

# Smile, you're in the Canaries!

Luis Falcón Martínez de Marañón and Silvia Banchini take you on an 'all inclusive' architectural tour to the EU's most outlying region: the Canary Islands.

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We suggest a quick, six-day trip for two to the Canary Islands, everything included for 715 euros per person. Our tour takes you to three islands (all seven would take a bit longer) to see the most interesting architecture built during the archipelago's short history.

In order to prepare you for the trip, we will first tell you a little about your destination. The Canary Islands are Spain's second autonomous region by number of tourists – 11 million in 2005 – while Spain itself, with 53 million, continues to occupy the second position in the world for both the number of tourists (after France) and the volume of sales (after the US). They both offer sunny beaches but the Canaries combine this with a lot of nature; it is the top Spanish autonomous region in terms of protected natural areas – 50% of its territory is undeveloped. Of Spain's 13 national parks, four are in the Canaries, along with 18 nature reserves and three biosphere reserves. The beaches have traditionally been in the hands of the tourism industry, a fast-moving and ruthless market. The Canary Islands economy relies directly on tourism for 35% of its GDP, and indirectly for almost 85%.

As to the architecture you will see on this tour, it reflects the influence of two main conditions, education and economics, both of which have undergone consider-

able changes. On the educational front, the first impulse came with the maturing of a generation of architects trained during the heyday of the School of Architecture. The second came from a new generation educated during the rise of architecture journals, computer design and EU grants to study and work abroad. A third impulse came from the experience of international networking which saw young foreign architects working in local studios and local architects collaborating with prestigious foreign firms.

The economic influences begin with Spain's accession to the EU in 1986. The Canaries are the most outlying region and a priority destination for development aid. The next important development was the 90% reduction in corporate tax following approval of the Reserve for Investment in the Canaries (RIC) in 1998. The capital must be reinvested within five years. A third important influence was the approval of the land use planning and tourism guidelines in 2003. Between 2003 and 2005 there was a moratorium on the construction of tourist accommodation whereby capital was diverted to non-tourist construction. A fourth influence was the creation of the Canary Islands Special Zone (ZEC) for an initial period of eight years (2000-2008); subject to certain conditions, corporate tax rates may be as low as 1 to 5% of normal rates.

