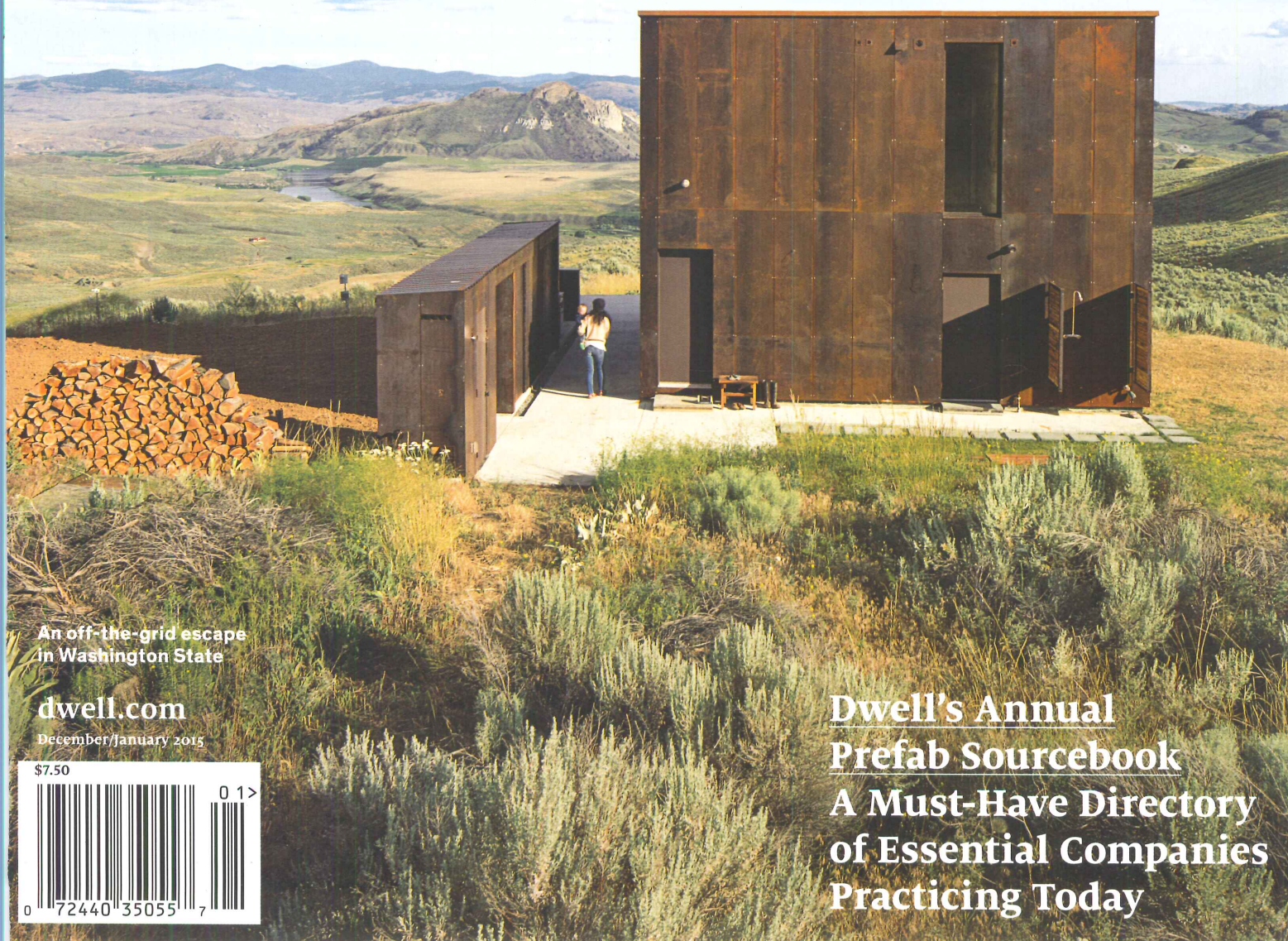


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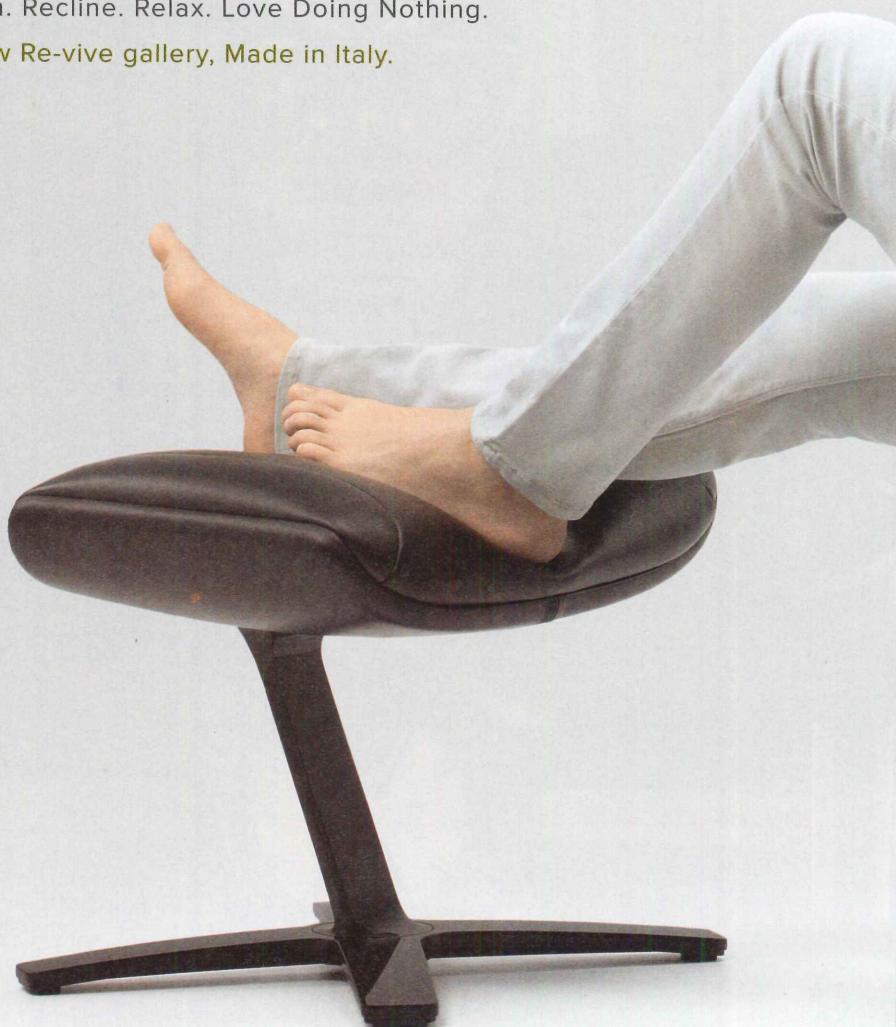
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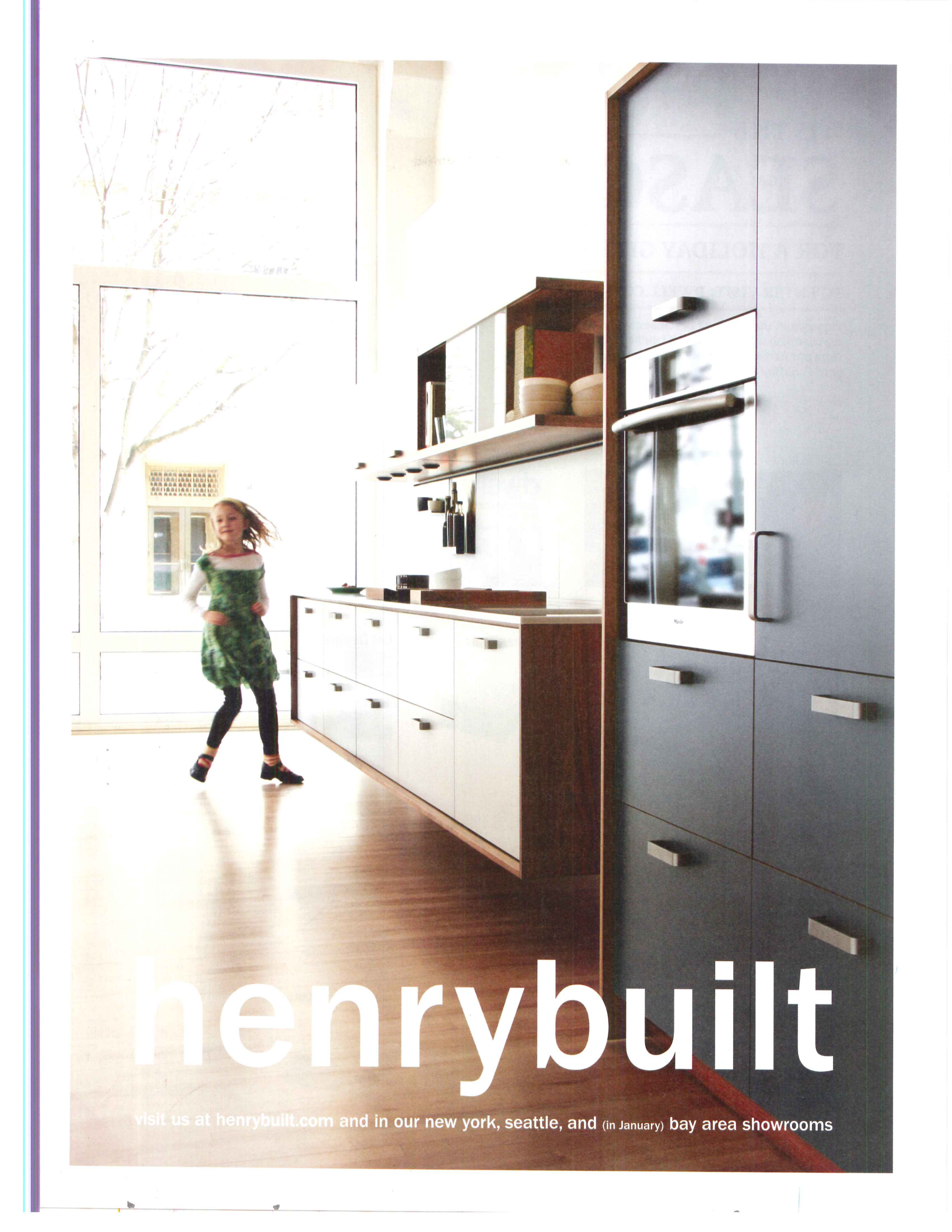
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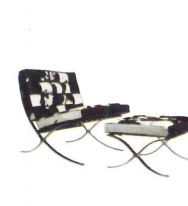
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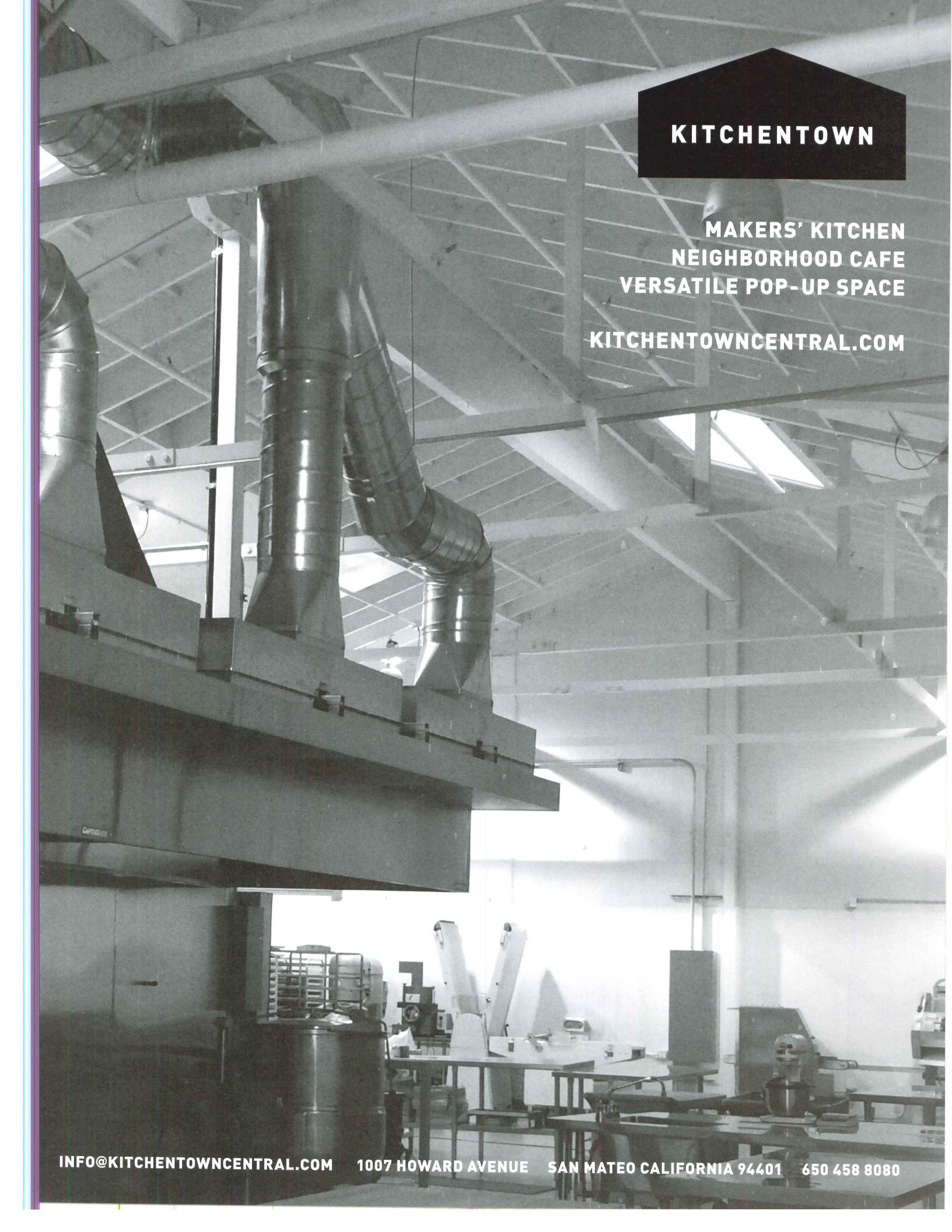
Charles P. Rogers



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Dwell Store





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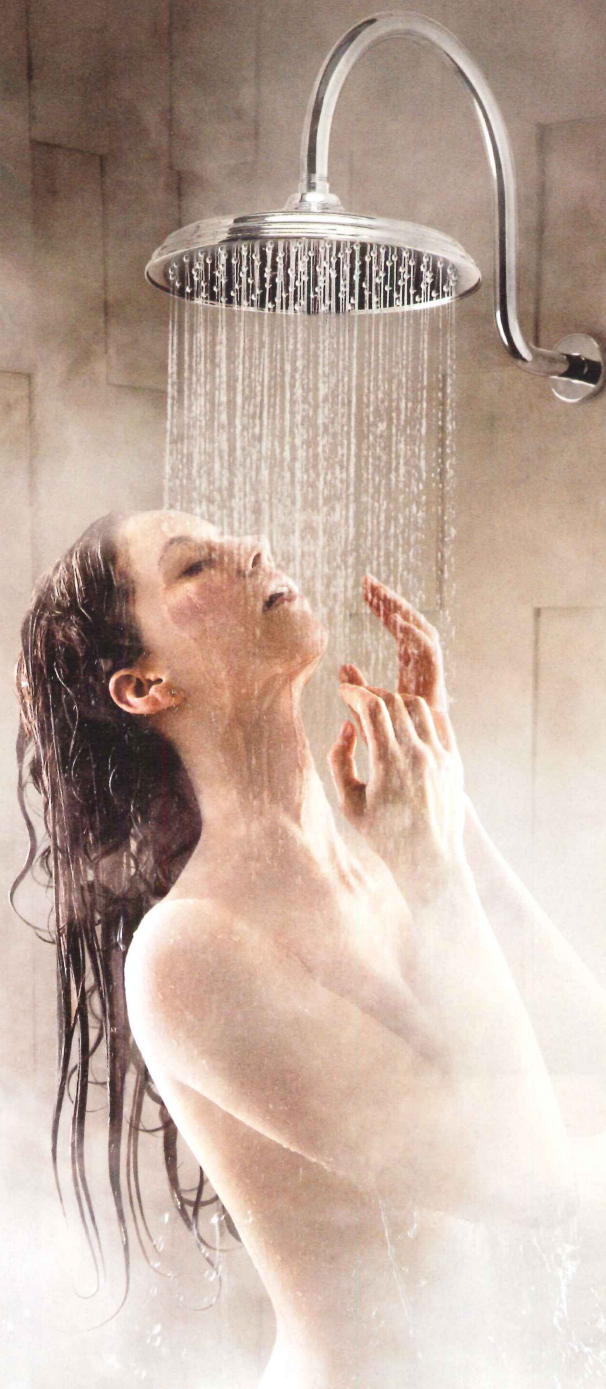
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"It just feels good. When you're inside this house, you feel like you're floating." —Kaja Taft, resident

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DWELL DEC/JAN 2015

84 Sailing the High Desert

In a remote town in Washington State, an architect builds an 820-square-foot prefabricated, off-the-grid vacation home in three days.

