



**JANUARY'09**

<b>S</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	
<b>W</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>

For once, my article was the last to be written, not for want of time or any of the usual excuses - simply for lack of focus! After Sourabh, Tamushree and Aditi sent in their pieces, I was up till midnight, watching the 'wall' being resurrected at Mohali (cricket lovers- you know what I am talking about), when inspiration struck.

I decided I would tell you a few interesting bits of trivia about architects that I could remember at the drop of a hat- bear in mind- that it was at midnight!

Nationalist and statesman, he designed the campus of the University of Virginia, identified by the American Institute of Architects as the most significant work of architecture in America. This is none other than the third President of the United States- **Thomas Jefferson**.

The noted Sri Lankan architect, **Geoffrey Bawa** qualified to be a barrister in London, and indeed practiced as one till he was in his late thirties, when he switched to architecture.

American Architect **Frank Lloyd Wright** was once arrested under the notorious Mann Act, which was aimed at "preventing immoral trafficking of women across state boundaries" Wright's crime? He moved to his famous studio-home Taliesin with the dancer Olga Lazovich Hinzemburg. The charges were soon dropped, and the couple got married in 1922.

Closer home, **Piero Molli**, the only architect to be elected to the Lok Sabha (as per my knowledge), and a known critic of Jawaharlal Nehru was co-opted by the community of being a CIA agent, to which his response was to walk into the Lok Sabha with a placard around his neck stating "I am a CIA agent"! When asked not to show his back to the August assembly, the returned Mover exclaimed "I have no back or front- I am round!"

A young man once wrote an extraordinary letter to the ruler of Milan stating that "he was a military inventor and engineer", that he could make bridges "indestructible by fire and battle", and chariots "safe and unassailable". To this he added, almost as an afterthought, "He was also an architect, a sculptor and a painter". He also devised "his early prototype of the modern helicopter. Who was this remarkable person? Do email your answer to Alisi at archhomter@archohm.com!

To come back to more pertinent matters, this month, which incidentally is named after the two-faced Roman God Janus, we bring to you a rather meticulous description of the Vestergaard Offices at Delhi, one of Archohm's office projects; an article by Aditi on the library at Utrecht University, Holland and an article by Sourabh on furniture and what it means to him. May I request you to keep those responses coming?

For the record, the world's tallest building, **Burj Dubai** expects to open to the public in the month of September. Closer home, construction of India's highest (81 storey, 301m) building named **"Shreepani Skys"** will begin in Mumbai this year.

Before you think that I may have forgotten - I wish you, your associates and family, a very Happy and Prosperous New Year on behalf of all of us at Archohm!

FEEDBACK from the Archohm staff

The whole idea of coming up with a newsletter, giving a fair chance to each staffer to express himself, is fantastic! Himani, Interior designer

Not only me but all my friends and associates eagerly await the arrival of the monthly newspaper! S.S.Muralidharan, Architect

Archohm is perhaps one of the very few companies in the country who undergo the pains of coming up with the monthly newsletter! Great effort on the part of the people compiling all this information! Amit Sinha, senior Interior Designer

Tamushree: One of the 'Tifers' at Archohm, this senior designer has worked on a gamut of projects in the past few years. She has written on the Vestergaard project, one of the many which have seen her dedicated application and work. At present she is working on the Villa Pearl's Showroom at Chandigarh, among others.

ectorian

archohm works



As one enters the two offices of **Vestergaard Frandsen** in Saket, New Delhi, an atmosphere of warmth mixed with vibrance greets you. At first glance you can see the lines with which the office has been designed, based on simple and contemporary lines, since "beauty lies in simplicity".

The two offices in proximity of each other evoke completely different ambience. One touches the corporate Swiss environment with vibrant colors and minimalist materials. The bold open layout (not even wall partitions) reflects the philosophy and value of their able leader, Mr. Navneet Gang who indulged in creating this space with more time than money. Each and every element has been debated and has expressed acude need to remain in existence. Such is the nature of this **minimalist corporate headquarters**.