## Tenerife

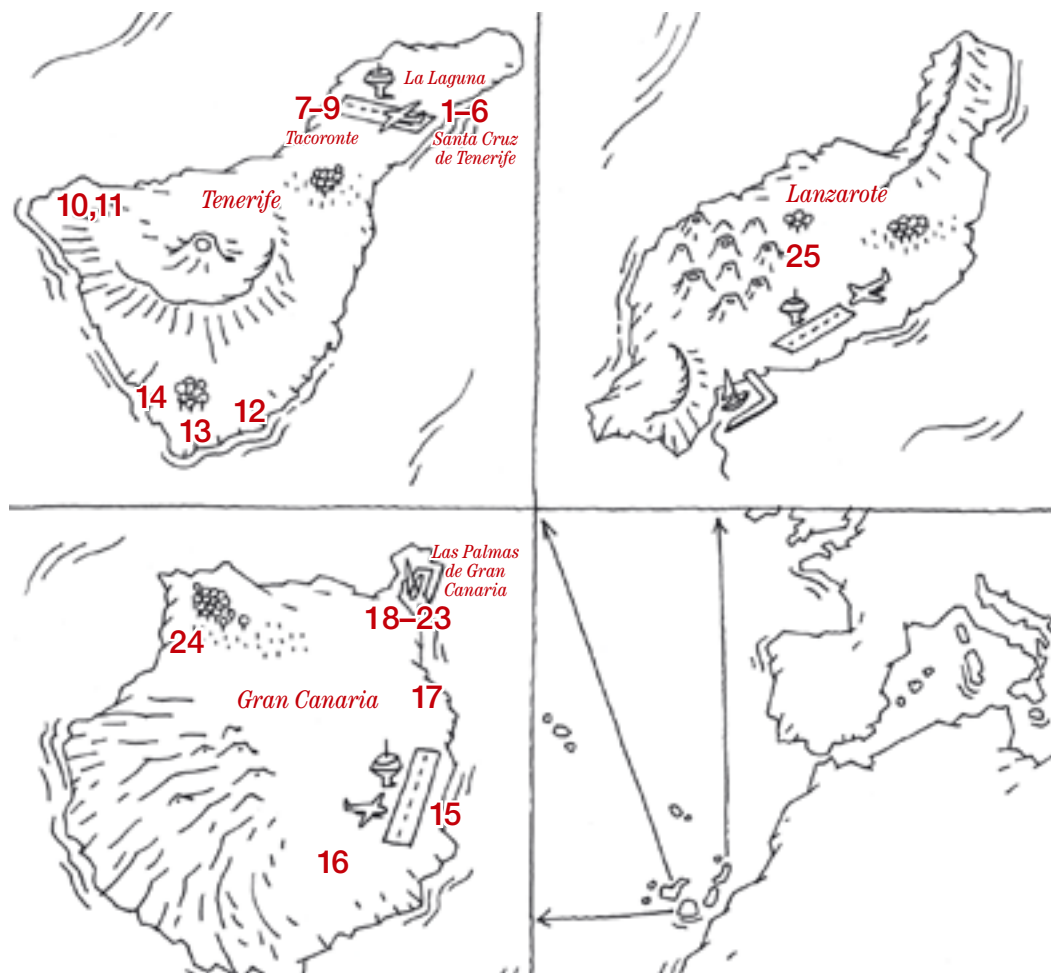
The first stop on this tour is Tenerife. You can buy an air ticket for around 125 euros per person from any of the 25 low-cost airlines that fly to the islands, from 160 different European airports ([www.whichbudget.com](http://www.whichbudget.com)). Fly to **Los Rodeos airport (1)**. To your right or your left as your aircraft descends is the Teide volcano. It is Spain's highest mountain and the third highest in Europe at 3718 metres. Until recently it was a few metres higher; now access to the summit has been closed off to prevent tourists removing rocks as souvenirs. Take a look around the cosy, local and entertaining airport lounge. **Arsenio Pérez** and **Antonio Corona** used laminated wood on its ceiling which, together with the exposed concrete and judicious amounts of steel and glass, welcome you to the islands. The chief characteristics of the architecture on our tour are already on show in this building: rigour with novelty, warmth and creativity.

Before leaving the airport, you can hire a car for 15.50 euros a day ([www.pepecar.com](http://www.pepecar.com)). Petrol costs only 78 euro cents a litre. Spend the first night at La Laguna, a World Heritage site since 1999. Dine for as little as 15 euros per person and then go out for a drink. (This is a university town.) Rise early the next day and drive to Santa Cruz de Tenerife which you approach along Tres de Mayo Avenue.

The chief characteristics of the architecture are already on show in the airport building: rigour with novelty, warmth and creativity.

At the end of this avenue, on your left, you'll find the seat of the regional government (2). The building was designed by **AMP architects** – Felipe Artengo, Fernando Menis and José María Pastrana. This team, which has since split into two different studios, was the first internationally known architecture firm from the Canaries, profiting from globalization and the proliferation of specialist architecture journals. As such, they are the local superstars – apologies to the rest of their generation. The building is a showpiece of exposed concrete crafting and the use of local stone. Its conference hall is spanned by exposed concrete beams. From the quality of its formwork it is easy to imagine the amount of on-site time this team devotes to its work.