TEXT BY
Brian Libby

PHOTOS BY
The Morrisons

92 Space Odyssey

A family compound in the Texas Hill Country uses a modular LEED-certified Porch House system, developed by Lake|Flato Architects, to construct an environmentally friendly family compound.

TEXT BY
Dan Oko
PHOTOS BY
Collin Hughes

100 A New Angle

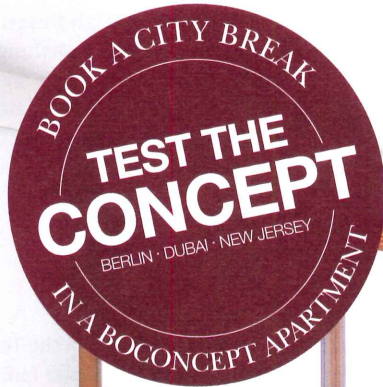
Using geometric modules, Skylab Architecture and Method Homes craft a unique honeycomb-like house in Portland, Oregon.

TEXT BY
LAURA MAUK
PHOTOS BY
Cedric Angeles

On the cover: In Washington's rugged high desert, a weathered, steel-clad vacation house sits lightly on the land, p. 84.
Photo by The Morrisons

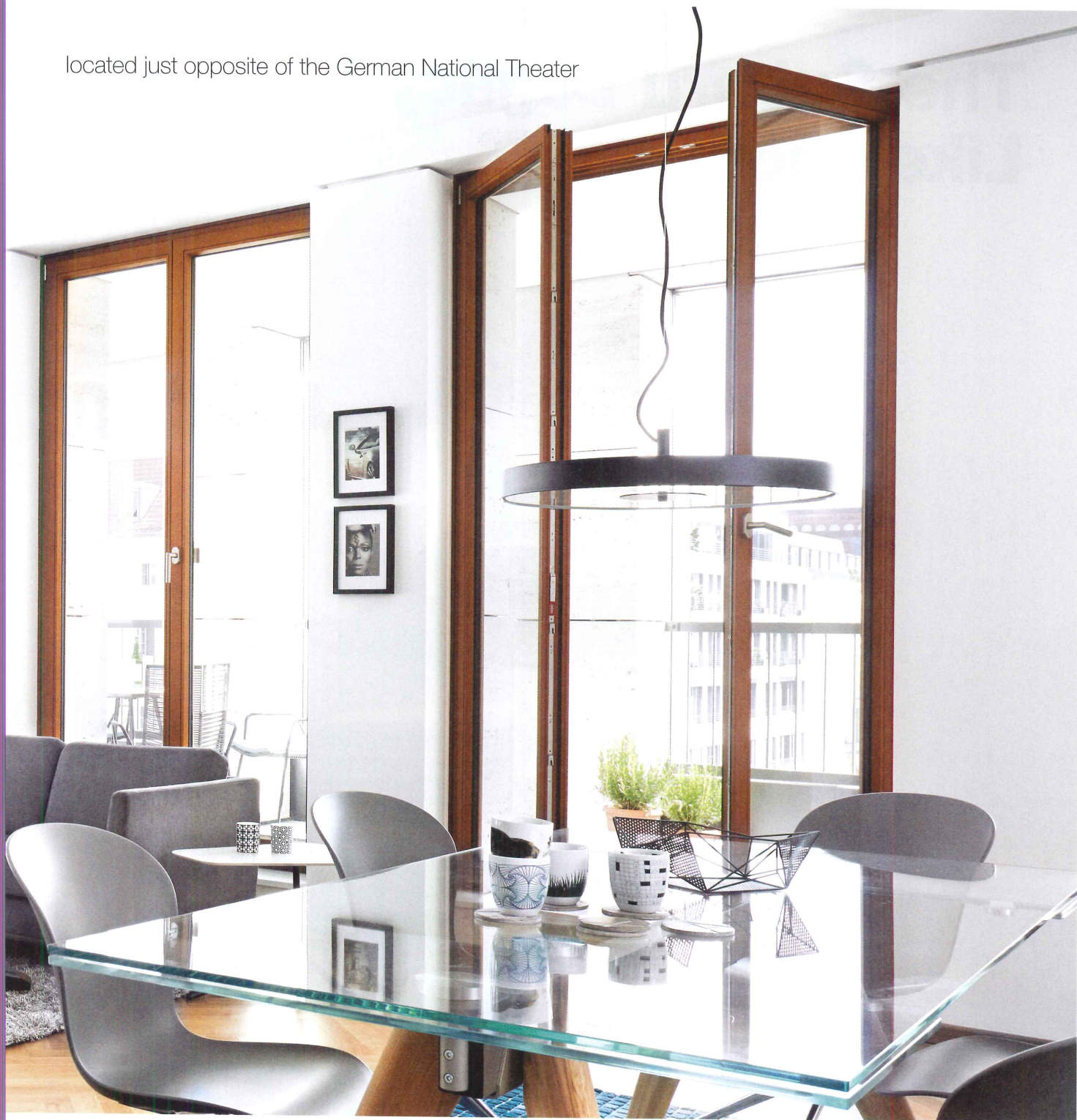
This page: A Portland prefab with honeycomb-inspired beams features a lofty central living space, p. 100.
Photo by Cedric Angeles

The living room in the BoConcept apartment in Berlin



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Our Prefab Sourcebook outlines a variety of modular options, including the appealing Bunkie (above), a stand-alone unit that can be erected without a permit. Near Boston, LABhaus created a modern poolhouse (right), adding indoor-outdoor living space to a modest frame house.



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Pick out your perfect prefab with our updated sourcebook, the definitive guide to companies across the United States. Then, it's off to Leon, Mexico, to explore container architecture writ large. And in case you missed Dwell on Design Los Angeles in June, we share highlights from America's largest design show.

54 My House

Near Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Wisconsin estate, the architect's son Tim Wright celebrates a new generation of architecture with a 2,212-square-foot prefab from Blu Homes.

64 Backstory

In the Massachusetts countryside, a modern prefab pool- and guesthouse designed by LABhaus is a surprisingly fitting addition to a 1928 Sears, Roebuck kit house.

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From private residences to multigenerational homes, we explore the new challenges and benefits behind design for aging in place.

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Saw it? Want it? Need it? Buy it.

120 Finishing Touch

Cubicco, a Dutch prefab company, brings sustainable, affordable houses that can withstand catastrophic weather to Miami.

dwell

DWELL DEC/JAN 2015

PHOTO BY TONY LUONG (LABHAUS)

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The New Prefab

Every day I am reminded why Dwell champions prefab. This morning, for instance, we received a note from a reader who lives in a 4,600-square-foot house in New York and who is considering prefab for his next home. This afternoon I received an email from a producer in Los Angeles looking for leads for a new television show featuring companies that use shipping containers to make homes and offices. Yesterday I discussed with colleagues plans for displaying the many prefab units we'll have on the show floor at Dwell on Design Los Angeles in May—one of the most popular features of the conference. We celebrate prefab because it is a smart building solution that is highly adaptable and compelling to our audience. We never tire of exploring its possibilities.

Our aim is to highlight the many ways that prefab can work, reinforcing the notion that it does not offer a one-size-fits-all fix but rather a wide spectrum of strategies and solutions tailored for individuals. We are excited to present advances in the industry in the pages that follow, represented in projects as diverse as an apartment building in Mexico composed of shipping containers (page 48) to an off-the-grid retreat in Washington State (page 84).

Just as important as the projects are the practitioners, who are exploring new materials and devising new ways to build with more precision and less waste. We are proud to include student work in the pages that follow, including two sustainable prefab models by teams from California State Polytechnic University (page 34) and Appalachian State University alongside the Université d'Angers in France (page 46). We begin and end the issue with concepts that offer structural resiliency in the face of environmental distress, from Shigeru Ban's paper-tube-and-partition system (page 31) to Cubicco, prefab structures manufactured in Miami that can withstand extreme heat and cold (page 120). Concepts like these remind us that creative minds can and will change the world.

We return with our annual Prefab Sourcebook (pages 32-46), a compendium of nearly 100 North American companies, organized by region. We are always happy to see architects and designers we've featured in past issues return to their concepts and refine them for a new age. Jennifer Siegel, for instance, has created a line of prefab playhouses, and Linda Taalman has updated her iT House program to adapt to colder climates. This practice of refining an established idea shows flexibility and sensitivity to the industry's ever-changing landscape, and reinforces the notion that there's always room for improvement.

Frank Lloyd Wright's prefab legacy pervades the issue—the notion of affordable housing delivered by machine was a mainstay in his practice, and a grounding element in his architectural philosophy. On page 54, we visit his grandson Tim Wright, who chose a prefab model by Blu Homes for his property in Ridgeway, Wisconsin, not far from Taliesin. We are also reminded of Frank Lloyd Wright's honeycomb concept for the Hanna House, which he built on the Stanford University campus in 1936, as we consider Jeffrey Kovel's HOMB system, developed alongside Method Homes (page 100). Kovel's 100-square-foot triangular modules—or “grownup Legos” as the resident calls them—make up what has become a prototype house in its core structural aspects. We look forward to seeing the next iteration.

Flexibility is the cornerstone to the process of working with modular forms, and this idea is elegantly reinforced in a project by Lake|Flato in Wimberley, Texas (page 92). Porch House, the firm's customized system of simple gabled modules, appealed to a couple who were looking to build a compound for their large blended family.

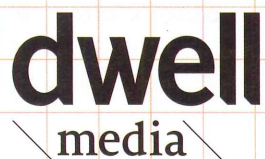
Lastly we'll end with our cover story, the 800-square-foot, off-the-grid Sky House in a remote portion of eastern Washington (page 84). This is a thoughtful example of prefab as a solution for anyone looking to build lightly on their land. The unit arrived on a single tractor-trailer, and was erected in three days with a 15-ton mobile crane and a crew of four. We love the way this prefab has a high-quality building envelope and robust systems for solar and water, while functioning as an advanced version of a passively built log cabin.

What we always seek to do at Dwell is to take lessons from the past and apply new technology to make more responsible, design-forward versions. We cover the many facets of prefab, including the experimental elements, without relegating coverage to the one-note steel-and-glass box. The projects in the pages that follow explore innovations in the field that give us a peek into where prefab is headed rather than where it has been.

Amanda Dameron, Editor-in-Chief

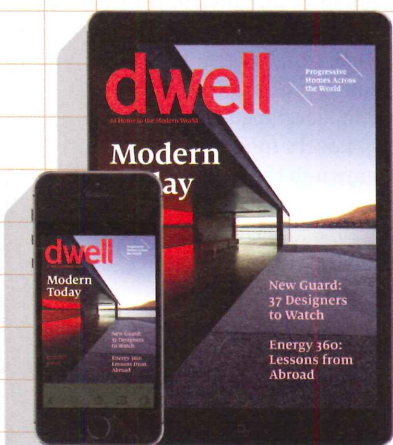
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Feedback

I walk by the Oakley House (Price Wise, October 2014) almost every day and really love it in our neighborhood, which mostly consists of Arts and Crafts bungalows. With the real estate market in Portland on fire right now, the city is awash in expensive and truly ugly infill construction. Let's see more of this instead, please.

Stephanie Parrish
Portland, Oregon

My husband and I had a rough experience with the retailer where we purchased our old mattress. Then we discovered Tuft & Needle (Modern World, July/August 2014). We ordered our new mattress and it was seamless—pun intended! It's now been a few months and the mattress feels great. A few weeks after our order, we received a handwritten thank-you note from the Tuft & Needle folks. I have to say, we're really impressed with the ordering process and overall experience.

Christie Shein
Posted to dwell.com

It would be extremely useful if you placed a north arrow on your site and floor plans—or any plan.

Bill Hunse
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Editor's Note: As of this issue, we're including a compass directional with our plans.

After a setback, I was in major need of some inspiration. I checked my mail and waiting for me was our monthly issue of Dwell. I'm constantly blown away by the magazine's beauty. It reinforces that minimalism and the use of quality materials will always win. Note taken.

@generalpublicgoods
Posted to Instagram



A beautiful home in a beautiful city (My House, July/Aug 2014). Pittsburgh is a gem.

Kate Brennan Hall
Posted to Facebook

If I could follow just one page on Facebook, Dwell's would be it.

Howard Campbell
Posted to Facebook

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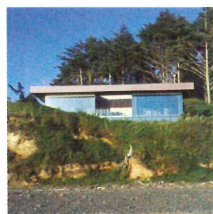


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@masterbutcher: I Instagrammed this two summers ago. Today, I opened up the newest issue of @dwell to find a spread.

@AbbyRhodes: I almost double-tapped a photo in the physical copy of @dwell magazine to “like” it. It was the Emmanuelle Moureaux installation.

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Dec/Jan 2015



Collin Hughes

In rural Texas, Collin Hughes shot a riverside family compound (“Space Odyssey,” p. 92). “It was one big get-together,” he says. “Kids and the family dog running around, warm weather, and swimming in the river—everything you’d want a retreat to be.”



Brian Libby

Writing about the Sky House (“Sailing the High Desert,” p. 84), Brian Libby appreciated both its beauty and ingenuity. “I was fascinated by how the house’s owner-designer likened spending time there to childhood sailboat trips,” recalls Libby, who also contributes to *The New York Times*, *Architect*, and *CityLab*. “Whether sea or desert, it’s not just about getting away from it all, but achieving mindfulness.”



Laura Mauk

An architecture and design writer and editor for almost 13 years, Laura Mauk formerly worked on staff at *Architectural Digest* and *Western Interiors & Design*. “A building’s architectural fabric is important,” says Mauk, who covered the Taft residence (“A New Angle,” p. 100). “I love that the house landed between traditional structures. Its modernity forces people to be more forward-thinking.”



The Morrisons

The New York-based photo duo Theo and Theresa Morrison trekked to the far reaches of Washington State to capture the Sky House (“Sailing the High Desert,” p. 86). “We were told to beware of rattlesnakes while tromping around in the brush to shoot the exterior but had no idea how numerous they would be!” the couple says. In addition to making pictures together, Theo and Theresa love adventures of all sorts, elaborate dinner parties, time in the woods, and their cat, Dessie.



