

SEPTEMBER 2009

S	6	13	20	27	
M	7	14	21	28	
T	1	8	15	22	29
W	2	9	16	23	30
T	3	10	17	24	
F	4	11	18	25	
S	5	12	19	26	

Another month, another editorial! August turned out to be a month in which H1N1 made news across the globe- one only hopes that September is better. On a positive note economists are predicting that the downturn/ recession/ slowdown (call it what you might) is showing signs of turning around; which has got to be good for all of us in the realm of construction and real estate.

The highlight of this month for Archohm was a **week long visit to Libya**- where Archohm is designing residential and public buildings in various new townships. On these large projects, Archohm is designing buildings as per various codes like the British and American codes. The design drawings are then approved by independent international consultants.

So soon after Archotour 2, we felt like we had done Archotour 3- with the amount of travelling accomplished in a matter of a few days- travelling from Tripoli to Sabha then Sirt (where we saw our buildings under construction), and finally to Benghazi. On one (un)eventful day we covered some 1000km through the Sahara desert! Unfortunately we missed going to Kufra where we are designing a set of 1500 independent homes- apparently the **world's second most isolated city!**

You will find more information on Archohm's Libya projects in the news section elsewhere in this newsletter.



This issue of Archohm features an article by Archana Anand on a signature project by **Santiago Calatrava**- the Metro Station at Lisbon; Tanushree's thoughts on the Taneja residence and our Guest Writer this month is Pooja Sablok who has chosen to write nice things about Archohm!

Last month we got one letter as feedback, which beats the combined total for the three months before that! It was all the encouragement we needed in the world to keep pushing this newsletter out! A special gift has been duly dispatched to the (apparently) jobless letter writer!

FEEDBACK:

"While it is a pleasure so receive the newsletter each month, the calendar would be more useful if the newsletter reached us before each month began... the news section is nice, maybe you could cover some architectural masterpieces that are not necessarily contemporary in style!"
Rakrvas Lanuk (Architect based in Iceland)

Please address all feedback to Atisi at archohm@archohm.com

editorial

archohm works

A perfect example of a **blend of simplicity and modernity** is the Taneja house in Gurgaon.

The layout kept in mind the **minimalistic** requirements of the **non-interfering** and **extremely co-operative** clients and rather uncooperative designers who had his way throughout the project. On a serious note, the clients were clear with what they wanted and we got under their skin fairly early in the design process to be able to achieve the same.

As soon as you enter this house, you are greeted with a massive black Kadappa wall that spans the only double height of the drawing room and living space. It spans the entire depth of the house and scales the space connecting various elements.

The kitchen is based on similar lines with a solid wood dining table, bench and chairs along with an extremely practical and attractive 'white' customised island from Germany.