The second office, larger and more populated answered the need to create an introverted environment that allowed long but pleasant working hours. The working office is an open plan with no partitions and long hanging lights accentuating the clean straight-line workstations.

The open diagonal arrangement of seats enabled privacy for the individual without physical segregation. Central to this entire space a **large green island**, for which a forest of palms was created. This worked as the centre of attraction and semi visibility barrier as well as effectively absorbed sound. As you walk through the office you can sense the openness in the space and see a very smooth mix of materials.

One could have never believed how well modern materials like raw wood, could be mixed with traditional materials like raw wood, with such ease, producing a refreshing vocabulary.

As goes for the colours which have been used here- they are neutral with splashes of bright greens to go with the basic browns and whites.

These two projects are undoubtedly one of Archohm's most unique and well appreciated works.



Aditi Sharma: Young, vivacious interior designer who epitomises Sourabh's credo of 'dog, boom, boom or die- but get the job done!' Hardworking and talented, she has been working on projects of varying scale in her two years at Archohm- winning accolades from clients along the way. She was an enthusiastic member of Archoutour 1 (as is proven by this article).

ectorian

The **third Archohm** took place in late December, the previous two being in August and October, and it marked the halfway point in the one year trial of this cross global, cross cultural design development scheme.

This article attempts to explain some of the motivating idea that drives me to take part in these events and what I think can be gained.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a **remarkable change in the patterns of human activity**, technological development and our relationship with the planet, we now live in a 'globalised' essentially consumerist society where ideas and concepts can be rapidly disseminated and appropriated.

The benefits of this are obvious enough people now desire and can obtain a standard of living akin to that of people in other parts of the world and cross cultural contact has the opportunity to lead to a greater understanding of one another and less conflict.

The dangers, though, are considerable and we risk creating an essentially bland planet where cultural differences and traditions are smoothed over as we strive for development. The patterns of human settlement, their forms and methods, is one of the characteristics that most define places and peoples and it is also under increasing attack.

India is undergoing a massive, rapid urban transformation. The population and size of cities is increasing at an astronomical rate and the construction of new infrastructure is reshaping the characteristics of many cities.

There is a long tradition of town planning and urban settlement in India traceable back to the Harappan civilization of the Indus Valley, who were the first people on earth to lay their cities out on grids oriented to take account of aspect and topography. India has contributed some of the world's greatest architectural wonders, not just individual buildings, but dynamic flexible typologies, such as the Havelli, and individual building elements such as Jharokas. Each state in India contains a huge wealth of traditional building typologies, styles and elements enough for a lifetime of study.

My point is that there is enough source material here for India to draw upon as she emerges as a world power without the need to import second hand pastiche ideas and models from other parts of the world. Why would a 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian wish to live in a Swiss chalet or a Spanish Villa?

I am not proposing the dead-end reproduction of traditional elements and styles and nor I am proposing the hopelessly lost cause of returning to some form of feudalistic society in which development is not allowed.

What I am interested in is a Critical Regionalism in the approach to architecture in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The development of an understanding of what the essence of the site is, physically and spiritually, and the resolution of the project in a way that reinforces these characteristics in a regional way, while simultaneously taking maximum benefit of the age in which we live.

This may all sound abstract and unachievable but it has already been accomplished in India many times before. I recently visited IIM Ahmedabad, a series of building that at first glance would appear to have nothing in common with traditional forms of building in India. However as I leisurely moved around the vast site I knew that I could only be in India, something intangible seemed to make it impossible for these buildings to exist anywhere else.

I know now that this is a range of factors that combined including the scaling of the courtyards and open spaces, the handling and quality of light as it passed through deep openings in the facade, the traditionally manufactured local brick that made the building look like they had emerged from the soil on site and the extensive planting and landscaping.

Many other Indian architects have achieved similar degrees of subtly across the sub continent and the country can be proud to have developed a individual post war architecture of distinction and character. Architects such as Balkrishna Doshi, Charles Correa, Laurie Baker and Raj Rewal have succeeded despite the socio-economic restrictions of the era in which they worked. Now, with India finding a greater level of affluence, it is time for a younger generation of architects to step forward.