Dan Oko

When Texas-based writer Dan Oko visited Scott Wallace and Tara Coco at their home on the Blanco River southwest of Austin (“Space Odyssey,” p. 92), he had one regret: leaving his fly rod at home. “I’m sure the Blanco has some nice bass,” he says. Oko’s work has appeared in *Texas Monthly*, *Men’s Journal*, and *Garden & Gun*.



Patrick Sisson

A writer and journalist based in Chicago, Patrick Sisson is at work on a book of interviews profiling members of the city’s design community. He was able to relate to Tim Wright’s love of the Wisconsin scenery (*My House*, p. 54); the pre-fab home he wrote about is a short drive from Sisson’s family’s river-front cabin, which he’s been visiting his entire life. □



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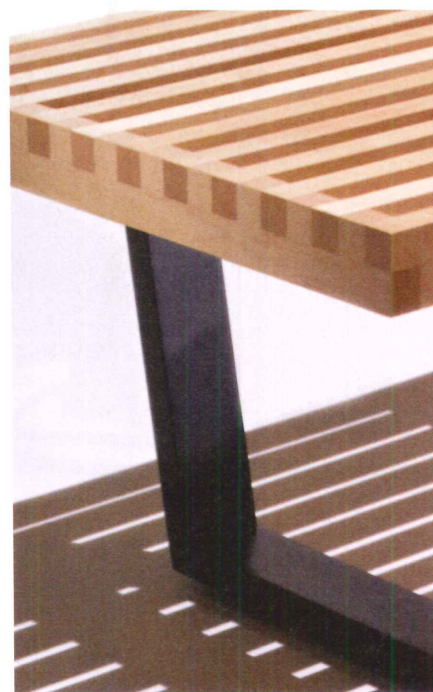
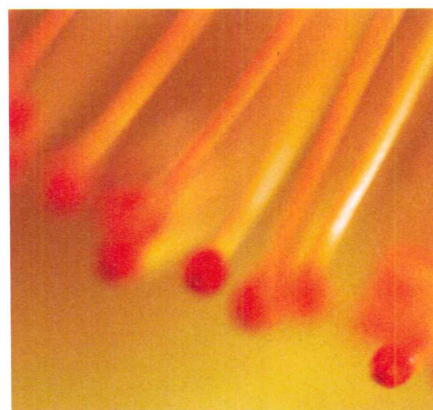
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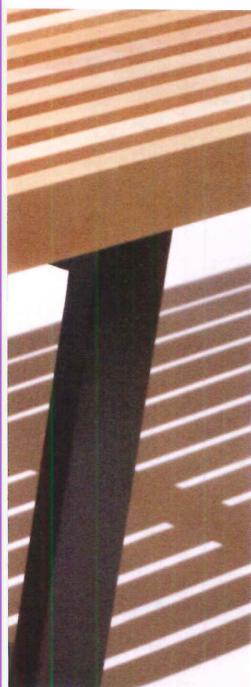
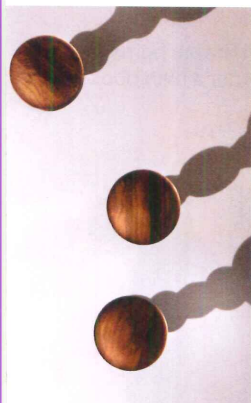
dyson.com/nocord

*Tested against upright market, dust loaded, using ASTM F608, ASTM F2607, IEC 60312-1 5.2, 5.9. Using competitor NPD sales volume data, MAT June 2014.

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Go Further

Modern World

- 32 Prefab Sourcebook
- 48 Houses We Love: Mexico
- 50 Design Report: Dwell on Design LA

Following Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the Philippines in November 2013 and displaced three million people, architect Shigeru Ban—winner of the 2014 Pritzker Prize—quickly devised a series of temporary shelters. Though similar in construction to temporary buildings Ban has implemented in disaster-stricken areas in Japan, Turkey, New Zealand, and India, the Philippines shelters were simplified with a paper-tube-and-partition system Ban developed for making barriers for shelters inside evacuation centers. Beer and soda crates filled with sand bags make up the foundations, and the

floor panels are coconut wood and plywood. The walls are made from Nypa palm thatching; the same material covers durable plastic sheets to form the ceiling and the roof. Local labor, courtesy of students from the University of San Carlos in Cebu, eliminated construction delays. “Concrete buildings can be destroyed by earthquakes, and are therefore temporary,” Ban says. “If a building, even made of paper, is loved by people, it has become permanent. It’s not about material. For me there is no difference between a temporary and a permanent building.”
shigerubanarchitects.com

Northwest

Prefab Sourcebook

Once upon a time, the only house seen on the back of a flat-bed truck was an aluminum-clad single-wide. Now, new home buyers are faced with an array of prefab options. Some suppliers design the models themselves; others partner with architects to create modern homes in a factory setting; others disrupt the modular mold by going mobile. As chroniclers of the movement for the past 14 years, Dwell is here to help sort through the noise, so read on for our updated compendium of designers and builders, organized by region, who continue to improve the prefab scene.



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Noncompliant Design's geometric prefabricated prototype offers an off-the-grid option for outbuildings. Six-foot triangular modules are topped with interlocking coated-steel exterior panels. The structure uses less material than with conventional framing and promises superior acoustics.
noncomdesign.com

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Land, Ho!

TEXT BY
Robert Gordon-Fogelson

California's state parks embrace the modular trend with a series of light-on-the-land vacation cabins.

Those looking to experience California's stunning state parks now have added motivation to grab their rucksacks and make for the great outdoors. A recent collaboration between the Parks Forward Commission and architecture students at California State Polytechnic University has resulted in modular cabins that are modernizing the traditional camping experience. Led by Jointow Lin, associate professor of architecture at Cal Poly and a principal at FoxLin, students created sustainable,

low-cost, and mobile forms of lodging. The four final designs, including the Wedge (above), are prefabricated in a factory in four days and meet transportation dimensions, allowing for quick delivery to campgrounds throughout the state, and can be relocated as necessary. Fire resistant, low maintenance, and ADA compliant, the cabins are ideal for families and urban residents as a safe and simple alternative to more rudimentary ways of roughing it. revampthecamp.com, foxlin.com

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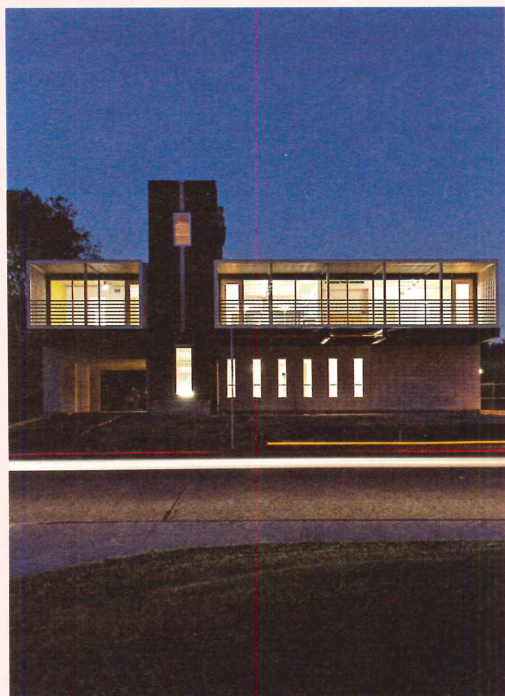
Jennifer Siegal, a California architect whose Office of Mobile Design gained renown for residential prefab in the early 2000s, continues to defy expectations in the modular realm. Siegal recently debuted a mobile prefab unit that's a hybrid tech incubator and pop-up retail space, from

which she'll be selling a new line of prefab playhouses beginning in early 2015. For the shell, she borrowed unit load devices (ULDs) used in the aerospace industry—a cross-disciplinary move that she says defines her practice. designmobile.com



Dallas architect Michael Gooden spent 18 months planning his PV14 House before breaking ground. The home—Gooden's inaugural modular project and the first container house in Texas—comprises 14 20-foot-long shipping containers and was completed in late summer 2014. "The containers are a

unique vehicle in which we were able to focus the view along one primary axis," says Gooden, "and elevate the living spaces above a well-traveled street." He minimized its footprint by cantilevering the containers 16 feet on the front facade and eight feet in the rear. pv14house.com



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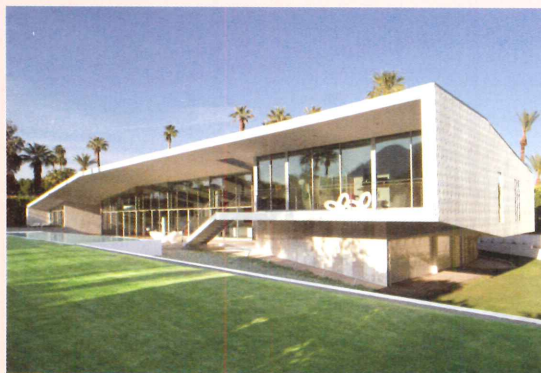
The Right Stuff

Architect Linda Taalman's iT House expands beyond its desert beginnings with new features.

Since building her own prefab getaway in Joshua Tree, California, in 2006 (read more about the project in Dwell's November 2008 issue), architect Linda Taalman and her former partner Alan Koch completed six more iterations around California. Since striking out on her own under the moniker Taalman Architecture, Taalman has completed one and begun working on seven more iT homes in more diverse environs from Hawaii to upstate New York. She's introduced a new solid-wall system that uses fiber cement board cladding in place of the initial polycarbonate. On adapting the prefab model to winter

weather, she says, "It's the same house but the parts are put together differently." The individual parts are thermally broken, meaning that every metal component contains an insulating layer of foam or rubber, and walls are moved out so that the window glazing (triple, instead of double as in California) is between the beam and the exterior. As for the original iT House, it's held up well in its harsh desert clime; Taalman says it's mostly the same, though she plans to add a solar carport, a guest house, and a small pool that will be heated with a reworked solar thermal system. taalmanarchitecture.com

Sander Architects devised its Hybrid House system in order to apply custom design to a prefabricated structural system as a way to drive down costs. For the Desert Canopy House, a sweeping roof canopy covers four distinct pods measuring 6,200 square feet: an open living room and kitchen, a master suite, and two guest wings. The cantilevered roof with its 15-foot overhang, along with triple-layer polystyrene insulation, reduces the home's solar gain from thousands of dollars a month to almost zero. sander-architects.com



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When tackling a 2007 competition to design easily-deployable post-disaster housing units, Garrison Architects thought big-picture. The firm developed a working three-unit prototype that was built in a factory and installed at a site adjacent to the New York City Office of Emergency Management's headquarters in Brooklyn. Employees and their families are presently living in the units and giving real-time feedback on comfort level, amount of storage space, organization, and efficacy. Since the competition, OEM, along with the city's Department of Design and Construction, has outlined standards for delivery, maintenance, and occupancy that are exemplified by Garrison's design. garrisonarchitects.com

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Stack the Deck

TEXT BY
Robert Gordon-Fogelson



Winning the race to build the tallest prefab building in New York City, Gluck+ assembles 28 affordable housing units in less than a month.

A new residential building in upper Manhattan, dubbed The Stack and designed by the architecture firm Gluck+, employed offsite prefabrication methods to create a high-quality, affordable housing solution that was raised onsite in only 19 days. The modular construction is visible in the exterior, where individual units jut out to create a stepped facade that

celebrates the construction process while still relating to the scale and texture of the surrounding architecture. The Stack also dispels the myth that prefabrication limits the size and shape of the final product: The building's 28 apartments, which come in a variety of configurations and span multiple modules, optimize the infill site's small footprint. gluckplus.com

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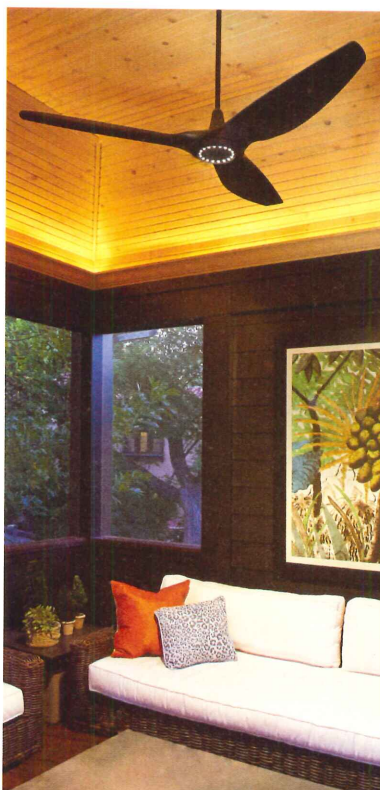


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On the Road Again



A hybrid prefab trailer harnesses principles of mobility and modernist industrial design.

The jaunty boat-like shell of the Hütte Hut began with a case study undertaken by Brian and Katrina Manzo, a husband-and-wife team of industrial designers behind Sprouting Sprocket Studio. Katrina Manzo explains the pair's 44-square-foot mobile prototype as "both reductive and luxurious." Its automotive structure is assembled in-house from the studio's own kit of parts, with help from CNC milling which Manzo says "marries precision and

consistency with the capacity to manufacture in small volumes." Keeping molded components to a minimum, the pair first designed a lightweight frame and then enclosed the structure with taut fabric and sheets of Jobert Okume marine plywood. The result, which will be available commercially in early 2015, is a teardrop-shaped caravan that can be towed behind a vehicle or parked in a backyard. huttehut.com

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TEXT BY
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Grading Off-the-Grid

Students present a prototype for ultra-green prefab housing.