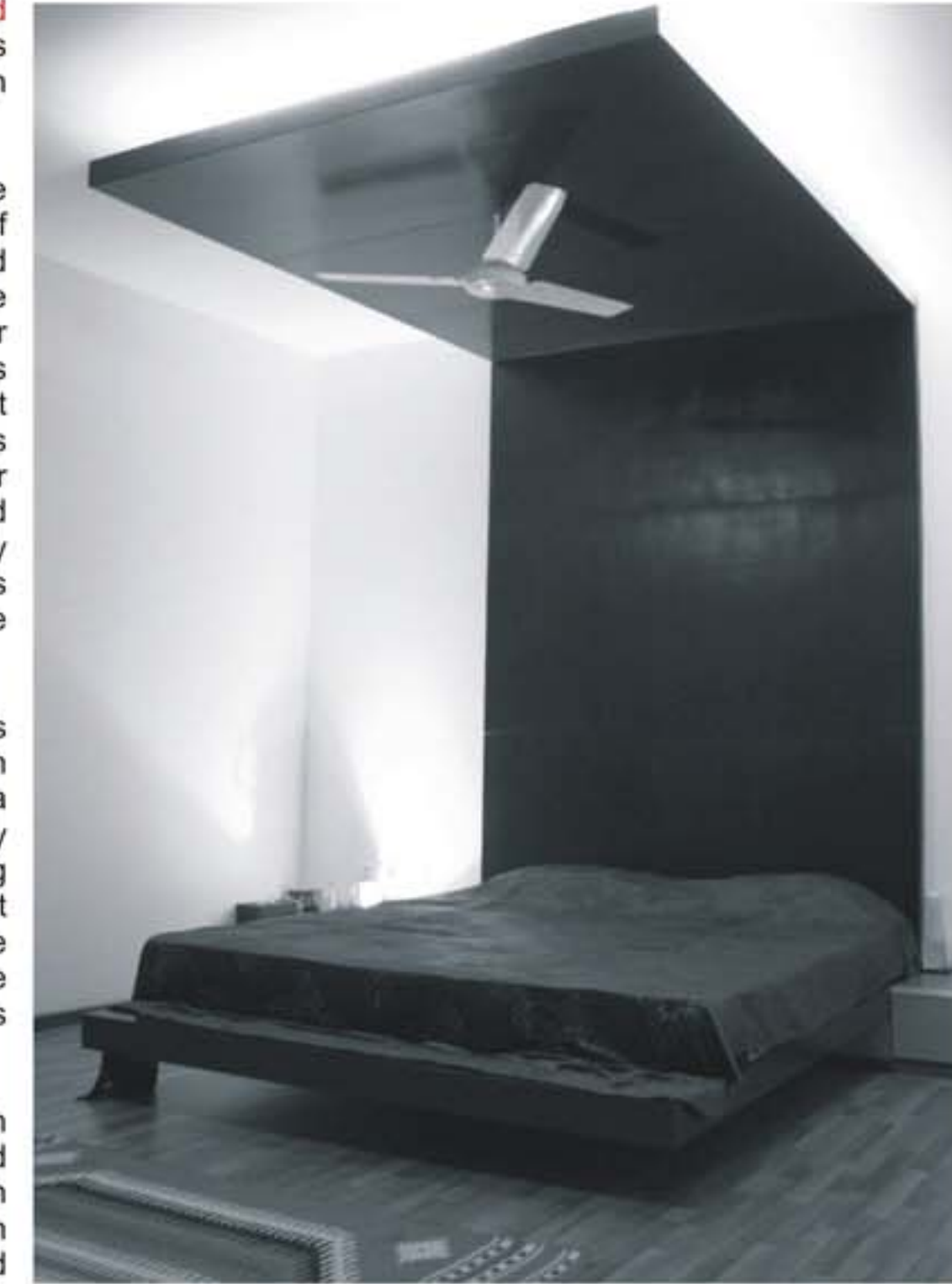
One of the features of the house is the master wardrobe. With detailed client inputs and their zeal for perfection we were able to come up with a masterpiece that has now become an Archohm standard. (So much so that we managed to provide a place for **each and every handbag** the lady of the house possesses)

The interiors of the other rooms and spaces are based on a colour palette of black, grey, white and splashes of our signature red.

The result purely demonstrates that the calm and comfortable clients cooperation throughout the design and development process made the product interesting and the journey fulfilling...



Tanushree Lakhota: One of Archohm's long serving soldiers, Tanushree has been involved in almost all our interior projects- be they residences, offices, commercial fit outs or ... A team player, she is hardworking and dedicated- two qualities that are almost old fashioned now!



Good architects are more than just good designers- they **are also problem solvers**. In addition to giving shape to our thoughts and dreams, Sourabh and his team have shown a vision and design skill to find solutions to awkward problems- solutions we didn't think possible. The result is an **eclectic home** with an underlying contemporary theme and a diversity which reflects global trends.

A top level of servants and a basement of cars and services makes the design vertically compact. An independent servant and service facility and routing has been developed so as to keep the house insulated from any unnecessary traffic and view. The house has been punctuated with designer furniture and lighting from Italy, American security and lighting systems, German doors, windows and kitchenettes and state of the art equipment to keep the house technically sound and functionally efficient.

All room and living areas reveal fresh, practical ideas which have turned our home into a retreat where we can escape the pressures of a busy lifestyle.

Working with Archohm has shown us how **living on a small site doesn't have to mean living in a small space**.



Pooja Sablok: A friend and client who speaks her mind. A definite well-wisher as she would always be the first to give feedback on Archohm's positive energies that need to remain high and our execution team that needs strengthening. It has been a pleasure to work with her and her husband on their dreams.

guest thoughts

in focus



From home liabilities to ensuring project continuity in office, **archotour 2** started with a lot of trepidations on the one hand and many expectations on the other! While still grappling with clients' issues over exorbitant roaming calls, the fourth day started with a feast for my eyes. Literally it was **"food for the eyes"**. It was the **Oriente Station** by the world renowned architect Santiago Calatrava.

Commissioned by the city of Lisbon in **1993** after an invited competition, its immediate goal was to serve the great number of visitors expected for the 1998 World Exposition. Its facilities serve and interconnect several forms of transport. Passengers can change between metropolitan, long- and medium-haul regional and international trains. There are connections into the underground system, national and metropolitan buses or taxis. With multiple modes of transport & public facilities under a single constitution, the structure "clicks" in ones mind.

Steel & concrete define the spatial structure of this space resemble the rib structure of some extinct creature, yet their proportion and arc give an impression of stability and lightness.