The archohom for me then is an opportunity to engage with Indian designers and remind them that all the ingredients of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian architecture are already here in India.

Why would a 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian wish to live in a Swiss chalet or a Spanish Villa?

Christopher Gilbert: Super talented, incredibly motivated and hard working, a thinking architect from London- a man with a typically British sense of humour- that is Chris for you. Of course his many trips to India demonstrate his love for the country, Chris has been the strength of 'Archohom' and when he expressed his desire to pen a few words on the same, we already knew that it would provide a lot of food for thought. This then, is the one article YOU MUST READ.

guesthoughts

in focus



When I was asked to write an article on the library of the University of Utrecht, the only thing that came to my mind were the colours black, red and white, which happen to be synonymous with Sourabh sir and Archohm for me!

In view of the many innovative buildings created for the University of Utrecht by architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Neufertling, Riedijk, Mecanoo, Ben van Berckel, NL Architects and many others, the Utrecht University campus is known far beyond the borders of the Netherlands.

The one thing that instantaneously catches one's attention as one enters the library is the fact that the colour black is used extensively there (which goes much beyond the stereotypical colours used in a library)

Since September 2004, a massive library cube has formed the focal point of this development. The stacks of books are not housed in underground stores, as is so often the case. They are located in the interior within concrete cubes that seem to hover in the six-storey overall space. Suspended between them are concrete platforms that accommodate the open-shelf areas and the reading places. The internal surfaces of the building are painted black to facilitate concentrated studies within the extensive, interlocking spaces.

The external surfaces of the concrete enclosing structure are finished with a relief pattern of willow stems created with special shuttering inlay slabs. The same pattern is repeated in the form of screen-printing over the glass surfaces, thus uniting the two facade materials.

This building by Weel Arts of combines functionality with a remarkable sense for detail and quality. The use of innovative techniques applied to classical materials like glass and concrete make this building a landmark for contemporary architecture and symbolise the redefinition of the public environment. Nominated for several awards, this building is now already listed among the **great examples of European contemporary architecture**.



Aditi Sharma: Young, vivacious interior designer who epitomises Sourabh's credo of 'dog, boom, boom or die- but get the job done!' Hardworking and talented, she has been working on projects of varying scale in her two years at Archohm- winning accolades from clients along the way. She was an enthusiastic member of Archoutour 1 (as is proven by this article).

ectorian

**Archohom 3**: Yet another successful Archohom saw Chris, our London team member and Mini Patel, our landscape architect from Ahmedabad, focus on the Centia educational campus. Sanjay Rawat rejoined the Archohm team, starting at 8 am on a Sunday in true Archohm fashion!

**Archohm II planning**: Keeping upto our standards of doing everything else but work, planning of the next Archohm to Spain and Portugal began with a bang under the able guidance of Nabin. Basic plans were introduced to the team to finalize the lucky volunteers of this years excursion

**Bouwkuude competition**: Archohm participated in the international competition for the design school, Bouwkuude, at Delft. The Netherlands reasons for doing so were manifold. It is a premier design school of Europe, a challenge in itself. Secondly, Sourabh owes a lot of his influences from his student days at Bouwkuude (The Bouwpub sold the cheapest beers in town!). Thirdly, on Archohm, the entire team saw this building in flames due to an accidental fire. Last but not the least, **Archona** had the motivation and will to do this competition and delivered with her able team of Bhoomika, Rucha, Ashwini, Sanjay and Kuber.

**Visit of the Rapael owner**, Aldo Provini gave a boost to the Archohm design spirits. He is a leader in designer sanitary ware working with the leading architects of Europe. He complimented Archohm on its design skills and offered to work with us in the near future.