In the push for prefabrication, the greatest potential may lie in America's schools. For the 2014 iteration of the Solar Decathlon Europe in Versailles, France, students from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, teamed up with peers from the Université d'Angers in France to design an energy-efficient, market-ready home that also happens to be entirely prefabricated. The entry, which featured a super-insulated building envelope and renewable energy systems, took first place in the Electrical Energy Balance contest and ninth place overall. Continuing its success at the decathlon, Appalachian State is piloting a new program called IDEXLab, in which student-faculty teams will work together on real-world projects. reciprocity2014.com

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The founder of Mississippi-based Viking Range launches a new venture with C3 Design, Inc., a prefab manufacturer that has tapped Rockwell Group to design the firm's first-ever modular home. The 2,400-square-foot Pinwheel model is anchored by a central courtyard and sports customized cladding and extras like a Cor-Ten steel screen or landscaped green wall. c3designinc.com



Originally designed by BLDG Workshop as an outbuilding for a cottage in the Muskoka region, the Bunkie—a stand-alone unit that doesn't require a building

permit to erect—has an appealing house-like silhouette. The interiors are outfitted with plywood paneling and modular cabinetry. bunkie.co

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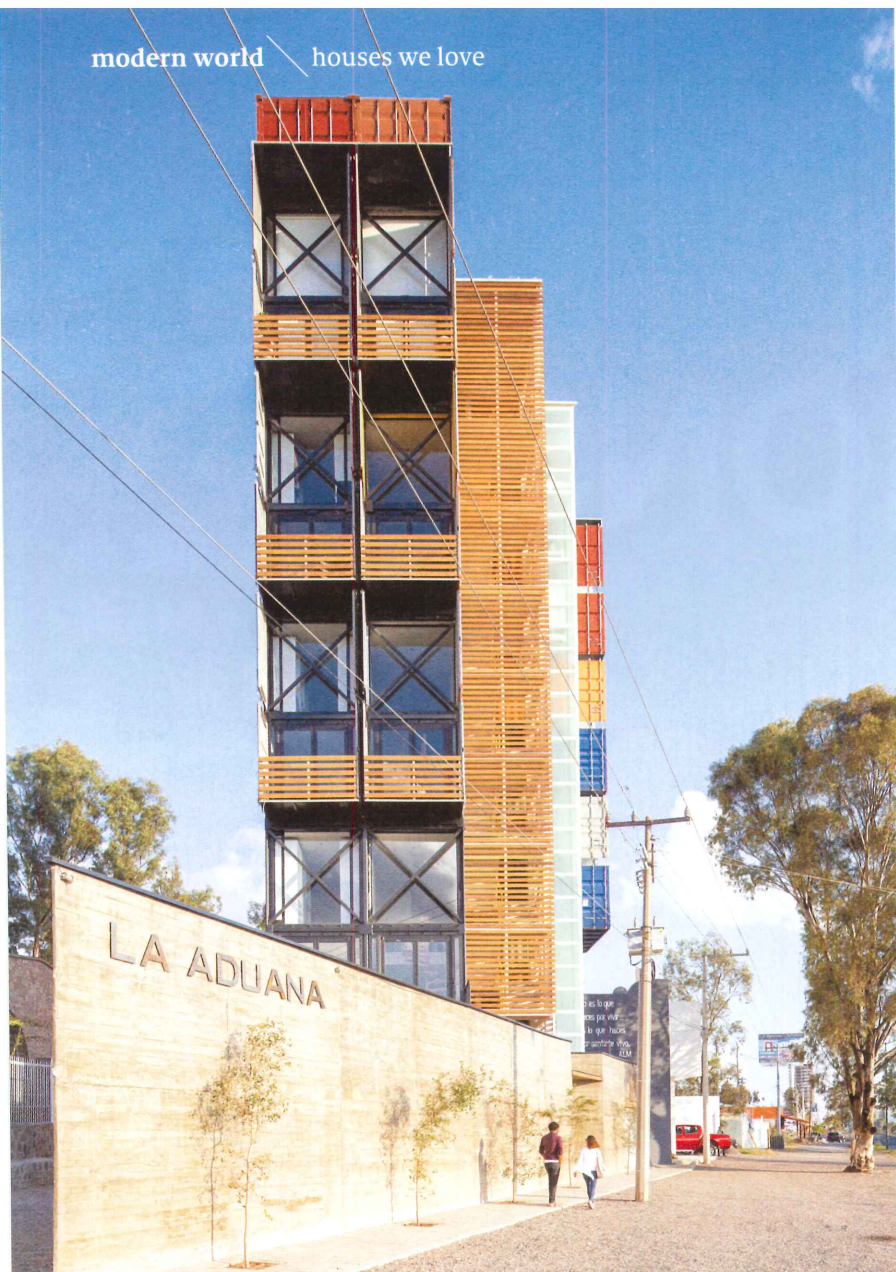
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TEXT BY
Dora Sapunar

PROJECT
La Aduana
ARCHITECT
Mario Plasencia,
villasanaplasencia.com
LOCATION
León, Mexico

La Aduana is an eight-unit apartment building in León, Mexico, made from 36 shipping containers (left). Mario Plasencia, the architect, used wood to wrap the exterior stairwell (below), creating a warm contrast with the concrete and metal used elsewhere (below, bottom).



PHOTOS BY JAIME SICILIA

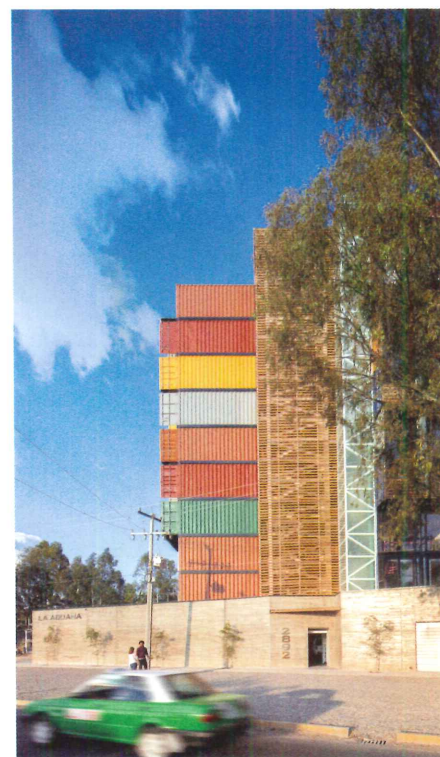
Stacked High

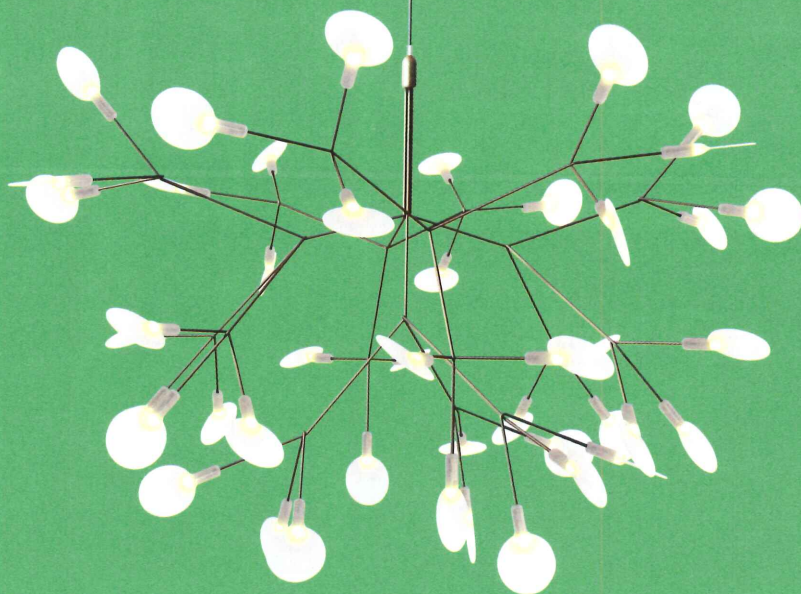
Three dozen shipping containers find a safe port in a modern apartment building in Mexico.

In León, Mexico, Adrián López Menduett sought to create an architecturally adventurous apartment building. After he bought a parcel in the Piletas neighborhood, the city made plans to construct a road across part of his land, trimming the buildable area to just under 2,300 square feet—about a third of the original footprint. This necessitated a vertically oriented design. To Mario Plasencia, the architect Menduett hired, shipping containers offered a way to keep costs down, to build sustainably with recycled materials, and to use an unexpected construction method. “The containers helped us get noticed,” Plasencia says.

“Bringing people out of their comfort zone is a challenge. Everything here is built with the same materials, colors, and shapes.”

Finding the 36 containers needed to complete the eight apartments—a number determined by the number of parking spaces that could fit on the lot—proved difficult. Plasencia scoured many of Mexico’s ports to get them. He repainted each container in its original hue, creating a prismatic exterior. Most of the interior walls were covered with plaster panels for insulation and acoustics—“but it was important to leave one container wall exposed,” Plasencia says, “to preserve that sense of texture.” □





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TEXT BY
Erika Heet
PHOTOS BY
Peter Williams

Dwell on Design moved into the South Hall of the Los Angeles Convention Center (left) in 2014 and increased its footprint to 260,000 square feet. Among the exhibitions on the show floor were a curated display by industrial designer Stephen Burks (below), the show's keynote speaker. Dwell also debuted the first physical pop-up Dwell Store (bottom).

Dwell on Design Los Angeles

America's largest design event celebrates its most successful year yet.

In its new home in the South Hall of the Los Angeles Convention Center, Dwell on Design 2014 was abuzz with more than 31,000 attendees, 400-plus exhibitors, and over 200 presenters. On Friday, June 20, the show kicked off with a keynote discussion between Dwell editor-in-chief Amanda Dameron and industrial designer Stephen Burks, who noted during the presentation, "What we see here today at Dwell on Design is about how far design has come." Indeed, over the course of the three-day show, members of the design community gathered to explore the latest innovations in the areas of prefab, landscaping, kitchen and bath, design materials, and furniture and accessories, among others. Dwell-curated design and remodeling pavilions and the first ever physical incarnation of the Dwell Store rounded out the show floor. >



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Symposia, lectures, and discussions covering topics ranging from microhousing to renovation were presented on three stages. Dwell Outdoor dominated the show floor, where five full-size prefabs joined the newest modern landscaping approaches, the Loll Beer Garden, and a Coolhaus ice cream truck serving the Dwell on De-Vine ice cream sandwich. Exhibitors this year included the Architecture and Design Museum, Los Angeles; WUHO, Woodbury University's Hollywood gallery; and artist-in-residence Grace Hawthorne, who helped Dwell on Design attendees create a modern paper metropolis from Paper Punk's Urban Fold kit. The programming was further augmented by educational sessions from Dwell on Design industry partners, which included the American Society of Interior Designers, the American Institute of Architects, and the National Kitchen & Bath Association.

Join us for the next Dwell on Design LA, taking place May 29–31, 2015. dwellondesign.com □



The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) set up a lounge with its signature red hue electrifying the show floor (top). All weekend, Dwell editors hosted celebrated architects and designers on three stages in conversations on our built environment (above).

Artist-in-residence Grace Hawthorne hosted a Paper Punk fold-a-thon, in which attendees created a paper metropolis that grew over three days (left). Dwell Outdoor held several full-size prefabs, including one from LivingHomes (below).





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Taliesin Tale

A scion of Frank Lloyd Wright erects a modular hillside retreat near the architect's estate.



When you're a grandson of Frank Lloyd Wright and planning to build near Taliesin—Wright's studio and architecture school near Spring Green, Wisconsin—you have no shortage of design resources. Tim Wright, a documentary filmmaker who teaches at Taliesin, and his wife, Karen Ellzey, managing director for a commercial real estate firm, live in Boston but had a set vision for a flexible second home on a rolling hill seven miles from his grandfather's estate. After consulting with several architects, they decided that a prefab house would best respect their plan for a flexible home that would sit lightly on the land, and they settled on Blu Homes, a start-up based in Vallejo, California, to execute it. Blu Homes' steel-framed structures, manufactured in a factory north of San Francisco that >

TEXT BY
Patrick Sisson
PHOTOS BY
Ackerman + Gruber

PROJECT
Wisconsin Balance House
DESIGNER
Blu Homes
bluhomes.com
LOCATION
Ridgeway, Wisconsin

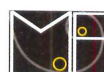
Karen Ellzey and Tim Wright gaze at the hills of Wisconsin's Driftless Area from the deck outside their prefab house by Blu Homes. The Brant Natural Folding Chairs are from Crate and Barrel, and the Strata chairs and wrought-aluminum patio table are by Summer Classics.

Marimba

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once churned out nuclear submarines, fold out on hinges like a pop-up book. Wright and Ellzey chose the Balance model for its flexible floor plan, spacious interior, and modern design. Unlike some other prefabs, it didn't resemble a "glorified trailer," Wright says, and the company's energy and drive were a draw. The components were trucked out on two semis in 2012 and assembled in seven and a half weeks. Wright and Ellzey's house, Blu Homes' first Midwest project, is a 2,984-square-foot statement in simple living that cost a relatively modest \$475,000, including the foundation and the added 1,184-square-foot basement.

Tim Wright: We stopped right up by the big oak [at the entrance to the property], got out on that hill, saw the 14-mile view to Blue Mounds, and something went *boing*: We must have this land. So we got it, 112 acres, with no clue as to what we would do. That was March 2006. We didn't build this until 2012. There was a long period where we would just drink wine on the hill.

Karen Ellzey: I felt very at peace out here. We wanted the ability to come out here and have a space to call ours, something flexible that could become a gallery or be a place for meetings. We actually had a few architects do drawings—Tim's cousin Eric Lloyd Wright even tried to adapt an old sketch of an unbuilt Wright home. We all agreed it was a nonstarter. One day, I decided to check modular homes and came upon Blu. I saw this layout and it felt right. If I had sketched a floor plan, this would have been the one I wanted. >



"I never wanted to live in a Frank Lloyd Wright house because I never wanted to be a curator. If I want to knock out a wall, I want a little freedom." —Tim Wright, resident

Wright, who teaches a course in visual literacy at Taliesin, works at a #101 dining table by Skovby (above). His Buffet Crampon clarinets sit on a set of Jesper Expando 230 shelving units in the great room (left).

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Wright: Blu doesn't give you measurements in square feet because they believe you don't live in square feet, you live in cubic feet. The interior is 1,800 square feet of interesting space. And when you see the 16-foot ceiling, it changes things enormously.

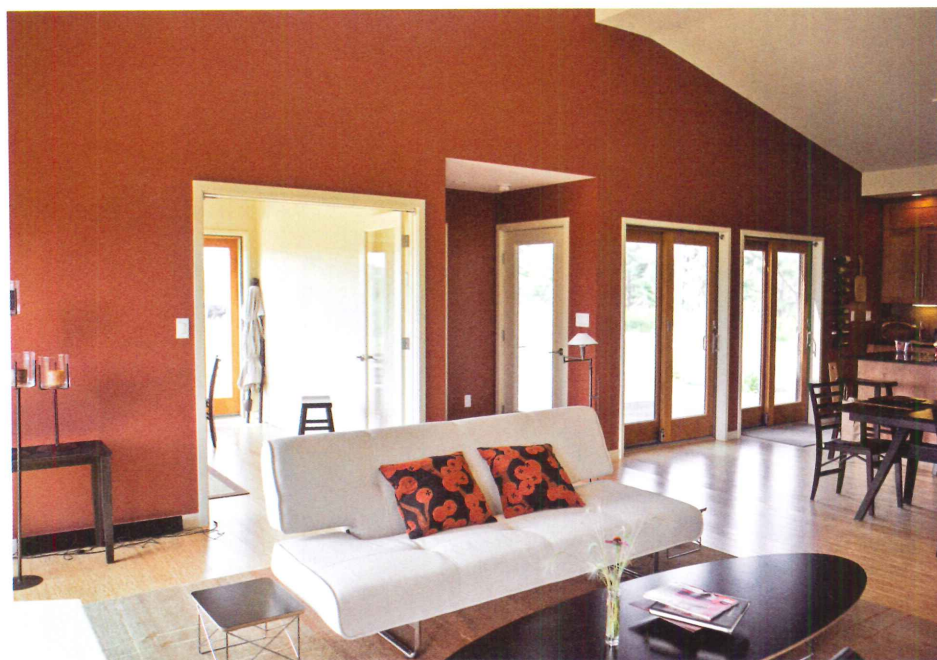
Ellzey: It really did kind of pain me a little bit that we're doing this manufactured home instead of working with an architect. But when you go back to someone like Frank Lloyd Wright, he's fundamentally interested in affordable homes for the average American. While we knew it would be a little controversial, it seemed like investing in this innovation path. In a sense, it's the most Frank Lloyd Wright thing we could have done.

Wright: I'd describe this house as artisanal. Our furnishing concept is based on transformation, with a video projector instead of a TV, a dining room table that expands to seat 12, and mounting >



**Wisconsin Balance House
Floor Plan**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A Closet | E Master Bedroom |
| B Porch | F Bathroom |
| C Kitchen-Dining-Living Area | G Guest Bedroom |
| D Master Bathroom | |



The kitchen island, with a Raven countertop from Caesarstone's Classico Collection, is illuminated by a set of April pendant lamps by WAC Lighting (top left). The master bedroom is furnished with an Asher platform bed from the Century

House (left). In the great room (above), a Splendor sofa bed by Innovation, an Eames Wire Base Elliptical table, and an Eames Wire Base Low table sit atop a Tufenkian rug from Dover Rug & Home near a #11 dining table by Skovby.



