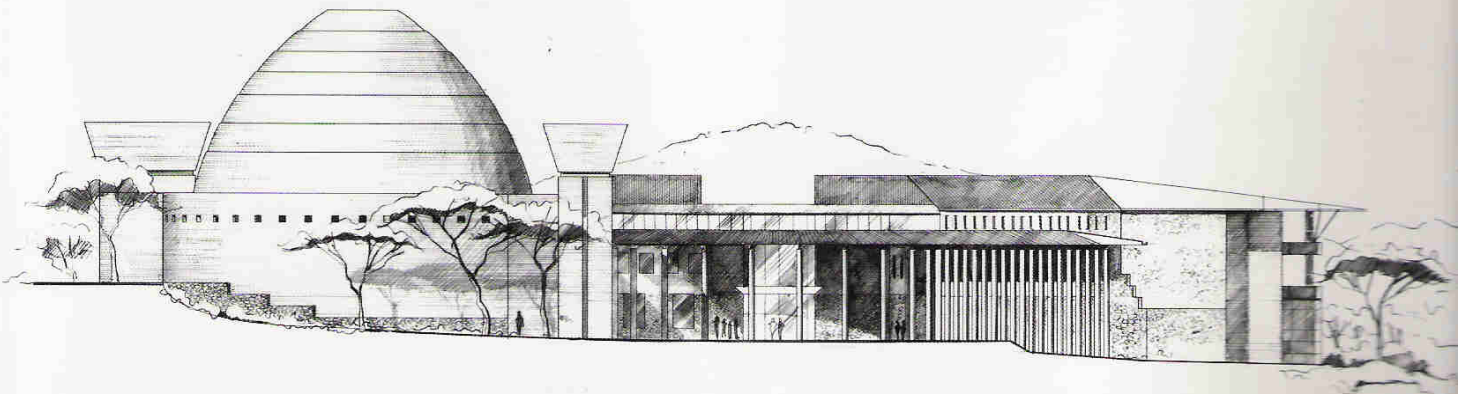


2003 • Vol 1 04

# architecture

Architecture of a new world



VIEWPOINT: BRINGING BACK THE CITY OF HARUN AL RASHID, A COMMON VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

NINE PROJECTS FROM CHINA, PAKISTAN, QATAR, MOROCCO, LEBANON, SAUDI ARABIA, INDIA, SINGAPORE AND KUWAIT

INTERIORS: A NEW ASIA, A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN, CYBERSPACE IDEOLOGIES IN REAL TIME ENVIRONMENTS

ARTS: I CLOSE MY EYES. I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. I'M HOME., HAPPINESS FROM WITHIN

ASPIRING ARCHITECT FOR STUDENTS

PEOPLE & PRACTICE: PETER RICH - INCOMPLETE MODERNIST VERSUS ROBUST HYBRIDITY IN SOUTH AFRICA, PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE IN OMAN

GO GREEN: MANYAR DESERT CAMP, M:OME - MODERN SUSTAINABLE LIVING

OUTDOOR ACTIVE: THE LANDSCAPING OF TALL BUILDINGS, PARADISE CAPTURED IN A 10X10

BACK 2 BASICS: REVIVING THE MAHARAJAS, ENCAPSULATING HISTORY

€3 EUROPE €12  
\$312 UAE AED 50  
SR 50 INDIA INR 200



## A NEW BEGINNING

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government Complex

EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE FROM THE GULF, THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA, AFRICA, AND THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT



**Simon Dove** is a senior consultant with Matt MacDonald engaged in growing their project and cost consultancy business in the Middle East. He has worked in the region for 25 years including nearly ten years of running his own practice. He is author of the UAE Construction Price Book, has acted as an Arbitrator and is an accredited Expert Witness.

