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"The dialogue between client and architect is about as intimate as any conversation you can have, because when you're talking about building a house, you're talking about dreams"
— Robert AM Stern

Born to be wild

Harley-Davidson's new headquarters in Gurgaon demonstrates how a ruggedly all-American company is meshing into the unique fabric of India

TEXT: AARTI BETIGERI
PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF MORPHOGENESIS



Situated in Gurgaon, the shiny new satellite city adjacent to the Indian capital New Delhi that is fast emerging as India's industrial and commercial hub, the Indian headquarters of Harley-Davidson are built to reflect the brand's innate qualities: rugged individualism, macho rebellion and implacable devotion to the road.

The interiors were designed by New Delhi-based architecture firm Morphogenesis, which has won a slew of awards for its work from around the world. The Harley-Davidson office opened in mid-2010, with the US-based manufacturer finally making its long-awaited move into the highly sought-after Indian market. There is also an assembly plant nearby, and dealerships in five cities around the country.

"The brand was entering India for the first time, so we wanted the space to reflect Harley-Davidson's Indian presence and how it blends with the Indian environment," says Vijay Dahiya, a partner in the firm who was involved in the project.

The architects did this most strikingly with the use of screens throughout the reception space. So-called *jaali* screens are a common feature of traditional Indian design, hailing from desert regions. They are a latticed or otherwise perforated screen, often carved from marble, providing respite from the burning heat of the midday sun while still allowing air to flow through. Here, each perforation is in the shape of the Harley-Davidson logo. Their function is

not just decorative, but also a way to divide spaces while retaining a sense of openness.

It is just one clever motorcycle motif used in the space: doors to the toilets and service rooms have bike handlebars as handles, with the mirrors serving as signage. Tables in the pantry have a set of supports resembling the side-stands of a bike. There is also an installation wall behind the reception desk, fitted out with various Harley-Davidson fuel tanks, each painted in a different design.

Through a wide glass door with the Harley-Davidson seal worked into the handle is the reception. To the right is a large *jaali* screen looking through to the open-plan office space. A little further is a glass-walled meeting room, then the workshop which contains a number of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The other side of the workshop opens out to the kitchen and canteen area, which flows into the grassy garden. The entire office is interconnected – much in the same way as, say, the engine of a motorcycle.

There was also the need for the workspace to operate as more than simply an office: it needed to be able to host events, workshops and launch parties. Morphogenesis conceived a space that could be closed off or opened up as needed, with areas designated for specific uses flowing into each other. "From one end of the office you can see the other spaces, and even out to the garden," says Dahiya. "There are sliding doors everywhere so spaces can open up if there's a gathering or event."



The colour scheme in the reception and throughout the office is in line with the company's colours: predominantly orange, black, grey with touches of white. One exception is a collection of bright red, high-backed seats. The small informal meeting spaces are known as 'huddles', with flooring in textured granite to mimic a gravel road.

"We wanted a non-conventional floor," says Dahiya. "Most office floors have carpet, but we did Indian granite all over. Nothing is polished, so there's a nice texture; you get the feeling of a road tarmac surface."

Were there any ideas that didn't make it to the final space? "The initial idea was to have the entire air conditioning duct open and in stainless steel, to represent the muffler of the motorcycle, to go all over the office ceiling, but it turned to be too expensive in the end," he says. That said, a small section of the idea did make it through, with shiny aluminium ducts featuring on the ceilings of the kitchen and workshop.

It is the workshop space that sets the pulses racing among the office employees: the 10 or so bikes stashed there are available for use by staff on weekends. As Milind Shah, a marketing executive with Harley-Davidson India, explains, "We are not just trying to sell bikes, we are trying to create a riding culture in India."





狂野不羈

單電車品牌 Harley-Davidson 在古爾岡新設總部，公告世人這間美國公司的狂野風格如何能融入印度獨特的城市脈絡中

撰文：AARTI BETGERI
攝影：由 MORPHOGENESIS 提供

古爾岡就在印度首都新德里旁，是個目的新興衛星城市，已快速冒起成為印度的工業與商業中心。美國品牌 Harley-Davidson 選擇在此建立其印度總部，展現品牌的真我風格：粗豪個性、反叛陽剛氣概，以及熱愛飛馳於路上的豪情。

新總部的室內設計由曾贏得多個國際獎項的新德里建築事務所 Morphogenesis 操刀設計，於二零一零年年中開幕，見證美國電車製造商 Harley-Davidson 終於進軍炙手可熱的印度市場。古爾岡總部附近還有組裝廠，而印度共有五個城市設有代理經銷商。

Morphogenesis 合夥人 Vijay Dahiya 有份參與項目設計，說：「品牌首次打進印度市場，希望藉著空間的設計反映 Harley-Davidson 在印度的定位，透視品牌如何融入印度的環境之中。」

為此，建築師特意在接待處選用矚目的幕屏。這些 Jaali 幕屏在印度傳統設計中很常見，源自沙漠一帶，大多都是把大理石雕成格子狀或洞孔，既阻擋中午炙熱的陽光，又讓空氣流通。而總部所用的幕屏，每個洞孔的形狀都是 Harley-Davidson 的商標；之所以選擇 Jaali 幕屏，並非只為裝飾，另一個作用是分割空間，令四周更見開揚。

這個電車圖案只是設計上的其中一個巧妙構思。其他跟電車有關的設計聯想，包括洗手間及服務室大門上的把手是電車車把手，而上面的鏡子就作標識之用；用膳間內，桌子的支撐結構就像是電單車的側立托；接待櫃檯後方的那塊飾牆，展示多個分別畫上不同設計圖案的 Harley-Davidson 油缸。

越過一道把手上刻有 Harley-Davidson 商標的寬大玻璃門，便是從下照明的誘人接待處。右

方有一道大型 Jaali 幕屏隔著開放式辦公室。稍為再後一點的，就是玻璃會議室，隔側是放有一些 Harley-Davidson 電車車的工作室。工作室的另一端連接廚房及餐廳區，再過一點便是室外綠油油的花園。整個辦公室內裡相互緊扣，就像是電單車的引擎般連結著。

工作間亦不止是個簡簡單單的辦公室，更是個可以舉辦活動、工作坊與發布派對的地方。Morphogenesis 構想出一個可以因應需要隨意開關打通的空間，每個區域都有其獨特用途，相互連接。Vijay 說：「從辦公室的另一端可以看到其他地方，甚至花園也看得到。總部全用上趟門，當有聚會或活動時候打開，即可打通空間。」

接待處及辦公室的色調是公司的企業顏色，盡是橙、黑、灰與點點白色，而當中唯一的例外是一系列鮮紅色的高靠背坐椅。細小的非正規會議室被稱為「私會區」，地板鋪有質感豐富的花崗岩，模仿砂礫路面。

Vijay 說：「我們想要一種反傳統的地板。大多辦公室都鋪有地毯，但我們就用印度花崗岩鋪砌全室地板。所有花崗岩都未經打磨，所以質感豐富，讓人聯想到柏油碎石路面。」

設計師有構想出甚麼最終不得放棄的概念嗎？Vijay 說：「我們起先想在辦公室的所有天花上，以外露形式鋪設整個空調系統的不鋼管道，來代表電單車的消音器。可是，最後發現造價太貴。」不過，這個概念還是有用在少部分空間之中，廚房與工作室的天花便鋪上光亮的鋁管。

工作室的小妙計使辦公室員工個個血脈沸騰：週末期間，他們可任意騎走存放在工作室內部的十來部電車。Harley-Davidson 印度市場部主任解釋道：「我們的目標不只是一要銷售電車，而是要在印度開創電車文化。」