Next proceed to Castillo Street in the centre. On the way there, you'll pass two new buildings that harmonize nicely with the historical city centre. The first is the Oscar Domínguez Museum, currently under construction, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, in collaboration with local architect Virgilio Gutierrez. The second is a **multi-storey car park (3)** by **Juan Manuel Rodríguez Peña**. It is clad with rapidly aged Corten steel, a good choice of material for a protected district which, like most of the local architectural legacy, is made up of domestic architecture – eclectic and in pastel colours. Pause for a beer or, if you →





**1** **TENERIFE NORTH AIRPORT**  
Architects: Arsenio Pérez Amaral, Antonio Corona Bosch, Eustaquio Martínez García  
Completed: 2003  
Address: La Laguna, Santa Cruz de Tenerife



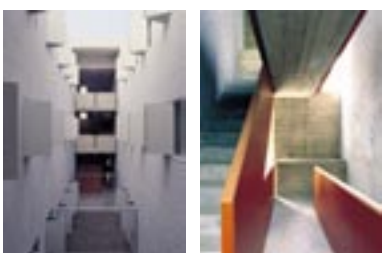
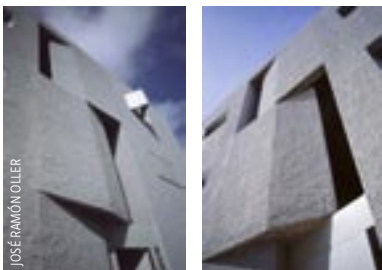
**2** **SEAT OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE CANARIES**  
Architects: Felipe Artengo Rufino, Fernando Martín Menis, José María Rodríguez Pastrana Malagon  
Completed: 1999  
Address: Avenida José Manuel Guimerá 1, Santa Cruz de Tenerife



**3** **CAR PARK FOR BINGO PREMISES**  
Architects: José Manuel Rodríguez Peña  
Completed: 2004  
Address: Calle Candelaria, Plaza de la Iglesia, Santa Cruz de Tenerife



**4** **EAET - TENERIFE SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS**  
Architects: GPY arquitectos, Juan Antonio González Pérez, Urbano Yanes Tuña  
Completed: 2003  
Address: Calle Pedro Suárez Hernández, El Ramonal



**5** **PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS AND GARAGE**  
Architects: GPY arquitectos, Juan Antonio González Pérez, Urbano Yanes Tuña  
Completed: 2002  
Address: Calle San Alfonso, Camino de la Hornera, Parcela D, La Laguna



**6** **MARINA CEBRIÁN SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
Architects: GPY arquitectos, Juan Antonio González Pérez, Urbano Yanes Tuña  
Completed: 2004  
Address: Calle Candelaria s/n, Taco, La Laguna



**7** **HOUSE IN 'JARDÍN DEL SOL'**  
Architects: Arsenio Pérez Amaral, Antonio Corona Bosch  
Completed: 2005  
Address: La Jara 6, Urb. Jardín del Sol, Tacoronte



**8** **M STUDIO**  
Architects: nodo17 arquitectos, Manuel Pérez Romero  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Tacoronte



**9** **RAVELO LOCAL SURGERY**  
Architects: GPY arquitectos, Juan Antonio González Pérez, Urbano Yanes Tuña  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Calle Hoya de la Viuda, Ravelo, El Sauzal



**10** **LOS SILOS YOUTH CLUB**  
Architects: Lavín arquitectos S.L., Alejandro Lavín Della Ventura, Francisco Miguel Lavín Della Ventura  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Avenida de Aregume, Los Silos



**11** **BUENAVISTA GOLF CLUBHOUSE**  
Architects: Rubén Henríquez Guimerá, Gustavo García Báez  
Completed: 2003  
Address: Calle La Finca, Buenavista del Norte



**12** **18 APARTMENTS WITH SEA VIEW**  
Architects: Eustaquio Martínez García, Virgilio Gutiérrez Herreros  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Urbanización La Mareta, Granadilla de Abona



**13** **'INHABIT THE LANDSCAPE' HOUSE**  
Architects: Claudia Collmar  
Completed: 2003  
Address: La Cañada Verde, Las Galletas, Arona