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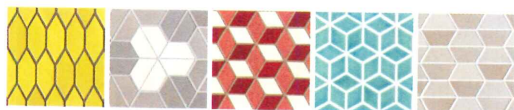


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Ellzey: When we visited the factory, we could see the two boxes side by side. The main space really appealed to me—you can get a real great sweep of the house. And Blu was flexible. They added two windows to the great room, since it was important for us to have a space that looked like a porch. All the architects in Tim's family thought we chose the wrong site [facing the oak]. We fell in love with this view. As Tim said, the house wasn't going to be the star; the landscape was going to be the star. This was just a way of accessing it. □

Ellzey sees the house as an outgrowth of Frank Lloyd Wright's experiments with modular housing: "For me, it was in that spirit of, what can it mean for homebuilding?"



The Machine Age Exploring Frank Lloyd Wright's Prefab Legacy

If you were plotting a Frank Lloyd

Wright tour of American architecture, the 2700 block of West Burnham Street in Milwaukee might not make your itinerary. But on this quiet street, you can find evidence of the architect's career-long obsession with creating affordable, sometimes prefabricated, housing for the masses.

Crafted between 1915 and 1917 with precut factory lumber to save cash and labor, a half-dozen duplexes and bungalows on this block—the American System-Built Homes, as they have come to be known—were Wright's first attempts at attainable architecture. He did more sketches for this project than any other in his career, according to Dale Gyure, a Wright scholar. Gyure notes that the homes embody ideas from "The Art and Craft of the Machine," a 1901 speech in which Wright spoke of building affordable housing by letting machines free humans for more high-level design.

Wright was cooking up an ambitious plan with a developer, Arthur L. Richards, to sell homes via a car-dealership model when the combination of a sluggish economy and the entry of the United States into World War I effectively scuttled the project, according to Sidney K. Robinson, a professor emeritus of modern architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Wright revisited the affordable home concept often. His Usonian homes, which were built starting in the late 1930s, represent a more ambitious attempt at a design system that could be replicated, with concrete slabs embedded with piping for radiant heating and carports instead of garages. Writing in *Architectural Forum* in 1938, Wright identified the challenge of building "the house of moderate cost" as "not only America's major architectural problem, but the problem most difficult to her major architects. I would rather solve it with satisfaction to myself

than anything I can think of."

These projects led to the Erdman homes, a series of three prefabricated structures that Wright designed for Marshall Erdman, a builder who had collaborated with Wright on the Unitarian Meeting House in Madison, Wisconsin. Each "set" would come with all the major pieces needed to assemble a home; the buyer would have to provide the foundation, wiring, and plumbing, and even submit a topographic map for Wright's approval. The layouts of the two models that were constructed—the L-shaped No. 1 and flat-roofed No. 2—would "immediately catch your eye," Gyure says, as looking a bit like previous Usonian models, more evidence of Wright's continual refinement of affordable housing concepts.

"Wright wasn't trying to change the manufacturing or prefab system" with these experiments, Gyure says. "He was trying to take advantage of it."



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Starter Kit

A Boston family chose a double dose of prefab for an addition to their home in the Massachusetts countryside.

TEXT BY
Kelsey Keith
PHOTOS BY
Tony Luong

PROJECT
Shirley Road Residence
ARCHITECT
LABhaus, labhaus.com
LOCATION
Groton, Massachusetts

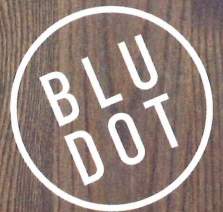


Jed and Asia Webber weren't actively seeking a prefab existence when they bought property in Groton, Massachusetts—an hour away from their home base in Cambridge, where they run a restaurant group. But the modest, sturdy frame house they fell in love with had a surprisingly modular history: It's the Dillman model, a Sears, Roebuck and Company kit house from 1928. The Webbers, who have three children, required more space than the original structure could provide at 1,400 square feet. But since the house was "so symmetrical and appropriate for its time," Jed Webber says, "we couldn't wrap our

heads around any sort of addition that wouldn't look like an afterthought." Instead, they looked online to find a prefab builder who could construct a similarly sized structure on their land.

Asia Webber, an intrepid fittings and materials scout for the family's restaurant business, happened upon LABhaus, a prefab manufacturer based in the northeastern United States. The family's main ask was a wall of sliding doors that could open up to the yard—a hold-over from their sojourn in San Francisco. "We loved the indoor-outdoor space that comes with living in California—which of course doesn't have the winter or the >

A prefab pool- and guesthouse designed by LABhaus frames views of a Massachusetts property's original structure, a Dillman model Sears, Roebuck kit house from 1928.



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The 1970s burlwood dresser (left) is originally from a Palm Beach estate. Modernist sculptures throughout the house are by artist Costantino Nivola; abstract artwork is by Charles Schorre. LABhaus designed the custom cabinetry for the mini-kitchen in the great room (below); the articulated faucet is by Kohler.

bugs that we do now,” says Jed Webber. Overall, they wanted something very modern, which fit with LABhaus’s aesthetic, and a structure that they could use as an extension of living space for their family of five.

The new 1,000-square-foot addition is situated next to a swimming pool, with a terrace protected by an overhang, which, from the backyard, frames views of the original house. “Because it is such a large property,” LABhaus architect Sara-Ann Logan says, “we wanted to scatter these buildings—like throwing stones—so we created a loosely gathered compound connected by deck surfaces.” The Garapa wood deck connects the old kit house to the new pool house, which >

“Let’s figure out how to make beautiful design choices accessible to more people.” —Sara-Ann Logan, architect



The addition, which was built offsite save for the sliding glass door system, includes an outdoor shower and a 500-square-foot covered loggia (left).



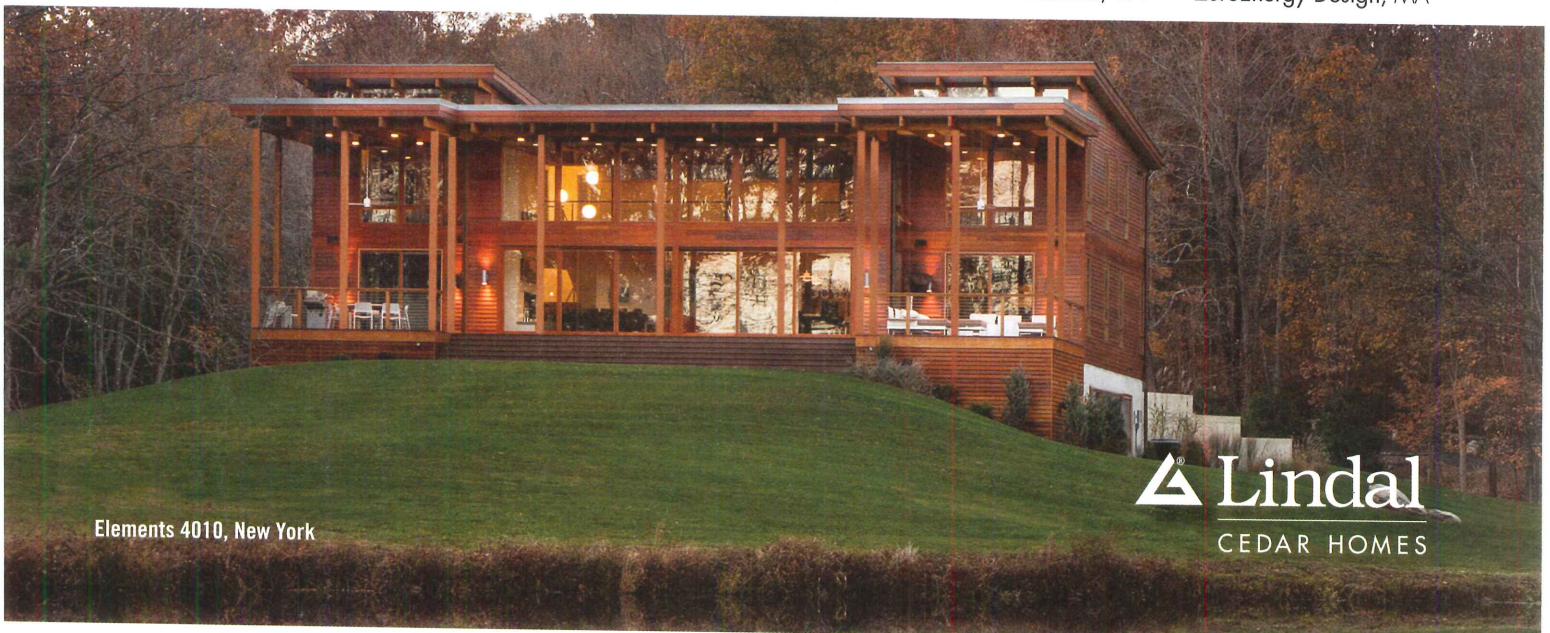
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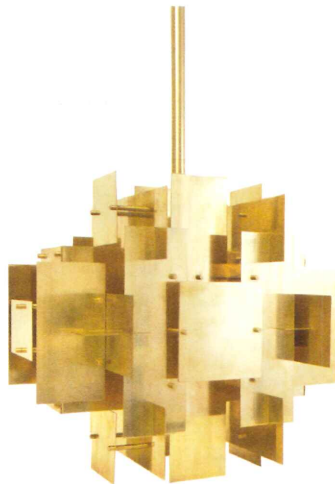
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The residents scored the Saarinen-style table at Brimfield Antique Show for only \$200. A Java ceiling fan by Minka-Aire helps circulate the breeze on the pool patio. The decking is made of six-inch-wide Garapa with hidden fastening clips. The dining chairs are from Ikea.





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The great room (above) has a collection of vintage furniture finds, including a 1980s burled-elmwood-and-chrome coffee table found on Ebay. The sofa was another secondhand score, believed to be a 1950s Edward Wormley piece for Dunbar.

Newer additions are a jute rug from overstock.com and a side table from Target. The aluminum sliding glass door system (left), manufactured by Solar Innovations, comprises five seamless panels that meet at the corner.



includes a small kitchen, great room, outdoor dining room, laundry room, bathroom, and den. (Given the town's building restrictions, the den isn't technically a bedroom since it's lacking a closet; to compensate, the architects added an extra-large closet in the laundry.) The Webbers, along with their children—Nina, 11, Gage, eight, and Tess, six—usually eat breakfast in the new addition and continue back and forth between the two buildings all day—except for, perhaps, in the middle of a Massachusetts snowstorm.

The main design feature of the mostly-prefabricated unit was actually built

onsite: a five-panel, sliding glass door corner leading from the living space onto the deck. Considering the Webbers' modest budget, LABhaus was concerned the residents couldn't get the kind of system they wanted for less than \$50,000. So the company tapped into its network of modular manufacturers in Pennsylvania and eventually stumbled across Solar Innovations, an aluminum door and window company that typically works in the commercial sector. "They have their own engineering department," Logan says, "and because they're a custom manufacturer, they don't shy away from hard projects." LABhaus plans to >

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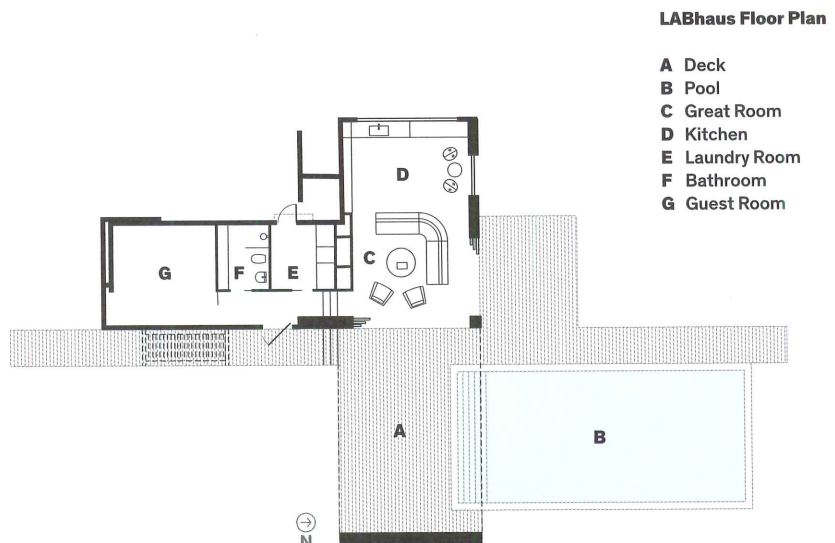
keep using Solar Innovations' product line for future projects, a tactic that costs time and money on the front end but establishes an efficient pipeline for standardizing units.

Logan points out that LABhaus's strength as a prefab company is its ability to source go-to modular systems for doors, cabinetry, and fixtures that can be reused in multiple projects with different finishes. "As an architect, it's fun for me to spend hours researching, but only a certain amount of the population can pay someone to do that," Logan says. "Let's figure out how to make beautiful design choices accessible to more people." □



LABhaus uses standard paint colors from Sherwin-Williams and tweaks them according to lighting conditions throughout the day. "Snowbound (left) is a rich white that doesn't wash out," says architect Sara-Ann Logan. The horizontal detailing for the rain screen

(below left) reinterprets the clapboard cladding of the old house. The unofficial guest room (above) features a West Elm bed, marble side tables from CB2, lamps from Target, and bedding from Ikea. The flokati rug and Murano glass chandelier are both vintage.



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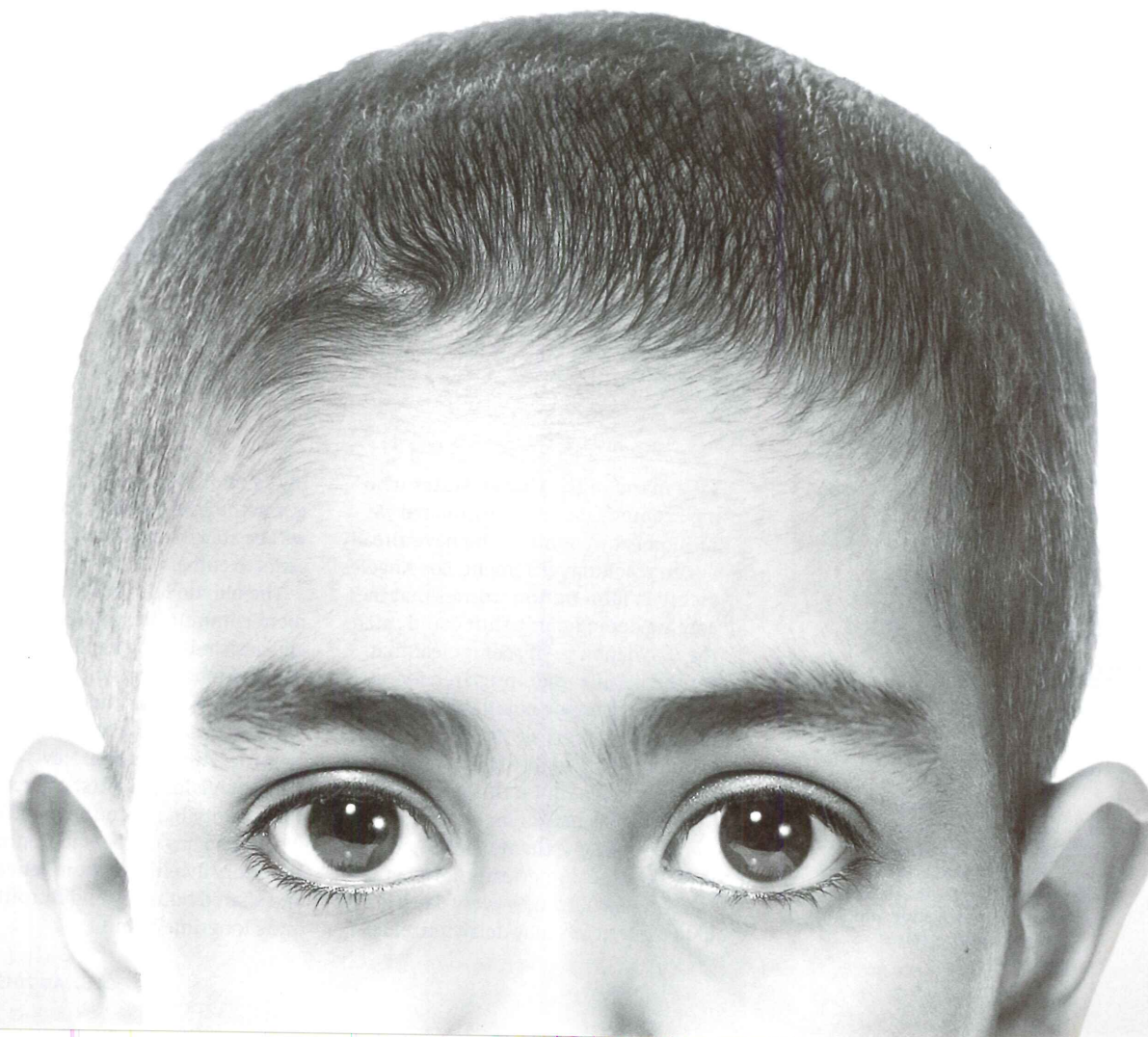
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Homes for a Lifetime

Marie Gladwish considers herself lucky. Twenty years ago, she purchased a wooded hillside site on Orcas Island, Washington, with the idea of building a home for herself when she retired. Designed by her son, Seattle architect Gary Gladwish, the result is a series of open, graceful volumes, on one level, with plentiful natural light and stunning views. To ensure that she can remain at home, the 800-square-foot studio where she now paints and sculpts can become space for a live-in caregiver. "My mother wants to spend the rest of her life here," Gladwish says. "I wanted to make sure she could enjoy it whether she had a cane, a walker, or a wheelchair."