**Mohammed Mahbub Rahman**, finished his B.Arch. Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1983, diploma in Urban design (1987) and Ph.D (housing) from Nottingham, UK. He taught at the Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology, Dhaka (1985-99), King Faisal University, Dammam, KSA (1999-2000) and since then has been teaching at the Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. He has to his credit 50 journal publications, 35 seminar papers and has worked in 50 projects as Design Architect, 17 funded researches and been involved in advisory services. He has won the Robert McNamara Fellowship & Commonwealth Scholarship. He has been involved in professional bodies and has been a nominator for the Aga Khan



**Dr. Abeer Hassanien M.A. and Ph.D** is Assistant Professor of Art and Design at the College of Art Education, Helwan University in Cairo. Her research places emphasis on environmental graphics, including poster design and way-finding mechanisms. Currently, she is on sabbatical in North Carolina where she exhibits her work to school districts. Her work was displayed in Minneapolis and Charlotte in a variety of events in 2003.

**Pilwon Han, Ph.D** is an Associate Professor of the architecture department at Hannam University in Korea. He has researched the traditional dwellings and settlements of Korea, China and Japan for 19 years. He manages a site ATA (<http://ata.hannam.ac.kr>) that offers relevant slides and articles on the subject.



**Nichola Williams (BLA Hons, ANZILA)**, is a Landscape architect with SBG Landscape Design, Dubai. Trained at Lincoln University, New Zealand, her works include numerous commercial, planning, urban, residential and recreational projects.



**Mona Campbell, BSc in LA, ASLA, CLA**, is the Director and Senior Landscape Architect of SBG Landscape Design, a Dubai-based landscape consultancy. A graduate of Rutgers University, NJ, USA, she has practised landscape design in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the Gulf and in the United Arab Emirates during her 15-year career.



**Rajiv Narain** is an award winning multidisciplinary firm based in New Delhi, India. Principal Rajiv Narain graduated from the Centre of Environmental Planning and Technology, Ahmedabad and the Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich in 1990. The firm offers architectural and integrated brand design services and has undertaken tourism, institutional, corporate and residential projects in India and Nepal.



**M:ome**, headed by Laura Joines-Novotny, Architect and Tom Di Santo, Architect are a collective devoted to new ideas in housing, and are addressing crucial issues of housing and environment simultaneously while creating in a form that expresses our collective moment in history, the 21st century. As a consequence, M:ome has developed a collection of modern sustainable and affordable homes that continue to save the owner money throughout the years via low life-cycle costs. Going further, all of this comes without sacrificing the modern conveniences we have all come to appreciate.

The brothers **Jan and Tim Edler** are the founders of the Berlin-based studio Realities:United. Since 1998, they have been focusing on projects researching the integration of media technology in the 'art space', both for self-commissioned and commercial projects. They research the development of new technologies and progressive working methods, furthermore ideas, messages and communication strategies. The studio's work has been shown at numerous international exhibitions, lectures and workshops. Recent university teaching positions were held at the Bauhaus-Foundation, Dessau and the Technical University Berlin.

**Alsop** is a leading European architectural urban planning and multi-media practice based in London and Rotterdam. The practice is led by Professor William Alsop, OBE, RA, with a team of five directors and a cosmopolitan staff of over 100, including architects, urban planners, multi media artists, modellers, graphic designers and fine artists. The essential objective remains, as Will Alsop puts it "to make life better through architecture." In addition, Alsop's buildings are known for their bold and often dramatic incorporation of art. Close collaboration with artists is often reinforced by an innovative use of new materials and a bold use of colour. Over the last 20 years, the award-winning practice has built extensively across Europe and in Russia.

**UNESCO's** mandate is to promote the stewardship of the world's cultural resources, among which the built heritage is one of the most valuable assets. Established in 2000, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation recognize and encourage the important role of the private sector in preserving, and adapting for contemporary use, the vast stock of historic structures that distinguish the Asia-Pacific region. The winning entries set technical and social benchmarks for conservation in the region, and act as catalysts for local preservation activities, which are fast gathering momentum across Asia and the Pacific.

**John Douglas** has crafted his practice, Douglas Architecture & Planning that reflects his passion for the preservation of desert structures and their native sites. A common thread in his work has been the desire to reveal hidden lessons and delights left by a previous generation of architects.