The movement of the columns as they describe their arches makes an arresting setting together with the hanging bridges, connecting tunnels, lifts and elevators. The main material is concrete, the bridge parapets are made of glass, and the pavement is the typical stonework used in the streets of Lisbon. The span of this roof is simply mind-blowing, even taking into account the rest of the structural feats that make up the project.

The rest of the detailing can be easily accessed online what with the world going global - on fingertips. To write about such a project in a few paragraphs is like running a **mile in a minute**. With no apparent negatives in planning of functions and lesser landscape, it does raise your eyebrow but I believe that can be humanly managed.

"Play of space with a natural form" is what Calatrava means to me.



Archana Anand: Hardworking, and determined in her work, if someone could move mountains - it is Archana. Project leader on several of Archohm's projects, she has a reputation for being tough on those who fall afoul of her high standards. This article is one she volunteered to write after being a notable member of Archotour 2- in fact so rapt was she in exploring this masterpiece that she literally got 'lost' in it!

News

Vis-à-vis visit: Working in a design firm can be great fun; whilst some of us sweated it out on dusty roads in the Sahara Desert, others had an opportunity to chill out next to a pool, on an August evening, at the Vis-à-vis farmhouse where they were also exposed to a great range of light fittings. B... and other such dr... ks were apparently in abundance. That proves the law of averages right- as there weren't any at all in Libya!

Archotour slide show at Sourabh's house

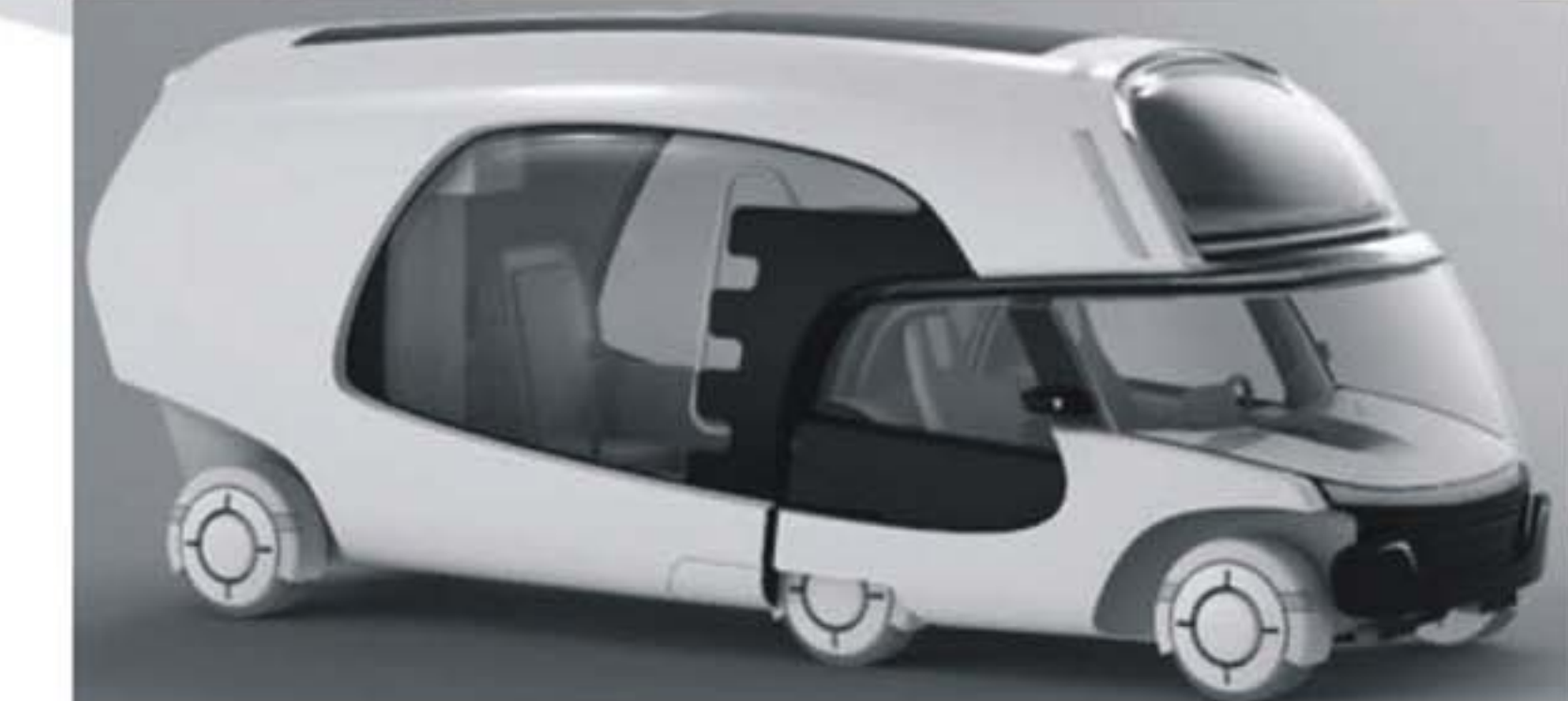
It wasn't a tight squeeze at all when the entire Archohm gang enjoyed the leftover Tang in Sourabh's 'meant-to-party' basement whilst looking at all the buildings they had photographed on Archotour 2. Aditi, Pynsh and Atisi were easily the most clicked persons on the tour.... The slide show then degenerated into an exhibition of candid snaps- the kind that look funny when others are featured- but make you red with embarrassment when the subject matter is oneself! All in good humour, and followed by great food.