Now 76, with one hip replacement under her belt and another down the road, Marie appreciates features like zero-step thresholds; nonslip, radiant-heated concrete floors; wide doorways; and easy-to-reach shelves. "It's an uplifting house," she says. "I wish I had some of these things years ago."



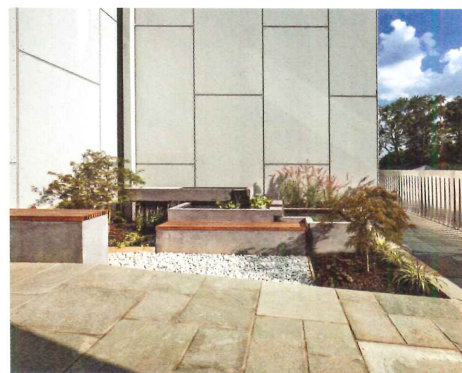
The Orcas Island house, whose steel exterior has patinated to a rusty hue (above) has a wide doorway with a pivoting door and a zero-step threshold. Inside, open spaces and natural light keep the main living area (top right) accessible and uplifting. In a similar scenario, architect Eric Höweler and Meejin Yoon devised a layout for Yoon's parents, Hannah and Jason, in Arlington, Virginia. The pair incorporated a gently sloping ramp (center) and an open kitchen (right) for the single-level house.



PHOTOS BY WILL AUSTIN (GLADWISH EXTERIOR), BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER/SEATTLE TIMES (GLADWISH INTERIOR), JEFF WOLFRAM (HÖWELER AND YOON)

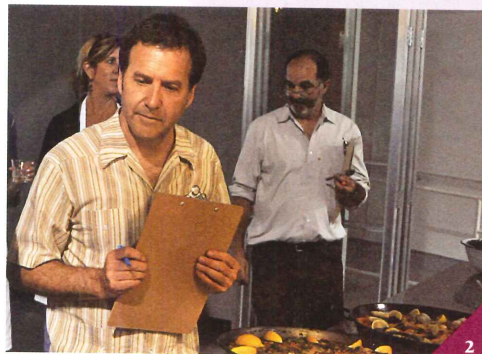
Clear across the country, on a narrow lot in Arlington, Virginia, Boston architects Eric Höweler and Meejin Yoon designed a modern house for her parents, Hannah and Jason Yoon. "Meejin's dad told us, 'This is the last house we want to live in,'" Höweler says. Though the couple are still in their 60s, the layout of one floor and two half-floors anticipates age-related limitations, something Höweler calls "future-proofing." A ramp leads from the street, past the garage, and through a courtyard to the entrance, which opens to the high-ceilinged, luminous main floor. Though the couple currently utilize all three levels, they could live comfortably on one, with the walk-out basement and the room over the garage both serving as caregiver space.

Pointing out the kitchen counter that could be modified to accommodate a wheelchair, the built-in bench in the master shower, and the guardrails outside, Höweler says, "We didn't set out to design a house for aging; we had to find creative solutions." >



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KitchenTown

In September, the Dwell team visited KitchenTown, a newly-introduced collaborative culinary workspace for artisan food producers in the San Francisco Bay Area. Co-Founders Rusty Schwartz and Alberto Solis hosted the evening and welcomed the Dwell staff with a tour of the innovative space equipped with top of the line commercial quality appliances. The group broke into teams for a challenge to prepare a winning paella. Special thanks to KitchenTown for a wonderful experience.

1 The entrance to KitchenTown in San Mateo, California.

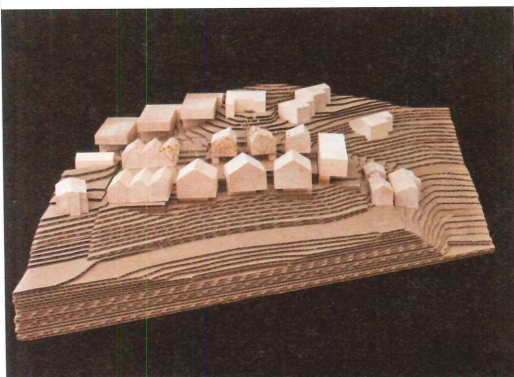
2 Dwell President, Co-Founders of KitchenTown, Rusty Schwartz and Alberto Solis judge the various versions of paella.

3 From L to R: Sales Operations Director, Regina Flynn; Enterprise Brand Director, Nuala Berrells; Brand Director, Jen Bruno; and VP of Marketing, Madison Shoop.

4 More of the Dwell team (from L to R): Marketing Manager, Anne-Kyle Cragin; Brand Director, Lisa Steele; Brand Director, Joanne Lazar; and Director of DIG, Michele Gerus.

5 The teams diligently cook their paella in the stunning, KitchenTown workspace.

Radical Responses



John Dutton, author of the 2001 book *New American Urbanism: Re-Forming the Suburban Metropolis*, believes that retrofitting suburbs is one of the great issues facing American planners today. While current housing in these “naturally occurring retirement communities” leave much to be desired architecturally, he says, “if you don’t look at the dresses these buildings are wearing and instead look at the fact that they’re dense, that they’re mixed-use and create great streets, and that they offer different housing types—all of that is really radical. Senior housing has to be that radical.”

Not yet 50, Los Angeles architect Barbara Bestor isn’t in a demographic typically associated with aging, but she’s given serious thought to the future of housing for Gen Xers and Millennials—“generations that don’t identify with getting old,” she says. Blackbirds, her first non-single-family project, is a “first step” toward creating senior housing within an urban context. Scheduled to open in 2015, it consists of 18 stand-alone units built around communal and pedestrian-friendly spaces in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. “As an architect, I’m interested in making social hubs and creating communities that people feel connected to tribally.”

Dutton and Bestor have begun collaborating on models for modest, modern, and affordable housing for seniors—housing that Dutton describes as “much hipper and more creative, connected, and modern” than we’ve come to expect. “Modernism’s historical and social mission is well suited for this,” he says.



In San Diego, brothers Nima and Soheil Nakhshab built Sofia Lofts, a multigenerational micro-community with 16 units ranging from 600 to 1,000 square feet designed to accommodate tenants of all ages and abilities (left and below). In development in Los Angeles is architect Barbara Bestor’s Blackbirds community (far left).



In San Diego, brothers Soheil and Nima Nakhshab, of Nakhshab Development & Design, specialize in creating options for multigenerational living in single-family residences, as well as larger developments like their LEED Platinum Sofia Lofts, which opened this fall. The project consists of a renovated 1908 house, with three bedrooms, and 16 new rental apartments, ranging from studios to two bedrooms, including two ADA-compliant units.

“There’s onsite bike sharing, an electric vehicle charging station, and a common area that invites interaction between residents,” Soheil says. “Whether they’re retirees or students or young couples, the idea was to create an environment they’ll never want to leave.” >



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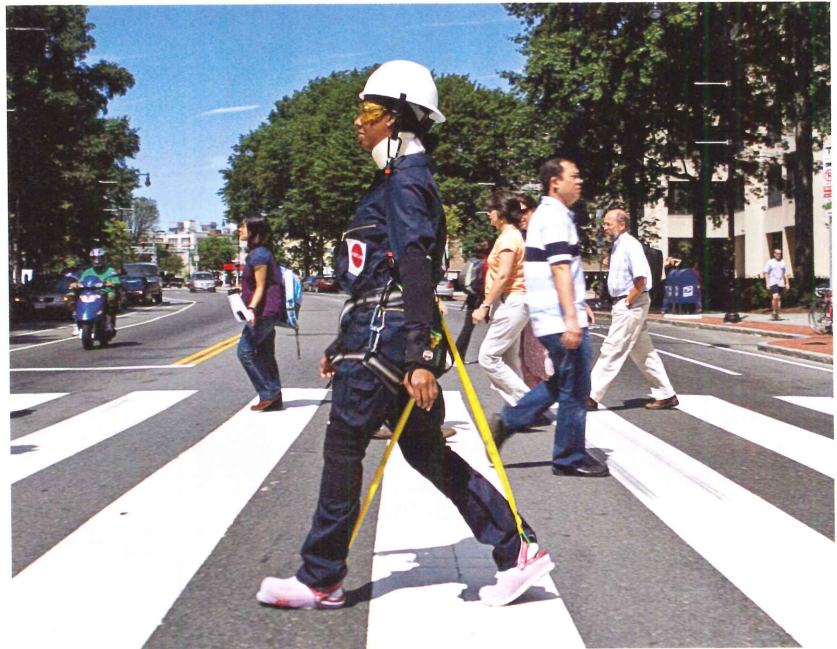


Joseph Coughlin

The founder and director of MIT's AgeLab shares his insights on aging in place.

What should we consider when creating homes for the long term?

Despite popular notions about people moving back to the city or the boom in senior housing, so far the vast majority of the baby boomers at the leading edge or the "Silent Generation" just ahead of them want to age in place. Their marriages, their mortgages, and their memories are in the homes they live in. For those who do want to move, they need homes that are for a lifetime, not a lifestyle. That means homes that are profoundly flexible, that are open and easy to negotiate, that optimize physical and emotional well-being, and that facilitate activities as well as visitors—not just family and friends but the home-care professionals who are going to be coming to your home as regularly as the mailman.



How can smart home technology support independence and healthy aging?

The technologies out there may replace the trips we're no longer comfortable or capable of making and facilitate home delivery of that product. There are things like a smart refrigerator that can detect that your food is getting old or that you're out of cream for your coffee, or even a smart medicine cabinet that many of us are working on that will facilitate the refill of your prescription before you have to call the doctor. It's about making independent living easier and safer.

You've written about the "transformative capacity" of technology to improve the lives of older adults. What innovations do you find most exciting right now?

Technology transforms our capacity to not just live longer but to live better across the life span. What's exciting right now is the system of innovations that brings together the social, the rational, and the emotional to help older adults live well independently and also allows caregivers to manage their loved ones from a distance. It's not about one specific app; these innovations come together to enable us to monitor and manage our well-being (food, medication, exercise) as well as to motivate. We're earning badges and smiley faces and positive glows that tell us we took the stairs today and that we've been eating well. Medical alert systems can

now detect changes in your gait and predict if you're likely to trip and fall. We're moving away from an alarm mentality to a proactive vitality.

How might products and technology aimed at young people improve the lives of older adults?

Arthur C. Clarke said it best: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." If you think about the technologies that young people use, it's not so much that they're better at it because they're kids, it's because they've known nothing else. For older people, technology needs a higher value proposition.

What's on the boards at MIT's AgeLab?

We believe that the house of the future should be looked at not just as an elegant structure in which to live well but also as an elegant platform to provide the services of the future. The appliances we buy for our homes and the design of those homes must remain profoundly adaptable to facilitate the service and home-care providers who will be coming in. Your house has to be designed for a modular, open experience that allows for the change of technology every five years and the change in your well-being even sooner. □

To read more of Joseph Coughlin's interview, visit dwell.com/joseph-coughlin



Joseph Coughlin is the director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's AgeLab, which developed the Age Gain Now Empathy System (AGNES), a wearable device that enables the user to experience the diminished faculties and dexterity that can come with age (above right).

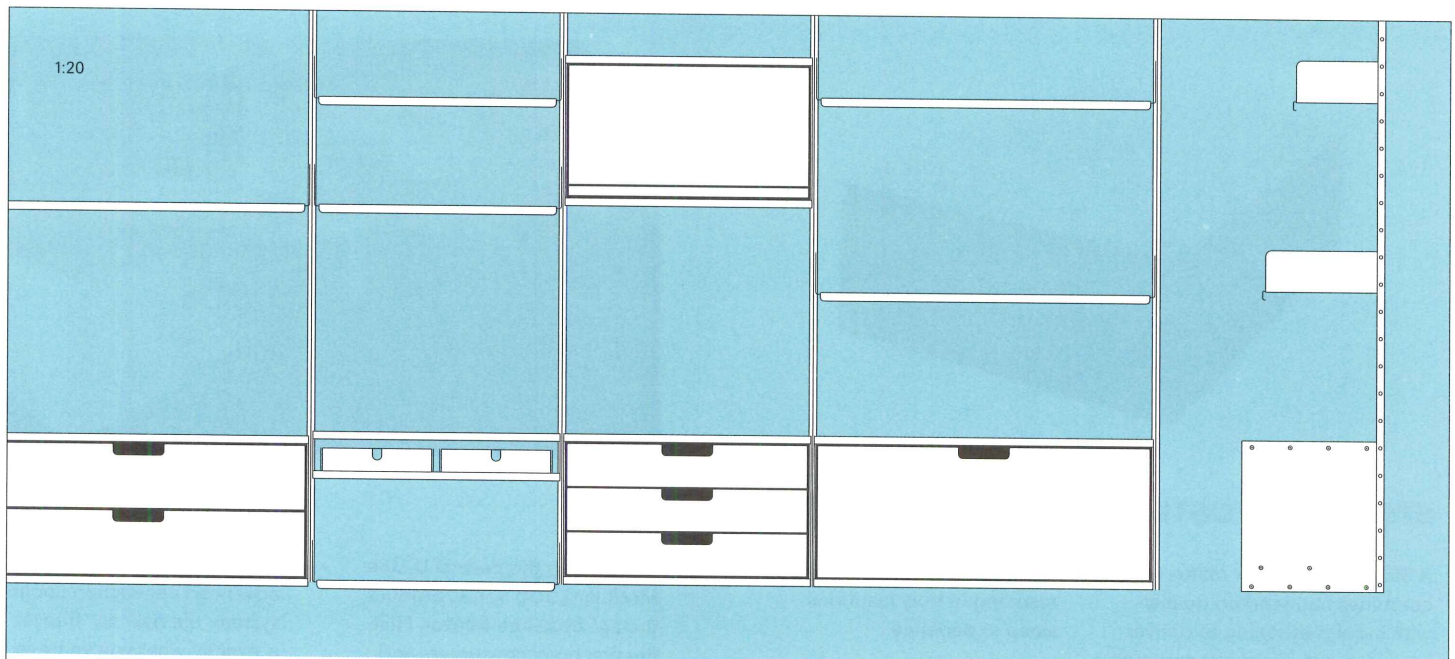
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PROJECT
Sky House
ARCHITECT
Platform Architecture +
Design LTD.
LOCATION
Oroville, Washington

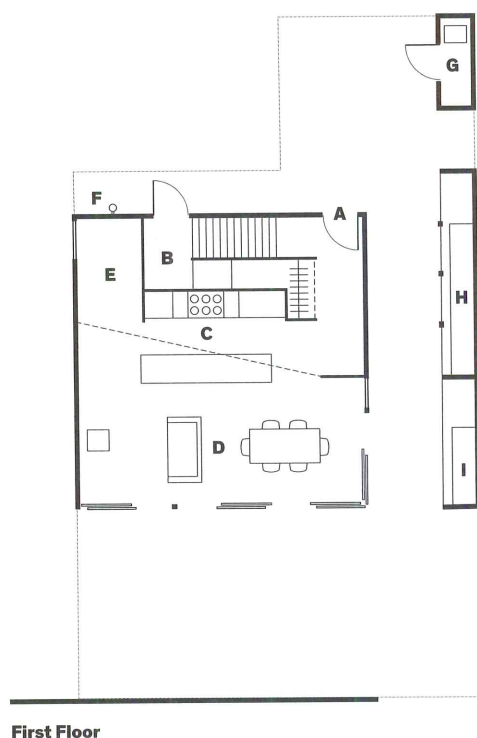
Sailing the High Desert

A prefabricated off-the-grid vacation home in eastern Washington provides not just a getaway, but lessons in learning to be one with the land.