**Become a member of the Architecture+ team!**

Architecture+, with its dedication to seeking out and celebrating excellence from our region welcomes your ideas, thoughts and information on issues and projects that you feel should be brought to the attention of a global audience. Please feel free to contact our editors online at [editor@inhousecreate.com](mailto:editor@inhousecreate.com), [www.inhousecreate.com](http://www.inhousecreate.com)



## MANVAR The desert camp

In the summer of 1994, under the blinding desert sun, two youngsters stood on a low sandy hill and surveyed a triangular piece of barren land. The client was a fresh graduate local Rajput who had a dream; the other was an architect who believed in that dream. The following years were both gruelling and challenging; transforming the land that lay before them into a destination called Manvar (it means welcome in Rajasthani dialect). Today, the resort not only hosts a stream of tourists but has grown into an economic hub around which a large portion of the surrounding villages draw sustenance.

Located in the heart of vast unspoilt desert planes in the state of Rajasthan, between the ancient cities of Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, Manvar nestles close to the ground, almost blending with the surrounding landscape. Constructed out of an amalgam of indigenous materials and assembled using traditional skills and techniques, the resort spreads over five acres of land creating intimate clusters that are home to a varied set of activities.

Significantly, Manvar is amongst a handful of non-heritage resorts in a state that boasts of some of the finest forts and palaces (most of the latter, today have been converted into hotels). The design challenge was therefore all the more profound.

Rather than taking the safer route of creating a 'modern haveli / palatial style architecture', Manvar adopted its own rationale.

A settlement rose from the stark sand dunes inspired by age-old vernacular crafts and transforms the land into an oasis. Stone, earth and grass weave themselves into a vocabulary of design that complements the desert and stands majestically in the midst of a parched landscape. It influences, nurtures and rejuvenates the surrounding land and its people - man and nature move a step closer in attaining a sacred balanced coexistence, deriving strength from each other. The movement generates a synergy of compassion, strength and humility.

Green architecture complements this effort. Stone, earth and dried grass (thatch), materials indigenous to the area, form the primary elements of construction. The architectural vocabulary draws inspirations from the vernacular settlements and villages of the region. Woven into this rustic expression are technology and services that offer comfort levels of a high standard for the contemporary tourist.

Manvar has been designed as a settlement within which exist two distinct functional zones, each respecting a certain level of privacy and catering to a specific clientele.



The restaurant zone, in proximity to the entrance caters to the passing traveller, while the more private holiday village, 'Anandgram', spreads across the rear end of the property and overlooks a forest and distant virgin sand dunes.

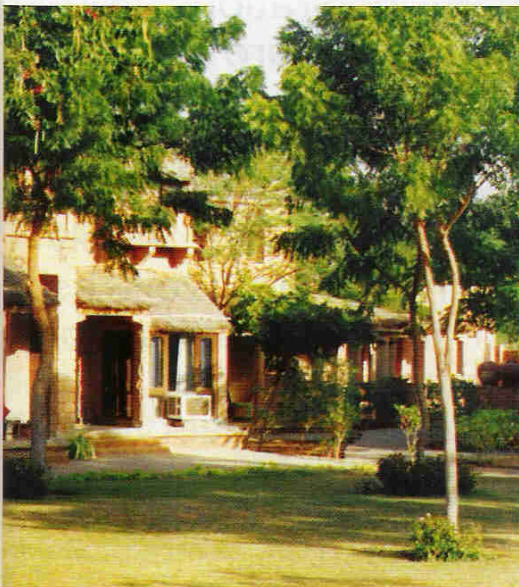
The two are connected by the retail street and an arts and crafts village (serving both as a buffer as well as providing an articulated and experiential path between the two areas). The settlement unfolds gradually with new vistas and experiences opening up as one walks through the complex from the more public areas to the private residential section. Much like a mysterious medieval settlement that reveals a little at a time, never the whole in one gaze, and the guest circulation is attributed with a certain ceremonial quality that prolongs as well as lengthens the experiential journey from one space to another. Surfaces, texture, a play of light and shadow enhance the journey at every stage. Distinctions between areas are not immediately apparent and are achieved through a subtle distribution of function that automatically creates a desired hierarchy.