Amidst the tragic happenings in Mumbai, we must mention the bravery of **Daniela Orefice**, an Italian who represents **Zaccarotto Cucine**, a leading kitchen manufacturer from Veneto. She was scheduled to fly into Mumbai on the night of November 20th, and had a late check-in at the Oberoi Trident. By God's grace her flight was delayed, but the feisty lady continued with her trip to India her first at that! It was a fruitful trip, and Archohm will surely be working with Zaccarotto Cucine shortly.

Dedication to the job: Nothing can be more remarkable than **Muralidharan's reporting** to office within 24 hours of a near death experience. On an excursion to the hills, on the night of 21st December, his tempo traveled burst into flames, and was reduced to cinders within a few minutes. Only their alertness prevented him and his friends from the same fate. After a sleepless bus journey back from Dehra Dun, Mural reported for work, knowing there was an important submission to be done. **Truly dedication to the job.**

UPCOMING PROJECTS

**CTC, Tundia**: Mis Ansaldo brought Archohm on board to design and engineer the building that will house a state-of-the-art Control Centre that will mark the coming to age of India Railways signalling system. This is the prototype project, the important **Tundia junction**. Archohm of course has the past experience of assisting **Movacsa** in the Dutch Railways.

**The extra Dashed bridge**: A great opportunity to design and develop the first of its kind bridge (across the Yamuna), with an able engineering team from TCFI, and B&S. A resemblance to the photogenic cable stayed bridges, it opens up incredible opportunities of becoming a landmark and signature icon for the city of Delhi.

**Nanotech golf balls**: Thanks to the wonders of nanotechnology, golf balls will now fly straighter! **NanoDynamics of Buffalo, USA**, has come up with a golf ball that can correct its own flight path by determining how its weight is disturbed at a given moment during a flight!

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH:

Faizan	third
Aditi	twenty fourth
Anup	twenty fourth
Kunal	twenty sixth

NEW JOINEEES:

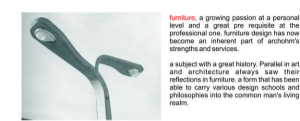
Sanjay Rawat	Senior architect
Mini Rajan	Accounts executive

The Seikan Tunnel is a 53.85 km railway tunnel in Japan, with a 23.3 km portion under the seabed. It is the longest undersea tunnel in the world. Built beneath it, connects the island of Hokkaido to Honshu, Japan's largest island. It was opened on March 13, 1988.

happy new year!

designs

sourabh desk



every architect has had a passion to develop furniture that was best suitable for his style, his space and his buildings. throughout history, some of the most famous pieces have been designed by leading architects aptly reflecting their skills, values and vocabulary. some of this was published in our October edition of archhomter (four).

Furniture is a medium in which one can experiment both with form as well as material. at archohm, we play with furniture in our projects as a logical extension to the built envelope; from street furniture in steel and concrete for infrastructure projects to glass and wood in interior projects. it is an exciting journey and play of scales and surfaces that transcends rules and traditions. the variation in scale brings about a subconscious synergy in design. one tries to design tables and street lights with similar ideologies, tools and materials.



most path breaking furniture comes through a long journey of evolution and experimentation. charles and ray earned some of the most critical masters of this artform. their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

the passion with which the 'one' german guy at the vitra factory still produces each and every piece single handedly expresses the institution called the 'bames lounge chair' masters of this artform, their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

the passion with which the 'one' german guy at the vitra factory still produces each and every piece single handedly expresses the institution called the 'bames lounge chair' masters of this artform, their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

the passion with which the 'one' german guy at the vitra factory still produces each and every piece single handedly expresses the institution called the 'bames lounge chair' masters of this artform, their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

the passion with which the 'one' german guy at the vitra factory still produces each and every piece single handedly expresses the institution called the 'bames lounge chair' masters of this artform, their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

the passion with which the 'one' german guy at the vitra factory still produces each and every piece single handedly expresses the institution called the 'bames lounge chair' masters of this artform, their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

the passion with which the 'one' german guy at the vitra factory still produces each and every piece single handedly expresses the institution called the 'bames lounge chair' masters of this artform, their furniture stands for design that transcends time.

ectorian