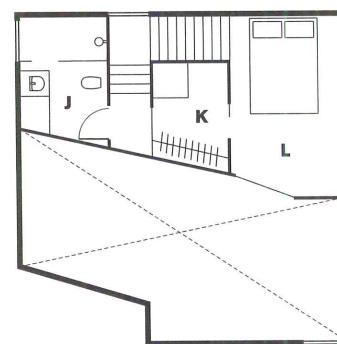
Text by Brian Libby
Photos by The Morrisons

Architect Jesse Garlick's rural Washington vacation home references its rugged surroundings. The steel cladding has developed a patina similar to the ochre-red color of bedrock found in the area.



Sky House Floor Plan

- A Entry
- B Mechanical Room
- C Kitchen
- D Living-Dining Room
- E Sleeping Nook
- F Outdoor Shower
- G Generator
- H Workshop-Storage
- I Outdoor Kitchen
- J Bathroom
- K Laundry Room
- L Bedroom



When Vancouver-based architect Jesse Garlick was growing up, his family used to take him sailing. Those aquatic outings instilled a love of solitude, design, and self-sufficiency that inspired him to join his profession. But when Garlick and his wife, Susan Elliott, decided to build a vacation retreat, they chose a different kind of geography and challenge: a prefabricated, off-the-grid home in eastern Washington's high desert.

Garlick draws parallels between sailing the sea and building on a remote, sagebrush-covered hilltop. "There is an openness and an isolation," he says. "Deserts are very calming and clearing, but there's also an intensity to them and a severity." For Garlick, having a rural home, like sailing, evokes a feeling of being anchored. "People think, 'It would be great to be away from it all.' But you've got to understand the place and do the work to make that happen. It's beautiful, but you have to be able to troubleshoot."

The project began in 2011, during a wave of change in the couple's lives: Garlick just left the Vancouver firm he worked for to start his own shop, Platform Architecture + Design; Elliott had ended a 20-year dance career to become a personal chef; and they had just adopted their infant son, Teo. Garlick and Elliott saw their so-called Sky House as a place to recharge and embrace their love of the outdoors. After living in a small Vancouver apartment overlooking a noisy urban intersection for years, the allure of decamping to the backcountry became irresistible. "There's this kind of magic moment," Garlick says of crossing the Okanogan National Forest en route to the cabin, "when you transition out of the temperate rain forest and begin to smell that first scent of sage."

The site's location near the tiny town of Oroville, Washington, made prefab construction a logical choice. The 820-square-foot, two-story home was built

from solid cross-laminated timber panels and sheets of unfinished raw steel, all manufactured offsite. The heavy onsite construction required a 15-ton mobile crane and a four-person team and only took three days—but there were moments of uncertainty, like when the truck carrying the materials couldn't make it up the hilly road to the house. Luckily, a friend of a friend on a nearby ranch offered use of his dump truck and trailer. A skeleton crew of two to four people completed the remaining work over the course of three months, due in part to Garlick's wise material choices. He specified 80-pound steel panels to clad the facade because they were the biggest size he and his brother could lift into place. "Even though they were made by machine, at the end of the day, they needed to be installed by humans," he says.

The house uses solar power for electricity, propane for heating and cooking, and a well for water. The interior temperature remains comfortable without the use of air-conditioning, despite the region's often high summer heat. Garlick designed a two-story house with a compact footprint in order to optimize passive strategies, like the stack ventilation effect: Heat rises in the tall space, eventually escaping through aptly placed windows, which causes cooler air to continuously flow into the building's lower portion. By using solid cross-laminated timber for the structure and specifying mineral-wool insulation, Garlick helped the building avoid dramatic temperature spikes and drops. "Log cabins hold their mass in a similar way," he says.

The relatively small floor plate doesn't keep their family (or a succession of guests) from enjoying moments of luxury. Thanks to a self-supporting, origami-like faceted roof, Garlick was able to forgo structural columns inside and have an open interior. The ground-floor kitchen is much larger than the >

The restrained 820-square-foot interior (opposite) is defined by the angular ceiling. Garlick left the prefabricated structural panels unfinished to save on material costs. A True North wood stove from Pacific Energy heats the house. Max, the family's cat, naps on a vintage rug purchased on eBay.

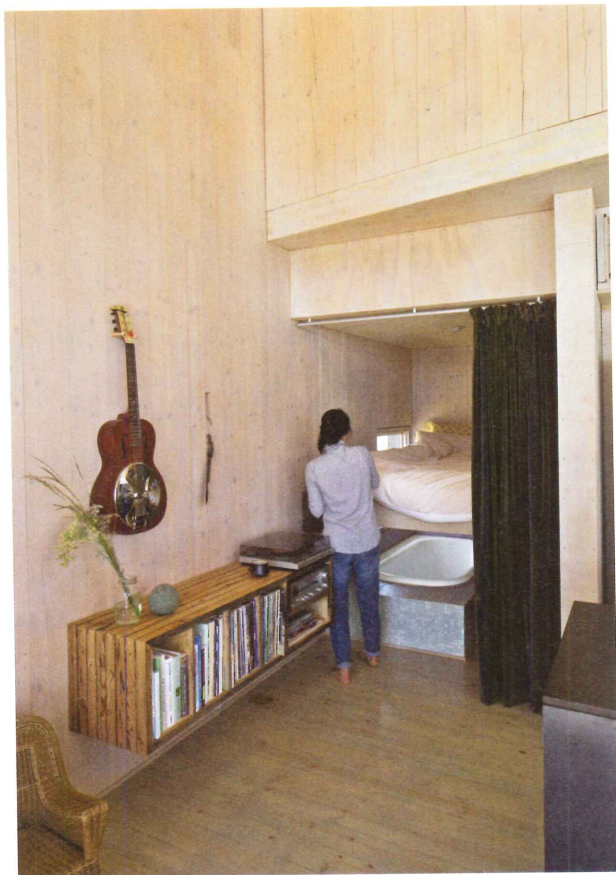


“The building is a modern version of a traditional log cabin with a wood stove, solid-wood interior, and carefully placed windows.” —Jesse Garlick, architect





The kitchen island (opposite) is topped with PaperStone in slate and wrapped in the same steel used to clad the house's facade. "We matched the color to create a '2001: Space Odyssey' monolith," Garlick says. He and his wife, Susan Elliott, a chef, cook at the commercial Wolf range they purchased at a restaurant supply store. The Bristol stool on the second story landing is by Modern Home.



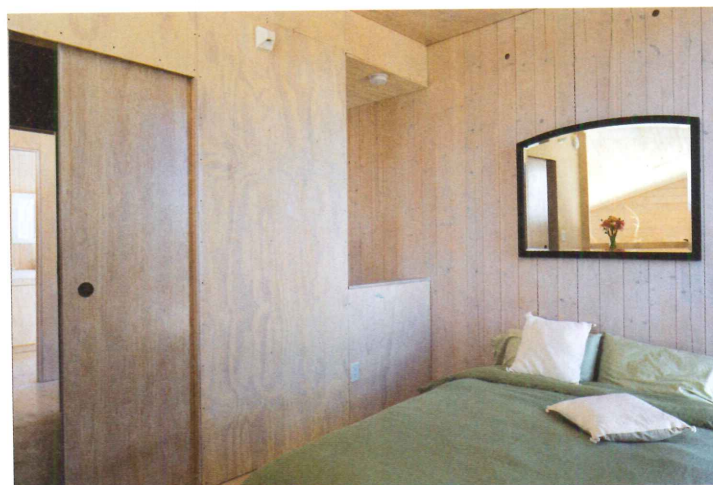
family's Vancouver apartment and features a commercial-grade Wolf range and a sizable island covered with a slab of PaperStone in their slate hue.

At the same time, Garlick's design is smartly compact, again influenced by his maritime experiences. A guest bed tucked into a curtained-off corner of the living area, for example, can be raised to the ceiling with a boat winch crank to reveal a bathtub sunk into a tile surround. "We even call it the quarter berth," Elliott says of the space. Garlick built the adjacent stereo cabinet (as well as the outdoor shower stall) using wood reclaimed from a long-abandoned cabin on the 20-acre property. "The nails in the planks were made by a blacksmith, so the wood had been there for probably 80 to 100 years," he says. "But because it's a desert, the wood doesn't rot."

Just as living off-grid takes planning, the beautiful setting requires awareness, with rattlesnakes not infrequently appearing outside. "What I love about the place is it puts you in a very mindful state," Elliott says. "When you step outside your door, you need to be listening for the rattles. But it's also the sound of birds and coyotes and wind in the grass. The juxtaposition between that and where we live in Vancouver is just so fantastic. It completely recharges my system when I'm there." □

Taking inspiration from train cabins, the guest bed lifts to reveal a bathtub (above, left). Garlick made the mechanism using sailboat hardware. The velvet curtain is by Restoration Hardware and the tile is from Stone Tile (above, right). The floating bookshelf is composed

from wood found on the property. Garlick purchased the Technics turntable and receiver from a used audio store. The bedroom (below) is outfitted with only the basics. A narrow building next to the main structure houses storage and an outdoor kitchen (opposite).





Space Odyssey

On a wedge-shaped lot in the Texas Hill Country, a couple adapt a modular system to create an idyllic gathering spot.



**Text by Dan Oko
Photos by Collin Hughes**



Scott Wallace and Tara Coco turned to Lake|Flato Architects and its modular Porch House system for a family compound on the banks of the Blanco River in Wimberley, Texas. The design integrates private spaces with public gathering spots, including a deck that serves as an outdoor living room.

PROJECT
2001 Odyssey
ARCHITECT
Lake|Flato Architects
LOCATION
Wimberley, Texas





Scott Wallace spent his childhood summers in Wimberley, Texas, sitting on the porch of his grandfather's vacation house and seeking refuge from the oppressive heat in the cool water of the Blanco River. Those memories exerted a strong pull, and Wallace wanted his own grandchildren to have a similar experience of exploring the spring-fed river, which flows through the Texas Hill Country beneath a canopy of towering cypress and oak trees. So in 2010, Wallace and his wife, Tara Coco, moved from Beaumont, in East Texas, to a riverfront property in Wimberley, about 38 miles southwest of Austin.

But there was a problem. Wallace and Coco, each of whom has four grown children from a previous marriage, found their new house to be ill suited to frequent visits from members of their blended family, which has grown to include nine grandchildren. Seeking a place where the family could gather without sacrificing peace, quiet, and privacy, they bought a second lot on the banks of the Blanco, about a half-mile from the first, in 2012.

The three-acre wedge-shaped lot is tucked into a bend in the road and stretches from the riverbank to a small bluff. It was here that Wallace and Coco envisioned a stylish yet economical family compound, and they wanted to build it quickly. By chance, Wallace's brother, an avid cyclist, biked with the partners at Lake|Flato Architects of San Antonio. But it was the firm's Porch House system of modular construction as much as the family connection that led the couple to hire the firm. "We started following their website and looking at projects," says Wallace, who was particularly taken with firm's design for >

The fireplace that Lake|Flato designed for the deck (opposite) is the compound's focal point. "People can go tuck their small kids into bed and then creep back to the fire pit area and be gregarious late into the night," Wallace says. Gliss swivel stools and a Dowel bar stool share space in front of a custom maple kitchen island (above). The pendant lamps are by Lightolier. The living area is furnished with a Fjord swivel arm chair by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso and a Como sectional chaise by Giorgio Soressi (right).





A separate module, clad in corrugated steel, houses a pair of guest bedrooms (top), offering hosts and visitors alike a welcome degree of privacy. Proximity to the Blanco River means easy access to fishing, swimming, and kayaking, but also the possibility that river

muck will piggyback its way into the house on unwashed feet. An outdoor shower tucked behind a screen off the master bedroom (above) neutralizes this threat. "We thought it sounded great for muddy kids to run up and shower off there," Coco says.

the Hotel San José in Austin. "The Porch House system was a far more efficient way to go."

For the firm's founding partners, Ted Flato and David Lake, the Porch House concept represents a return to the relatively modest brand of home design that was Lake|Flato's specialty in its earliest days, before lucrative educational, public, and commercial commissions began to take up more of their time and portfolio. Porch House was conceived in 2008—in part in response to the economic downturn—as a customizable system of simple, gabled modules that could be prefabricated, trucked to a site, and then stacked or arranged side by side or in a circle to create unique indoor-outdoor living combinations.

The firm completed several modular Porch House projects that boast LEED certifications and reflect the modern bunkhouse style that has become Lake|Flato's signature. "Our partner DNA was to create great housing opportunities for as many people as we could," Flato says. "We've found that if you limit the number of rooms and limit the options, you can really hone the cost of these rooms down and simplify the design process, but still allow clients to have unique buildings for whatever unique conditions they have."

Lake|Flato designed what amounts to a small family compound for Wallace and Coco, giving it the name 2001 Odyssey—a cheeky reference to the street address. Three modules with about 1,900 square feet of >

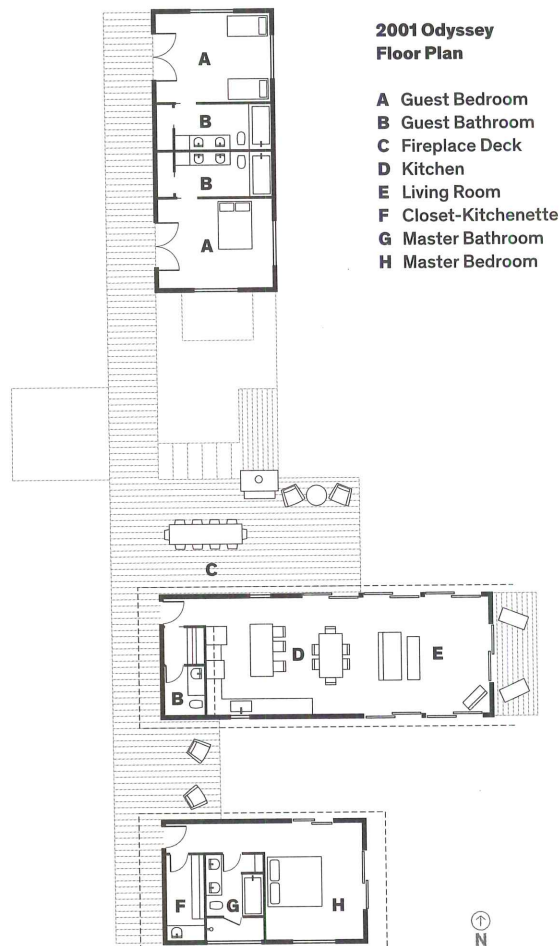
A Min bed by Luciano Bertoncini sits under a folk-art painting by Mamie Deschillie and next to a Mongolian Lamb Bench by Jonathan Adler in one of the guest bedrooms (right). The master bedroom (below) is furnished with a

Reve bed by Niels Bendtsen, an Ingmar chair by Jonathan Adler, and a Platner Arm Chair, which Warren Platner designed for Knoll in 1966. Wallace and Coco purchased the antique pieces in Fredericksburg, Texas.