The architectural vocabulary as well as the building techniques utilised derives its primary inspirations from the traditional architecture of the region. However, great care has been taken to draw a distinction between imitation and inspiration; to create an image that is both deeply rooted in its context as well as contemporary in the true sense of

the word, both in its expression and in the level of the offered services and comfort. The street and courtyard, verandas and the colonnade form the primary elements of the design theme. A play of these simple, yet powerful elements creates spaces and forms that are harmonious yet varied.

The buildings sit on an imposing deep red plinth constructed out of setrawa, random rubble stone masonry, while the main load-bearing walls are of lighter coloured beige sandstone of Shergarh. Deep verandas supported on singular columns of rough-hewn sandstone provide a transition between the interior and exterior spaces of the protected courtyard. The roof structure draws inspiration from the local dhani (the village hut), but is constructed to be far more permanent. The use of cement and concrete was avoided and lime mortar was used for all masonry work.

The rustic exteriors give way to well-finished clean and restful interior guest spaces. Smooth stucco plaster, patterned mosaic floors, earthy colours combine with customized elements like a woven bed headboard and bedside lamp shades, furniture and rugs, an aesthetic that is very specific to this desert region of Manvar. Each room opens out onto a semi-private landscaped sit-out to the rear. The furniture for the resort is custom-designed using traditional furniture components and improvising to create a new set of prototypes for use in a new environment.

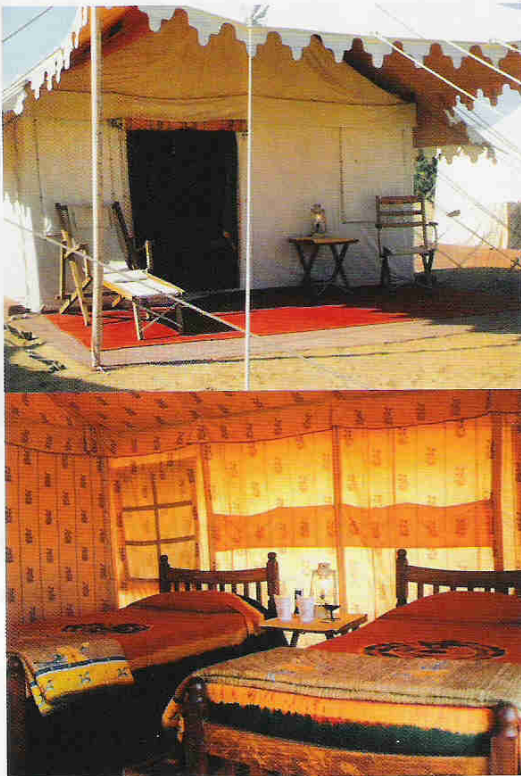


'Anandgram', spreads across the rear end of the property and overlooks a forest and distant virgin sand dunes.

Architectural detailing was meticulously worked out on the board and at site, taking actual site conditions into consideration. In an era where traditional skills are gradually giving way to the modern concrete slab and beam construction (even in the rural areas of the Indian sub-continent), great effort was taken to reorient the skills of the craftsmen - skills that for generations have moulded stone into beautiful intricate designs with a rich amalgam of engineering and aesthetic concepts, but which, over time lay forgotten in the recesses of history.

A high level of customisation at every level was necessary to create a boutique environment. Furniture, environmental graphics, cutlery and stationery were specially designed and created to present a unified theme and identity.

The project cost US\$325,000.00 and was completed over an eight-year period (1995-2003) for The Thar Foundation in Rajasthan, India. *Text: Rajiv Narain, photographs: Rajiv Narain Design.*



The architectural vocabulary as well as the building techniques utilised derives its primary inspirations from the traditional architecture of the region. However, great care has been taken to draw a distinction between imitation and inspiration; to create an image that is both deeply rooted in its context as well as contemporary in the true sense of the word, both in its expression and in the level of the offered services and comfort.