**14** **MAGMA ART & CONVENTIONS**  
Architects: Felipe Artengo Rufino, Fernando Martín Menis, José María Rodríguez Pastrana Malagon  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Avenida de Los Pueblos, Playa de Las Américas, Costa Adeje



**15** **CONTINUOUS SERVICE CENTRE**  
Architects: e4 quevedo & fdez-palacios, Ana Fdez-Palacios Martínez, Alberto Quevedo Domínguez, Víctor Quevedo Domínguez, José J. Quevedo Domínguez  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Calle Mijail Gorvahov, Carrizal, Ingenio



**16** **SANTA LUCÍA COUNCIL SWIMMING POOL**  
Architects: e4 quevedo & fdez-palacios, Ana Fdez-Palacios Martínez, Alberto Quevedo Domínguez, Víctor Quevedo Domínguez, José J. Quevedo Domínguez  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Santa Lucía casco, Santa Lucía



**17** **INFANT WING OF NESTOR ALAMO STATE SCHOOL**  
Architects: Manuel J. Feo Ojeda, Juan J. Espino Duran  
Completed: 2003  
Address: Rambla de Jinamar, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



**18** **TWO APARTMENTS**  
Architects: Manuel J. Feo Ojeda  
Completed: 2003  
Address: c/- Chaco 7-9, Urbanización Montaña Socorro (Tafira Baja), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



**19** **CASA RUIZ**  
Architects: Magüí González  
Completed: 2005  
Address: San Cristobal, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



**20** **ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING**  
Architects: José Antonio Sosa Díaz-Saavedra, María Jesús González González  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Avenida Alcalde Díaz-Saavedra Navaro



**21** **APARTMENT BUILDING**  
Architects: Manuel J. Feo Ojeda  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Calle Buenos Aires 7, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



**22 WOERMANN PLAZA**  
Architects: Iñaki Abalos Vazquez, Juan Herreros Guerra, Joaquín Casariego Ramírez, Elsa Guerra Jiménez, Renata Sentkiewick  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Calle Albareda 46, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



**23 INAKASA BUILDING**  
Architects: Alexis López Acosta - Xavier Iván Díaz Martín  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Calle Harld Flick 8, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



**24 RENOVATED HOUSE, CONVERTED TO A RURAL HOTEL**  
Architects: Juan J. Espino Duran, Pilar Banqueri Lomas  
Completed: 2003  
Address: Princesa Guayrmina 42, Agaete



**25 RESIDENCE-WORKSHOP CÉSAR MANRIQUE FOUNDATION**  
Architects: Juan Manuel Palerm Salazar, Leopoldo Tabares de Nava y Marín  
Completed: 2004  
Address: Taro de Tahiche, Lanzarote

## (Smile, you're in the Canaries!)

prefer, a glass of wine on García Sanabria Square which was recently remodelled by Palerm and Tabares de Nava. Hop back in the car and continue southwards along Avenida de la Constitución. On your left you'll see Santiago Calatrava's very white auditorium. Don't stop here. Opposite, is the Tank, another work by AMP. Stop here. If you can go inside, do so; exploring this cultural space that reuses the inside of an obsolete oil tank is a worthwhile experience. While still in Santa Cruz, visit the **School of Performing Arts (4)** by **GPY**, Juan Antonio González and Urbano Yáñez. Made out of wood and exposed reinforced concrete, this certainly is a fascinating space that acts as mediator between the action on stage and the actions of passers-by. The design team has a very extensive and rich portfolio and has received two Manuel de Ora awards (local architectural awards), as well as several honourable mentions.

Back at La Laguna there are two more buildings by **GPY**. The first one consists of **25 public housing units (5)** with a touch of luxury – notice the facade and the courtyards. How is it possible to do so much with so little? The second project is the **Marina Cebrián Secondary School (6)**, a light, coloured, concrete building for education.