Upcoming projects:

Generation next school: As the name suggests, the visionary clients for the project gave Archohm a free hand at creating an environment of comfort and education for an aspirational school of toddlers. With a view to expand the chain and the business into higher education, the design philosophy and building language were being addressed as an exercise.

Libya townships: Archohm has been commissioned to provide master planning services for various townships in Libya- including ones at **Sirt, Kufra** and **Hun City**. The scope includes road design, electrical services including high and low side supply lines and street lighting; water supply, sewage and storm water drainage, IT and telecommunications, gas networks and landscape design. Other projects in Libya include 28 public buildings including schools, mosques and commercial buildings at Kufra.

Archohm has successfully designed an entire set of **public buildings** at **Sirt, Libya**; comprising schools, a mosque, nursery schools, an occasion hall, a clinic and supermarkets. These buildings have been designed as per US standards. The first of these are under construction at present. Seen here is a photograph of the school; note that as piling has been done, the raft is literally at ground level!



Colim, a new vehicle designed by Christian Susana, is a great blend of a car and a caravan camper. The front part of this unique looking automobile can be **detached**, if you are not going camping with your family, and used as a two-seater car. Colim might not be the best looking vehicle, but it is quite useful given the **flexibility** it offers.

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH:
Shahzaad first
Girdher fifth

NEW JOINEE:
Saumya Garg Architect

design news

sourabh's desk

"Throughout the centuries there were men who took first steps down new roads armed with nothing but their own vision. Their goals differed, but they all had this in common: that the step was first, the road new, the vision unborrowed, and the response they received—hatred. The great creators—the thinkers, the artists, the scientists, the inventors—stood alone against the men of their time. Every great new thought was opposed. Every great new invention was denounced. The first motor was considered foolish. The airplane was considered impossible. The power loom was considered vicious. Anesthesia was considered sinful. But the men of unborrowed vision went ahead. They fought, they suffered and they paid. But they won.

"No creator was prompted by a desire to serve his brothers, for his brothers rejected the gift he offered and that gift destroyed the slothful routine of their lives. His truth was his only motive. His own truth, and his own work to achieve it in his own way. A symphony, a book, an engine, a philosophy, an airplane or a building—that was his goal and his life. Not those who heard, read, operated, believed, flew or inhabited the thing he had created. The creation, not its users. The creation, not the benefits others derived from it. The creation which gave form to his truth. He held his truth above all things and against all men.

"His vision, his strength, his courage came from his own spirit. A man's spirit, however, is his self. That entity which is his consciousness. To think, to feel, to judge, to act are functions of the ego.

(an excerpt from "The Fountainhead")

I recently acquired my second copy of the **ayn rand's** epic 'fountain head'. The difference was that one had ordered the original hardbound and was thus rewarded with a fine print quality and great paper character that made reading an even more pleasurable experience. Needless to say, have been reading it for the nth time since that day. would like to vent my enthusiasm on the same this month as rather than featuring a design faculty, one may stop and take a step back and analyse where design starts.

the **protagonist being an architect** made reading easier. the architecture in the book does not necessarily attract as the philosophy could be equally relevant for any professional and issues faced in every profession. values addressed are powerful enough to touch the very existence of man in a society. (influence on this on a lighter side, at least three architectural practices are called fountainhead in india alone and our structural consultants are roark, who is the architect in the book.)

what the philosophy of ayn rand propagates is the **power of man** and his mind. how decisions can be made in a democracy but creations can only work within the domain of an individual. democratic thought is fiction and so collective creativity an utopia. design, product of a creative mind, result of an inquisitive, informative and intrigued thought can thus be only achieved individually. individuals need to be equipped well and excited enough to move beyond the realms of reality and rationality. they need to follow their dreams and work on their beliefs, the only way to birth an idea.

at archohm, with this newsletter, with the archoforum workshops and the excursions of archotour excursions. we contribute towards exciting the individual minds. the only way to evolve as a design office that can move strongly towards an architecture that refreshes and relates to a new horizon.

it was apt to write on a book this month. as i write this, the final prints of the compilation of life at archohm in the last decade sees the light of the day. next month we present to you 'at ten'

at ten