The next stop is Tacoronte which boasts one of the best views of Teide. You might like to have lunch here; the local red wines are excellent and reasonably priced too. Thus fortified, venture outside the city to see three architectural projects incorporating natural environments. The **Garden of the Sun house (7)** by **Pérez** and **Corona** features pockmarked concrete, glass, wood and landscape. Situated on the edge of a 300-metre cliff, it looks onto the ocean on one side and Teide on the other – a true dream house. Five minutes from this is **Manolo Pérez's 'M Studio' (8)**. It is a simple and compelling project, employing only exposed concrete and metalwork. If you step back, it looks like a museum. Manolo is a part of the new generation of internationally-oriented Canaries architects. He studied in Las Palmas, worked with FOA, collaborated with Federico Soriano and is currently living in Madrid. Nearby, in El Sauzal, is the **Ravelo Local Surgery (9)**, another **GPY** creation. Its most characteristic element is a glass corridor – the entrance to the surgeries. We call this building a 'therapeutic landscape'.

Now drive along the motorway towards Los Silos. On your left during this rather long drive is Teide, on your right are palm and banana trees and the Atlantic. Stop at the **Los Silos Youth Club (10)**. Just look. It was designed by **Alejandro Lavín** and **Francisco Miguel Lavín**. The architects took fresh, local elements – exposed concrete, nature – which they decomposed and recomposed. A bit further on is the **Buenavista Golf Club (11)** by **Rubén Henríquez** and **Gustavo García**. Instead of being surrounded by 10,000 houses, this golf course is surrounded by nature – it is a joy to play here. Gustavo, who has worked with Herzog in Basel, realized this project prior to his international experience.

Make a small effort and go up to Masca by which time it will be nighttime. Stay at the Morro Catana rural hotel ([www.toural.com](http://www.toural.com)). In the morning, over breakfast, enjoy the spectacular nature. The next project is a fair distance away. You need to go up the Teide ravines, through a national park where you could easily spend the whole day.

Instead, proceed down the south side, towards the Reina Sofía Airport. You are making for the black sand beach of La Mareta where **Eustaquio Martínez** and **Virgilio Gutiérrez** recently completed **18 apartments (12)**. They were able – luckily for the island – to convince the developers to modify the originally much more commercial project. Nearby, on the way to Arona, visit another landscape project, in **Las Galletas (13)**. It is a work by **Claudia Collmar**. Be careful or you'll miss it as it is camouflaged with basalt and local rocks. It is a red volume with wood slats. In Arona, where all the 'guiris' (foreign tourists) have concentrated, is the **MAGMA Art and Convention Centre (14)**. This is the work par excellence of **AMP** who, naturally, received the Ora Award 2006 for it. The ingredients: pockmarked exposed concrete, patient builders to cope with the enormous complexity, a committed mayor and an unlimited budget. It is an impressive work. The best thing about it is the flexibility of use that was achieved during the design process and, spatially speaking, the entrance lobby. Yes, architectural quality is starting to be appreciated in the tourism industry. If you still have time, go and see the Bahía del Duque Hotel, by the late local architect Andrés Piñeiro. This will give you two contrasting visions of tourist architecture. Spend the night there and behave like a tourist!

### Gran Canaria

Fly to the Gran Canaria airport for as little as 30 euros ([www.binternet.com](http://www.binternet.com)). Cross the airport with eyes closed. Rent another car for the same price. Driving southwards you should visit three places. Near the airport, in El Carrizal, is the **Continuous Service Centre (15)** by **Ana Fernández-Palacios**, **Alberto Quevedo**, **Victor Quevedo** and **José J. Quevedo**. The contrasting volumes, lights and shadows are best appreciated at night, so if you have time you might want to come back. On the way to the Playa del Inglés, turn off to Santa Lucía to see the **Council Swimming Pool (16)**. Here, the same architects have played with materials such as basalt and Corten steel. Then visit the Dunes of Maspalomas nature park in San Bartolomé de Tirajana – possibly one of the most spectacular urban beaches in Spain. Before driving on to the capital, visit the Oasis hotel, by architects Corrales and Molezún. It is from the late 1960s, but an absolute must. Just before arriving in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, stop at Jinamar, a residential district of public housing. Take a look at the **Infant Wing of the Nestor Álamo State School (17)** by **Manolo Feo** and **Juan Espino**. Don't miss anything of this exquisite object, from the construction details to the zig-zag internal corridor that gives access to the classrooms. Follow Marzagán road to Tafira where you'll find some more housing by **Manolo Feo** (this time working alone) at the **Tafira Montaña Socorro urban development (18)**. This is an experimental exercise in domestic architecture. The zinc facade looks especially attractive at night. The last stop of the day is in the district of San Cristóbal: for **Casa Ruiz (19)**, **Magüi González** used exposed concrete, pine wood, frosted glass, stone and light – a lot of light as the house was for an artist friend. It earned him the Ora 2006, *ex aequo et bono*.

Dine cheaply on local food at 'El Herreño'. Go for a

swim at Las Canteras – you can do this any time of year. Choose a hotel in the old quarter, Vegueta. A good place for breakfast is the CAAM (Atlantic Centre of Modern Art) by Sainz de Oiza.

In Gran Canaria, unlike in Tenerife, experimental architecture is privately funded and found primarily in the city and, particularly of late, in collective housing. Here are four works. The first is a striking **office building with a zinc facade (20)** by **José Antonio Sosa** and **Magüi González**, located in the grounds of the San Ignacio de Loyola School. Private funding here came from the Church. In the old fishermen's quarter of Triana, look out for an old **corner building (21)** on Buenos Aires Street. Looking up at the 31-apartment building, you'll recognize the plasticity of the roof. **Manolo Feo** received the third Ora 2006 award for this conversion. The next building is near the port where **Iñaki Ábalos** and **Juan Herreros**, together with local architects **Joaquín Casariego Ramírez**, **Elsa Guerra Jiménez** and **Renata Sentkiewick** have produced one of the most remarkable works of the last few years: the **Woerman Plaza (22)**. It is the coloured-glass facade of this mainly residential building that stands out. In 'Siete Palmas', a new city development on Harld Flick Street, is the **Inakasa apartment building (23)**. This is the first work of both the developer Inakasa and **Alexis López** and **Xavier Iván Díaz**, young architects in their thirties who have finally been able to realize an experimental residential building. Among this private investment project's many highlights are the facade, the courtyard-oriented units, and the courtyard that is open to the street – working as a communication hub. It is undoubtedly one of the most daring and interesting works and, at last, a product of the Microsoft generation. To end the day, get in the car and spend the night in the northwest of the island, at Agaete. Stay in a **rural hotel (24)**, modelled on domestic architecture, by **Juan Espino** and **Pilar Banqueri**. Check out the carpentry on the facade. Enjoy it and sleep well.

### Lanzarote

The following morning go to the airport and, for 38 euros, fly to Lanzarote. Here we can recommend only one contemporary work, the **Residence-Workshop of the César Manrique Foundation (25)** by **Juan Manuel Palerm** and **Leopoldo Tabares de Nava**. But now that you're here, you should visit some of the island's natural attractions: the Timanfaya National Park, El Golf, La Geria, Tegui, Los Jameos del Agua, the River Viewpoint – and the work of Canaries artist César Manrique ([www.cesarmanrique.com](http://www.cesarmanrique.com)) who has developed a way of building that is so well integrated with its surroundings as to be barely visible. Lanzarote is called Manrique's most important work of art as his work and his influence have marked the external aspect of the island. In the late 1960s, he campaigned for greater local awareness of the landscape's specific qualities and respect for traditional architecture. By studying his creations, you may discover the essence of this island.

And now, sadly, our whirlwind tour is over and it is time to return to the airport and fly home by another route, but for the same low one-way price of 125 euros. The wonders of low-cost travel. ←