“We’re using a vocabulary that everybody knows. What we’re trying to do is open it up for different methods.”
—Ted Flato, architect





combined living space stand slightly apart, tucked under the tree canopy, each with its own river view. The largest, at 782 square feet, houses a living-dining area and kitchen, outfitted with maple cabinets and white oak floors. There's also a 476-square-foot master bedroom unit with a private shower and a kitchenette, and a 646-square-foot building with two bedrooms and two bathrooms. The structures, with corrugated-steel roofs and cedar siding, hang together with help from 1,780 square feet of decking, which the architects refer to as the homestead's "connective tissue." The focal point of the compound is a 16-by-28-foot deck—a kind of outdoor living room with a fireplace and a breathtaking view of the river below.

At construction time, Lake|Flato had little choice but to build onsite rather than truck in prefabricated modules. A spike in oil production in Texas had led to a surge in demand for modular housing, and the factory that the firm uses was too busy to fit the 2001 Odyssey modules into its schedule, says Bill Aylor, the lead architect for the project. In the end, site-building the compound allowed for greater sensitivity to the idiosyncrasies of the steeply sloping, irregularly shaped lot. "It forced us to look at the overall effort," Aylor says. "Sometimes prefab is not the best way to go. Our real goal is using a basic modular design for site-specific responses."

The site posed significant challenges. The architects had to avoid a floodplain and a road that snakes around the property, and they had to comply with local setback requirements. This meant that not every room could be oriented ideally toward the river or sited to edit views of the other modules. The architects came up with an imperfect but aesthetic solution, designing floor-to-ceiling screens of red cedar planks that shade the west-facing walls—as well as a 140-foot walkway that connects the living and master-bedroom modules—from the afternoon sun. Meanwhile, low-emissivity windows, spray-foam insulation, on-demand water heaters, and a zoned heating and air-conditioning system keep utility costs under control. Wallace also anticipates that a landscape of native plants will absorb runoff, helping the family conserve water.

The compound was completed in September 2013 after only eight months of construction and despite logistical challenges, including the switch from prefab to on-site construction and some flooding along the Blanco. "As we guessed, it has become a desired destination and, after several large gatherings, has proven to be a perfect venue," Wallace says. Now there is plenty of room for the couple's children—and their children's children—to spread out and enjoy a deep connection to a place that spans five generations. □

Red-cedar screens shade the modules' western walls, and part of the walkway that connects them, from the Texas sun (above left). Glass doors make for an easy transition from the deck to the kitchen, where a painting by Erin Rachel Hudak hangs behind a round Saarinen dining table (opposite).



A New Angle

Fresh geometries inform a modular residence in Portland, Oregon.

Text by Laura Mauk

Photos by Cedric Angeles





PROJECT
Taft Residence
ARCHITECT
Jeffrey Kovel
LOCATION
Portland, Oregon

In Portland, Oregon, Jeff Kovel of Skylab Architecture designed a house for Kaja and Kristopher Taft using HOMB triangular modules he developed with Method Homes. HOMB also features a super-insulated building skin and a highly efficient mechanical system. Kovel designed the living room's sofa as well.



"It's grown-up Legos," says Kaja Taft, describing her modular prefabricated house in Northeast Portland, Oregon, designed by Jeff Kovel of Skylab Architecture. "There was nothing here. Eight hours later, there was a house made out of triangles."

Taft, an instructional designer, moved to Portland for college, where she met her husband, Kristopher, a fifth-grade public-school teacher. The couple lived in Spain for two years but came back to Portland. "I can't think of anywhere else I'd rather live," Taft says. "It's beautiful, easy to get around, and has culture. You can drive 20 minutes and you're in the woods."

The husband and wife, who have two young children, talked for a long time about having a house built. "We were hesitant because it's trying on a family," Taft says. "But we finally decided it was something we really wanted to do." Their first step was to approach Kovel, an architect and an old friend, for advice. "We've always loved his work," Taft says, "but we didn't think we could afford it. We went to him just to get some pointers." During their meeting, the couple told Kovel they wanted a modern house with lots of light and an open plan. It had to be something that was sustainable

and affordable and that wouldn't take long to build. Instead of giving them pointers, Kovel gave them a description of a modular building system he designed called HOMB: any number of 100-square-foot prefabricated triangular structures that can be arranged and stacked together to create a small or large construction.

Originally, Method Homes (a company that manufactures custom prefabricated structures) hired Skylab Architecture to create an urban infill design they could prefabricate in their factory and deliver to any city site. "We gave them our shipping parameters and told them to go crazy," says Brian Abramson, who cofounded Method Homes with Mark Rylant. "And they did. They created something with infinite possibility that went way beyond the original commission." HOMB—the name is a derivative of "honeycomb" (six triangles make a hexagon) and expresses the idea of a modular system—is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's honeycomb concept for the Hanna House, from 1936, located on the Stanford University campus, in California. Both architects were looking to break from the pervasive rectangular form. Wright did so with a hexagonal shape; Kovel used a triangle. >

The triangle is the home's leitmotiv, appearing everywhere from the cantilevered bedroom module and the steps approaching the entrance (above left) to the skylight hovering over the double-height main space (above). The ceiling beams are designed to resemble a honeycomb. The couple's son, Rio, pauses on the mezzanine (opposite), which leads to the bedrooms.



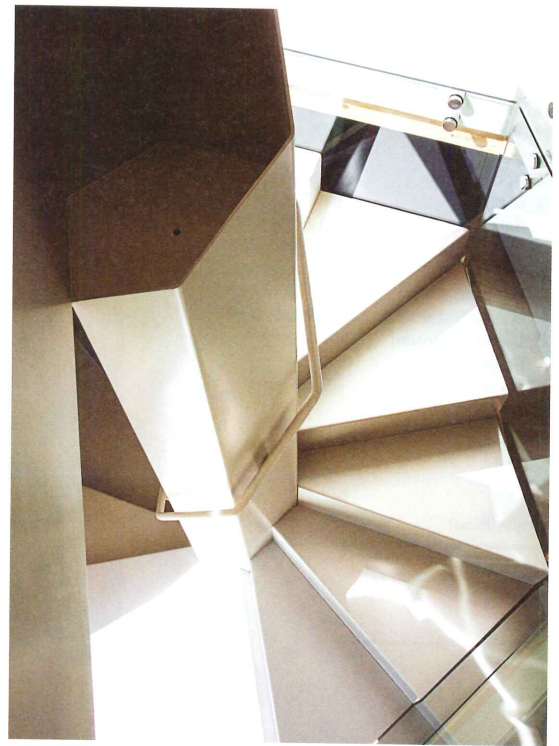
"We wanted something aesthetically dynamic," he explains. "But the choice was also practical because the form resists bending during shipping."

The Taft residence, the prototype for HOMB (which became a stand-alone company, owned by Skylab Architecture and Method Homes), rises out of its double city lot as a massive angular sculpture. Comprised of 28 triangles, which were delivered in six units, the house features a voluminous double-height living space that opens to the kitchen, the dining area, and the entryway. "My son, Rio, is six, and my daughter, Luna, is three," Taft says. "They're lovely handfuls and like to run from the front door all the way to the kitchen. The expanse is their open playground." The kids' actual playroom displays massive windows on either side of one point of a triangular module. "Your eye goes farther than the room," Kovel says. "The angles expand the space in a way that feels natural." The strategic placement of large windows throughout the house harnesses as much sunlight as possible. "The light in this house makes you feel like you're outside, even when you're not," Taft says.

The HOMB system was designed for customization. In addition to flexibility in window size and placement, the finishes, layout, and house size are also malleable. The Taft residence is three levels and has four bedrooms and three and a half baths. A driveway descends a half floor beneath street level to a basement, where there's a family room, a guest room, and another play area. "Radiant heat beneath bamboo flooring and rigid insulation on top of spray-foam insulation create a superior building skin that's critical to energy performance," Abramson says. The roof, too, is covered with the two layers of insulation, and also has a thermopolyolefin (TPO) membrane and solar panels. The interiors are furnished with a mix of custom and contemporary pieces that aren't too precious. "I have two little wild ones, so everything had to be something they could thrash," Taft says. There's a built-in sofa with an angular design that reflects the house's forms. "Portland is filled with artisans," Taft adds. "A friend of a friend made these beautiful bar stools out of wine barrels. We wanted to break up the strong forms with more organic, curvy furniture." >

"There are floor-to-ceiling windows in almost every room," says Kaja. "Light was a big part of why we loved this design." With so much light comes the need to block it out at times, especially in the children's rooms (Rio's is below). Though the couple invested in solar shades and blackout curtains by Mari Design, "They still get up at 5:30," Kaja says with a laugh. As in all the bedrooms, the carpet tiles are from Flor.





The core of the glass-enclosed spiral stair (above and above right) is a hexagon, a reference to the moments in the floor plan in which six triangular modules are joined together to form the shape. Hexagonal tiles made by the Portland Cement Company continue the pattern in the bathroom (left and right), where the architect designed low drawers and cabinets that are easy for Luna to reach. The Hansgrohe sinks are paired with Duravit faucets.

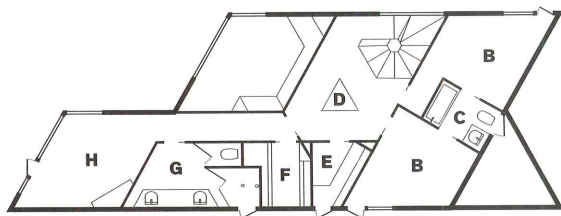
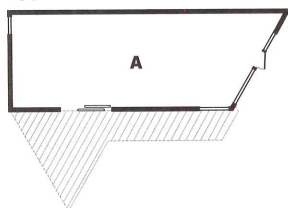


**“There was nothing here. Eight hours later, there was a house made out of triangles.”
—Kaja Taft, resident**

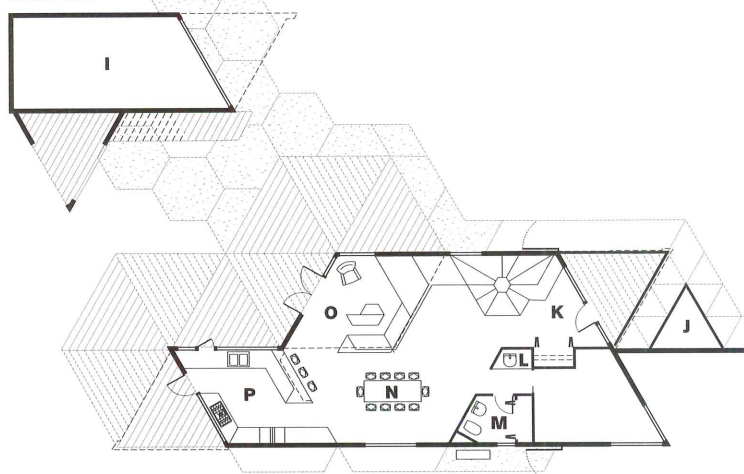
**Taft Residence
Floor Plan**

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| A Open Studio | K Entry |
| B Bedroom | L Bar |
| C Bathroom | M Powder Room |
| D Mezzanine | N Dining Area |
| E Laundry | O Living Area |
| F Master Closet | P Kitchen |
| G Master Bathroom | Q Mud Room |
| H Master Bedroom | R Utility |
| I Shed | S Den |
| J Planter | T Carport |

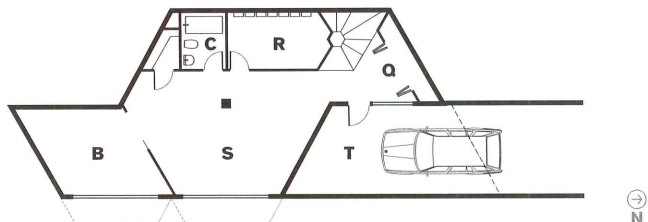
Upper Floor



Main Floor



Lower Floor



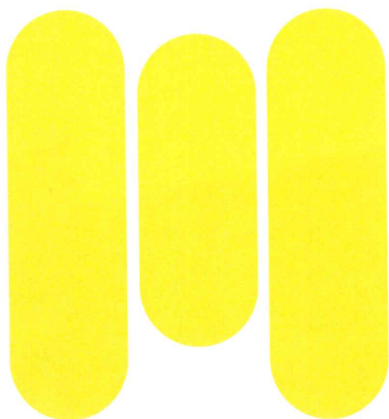
"My favorite spot is the kitchen," says Kaja. "I can stand in it and cook and converse with everyone." The space (above) overlooks the back yard. The white-oak cabinetry is by HOMB and the countertops are Caesarstone. A hood by Faber is above a Dacor range.

As shown on the floor plan (left), triangles are grouped together to form other shapes. The master bedroom (opposite) is perched above the kitchen. Kovel designed the landscaping with Kitty Davis of LandCurrent and Glenn Nardelli of Pistils Landscape Design + Build.

The pearl of this house—which is sided with vertical, black-stained cedar—is a glossy white central staircase that appears encased by its glass rail. "It spirals but has a triangular footprint rather than a round one," Kovel says. "We rolled a plate of steel into a hexagon shape then welded treads so they cantilever off of a column." The staircase fits inside a single 100-square-foot triangle and was in place the night before the structures were installed. "We threaded the modules down over the stair," adds Kovel, who also had modules stacked so triangle points would cantilever on the front facade, creating an entry porch, and on the rear, shading a deck made of recycled plastic. "Buildings that are custom-made to respond to their environments, connect to the outdoors, and celebrate the sun shouldn't be a luxury," he says. "Those should be something everybody gets to experience."

"I had Luna three weeks before we went over sketches," Taft says. "I needed this house to happen quickly and to be involved with the design." From plans to finished product, the project was completed in seven and a half months. "It just feels good," she says. "When you're inside this house, you feel like you're floating." □





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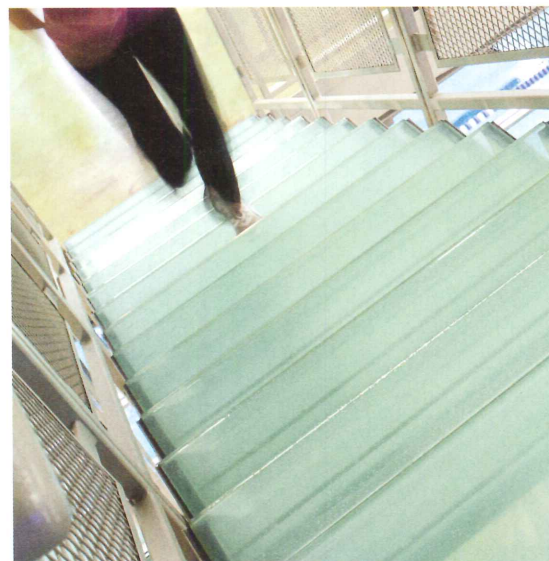
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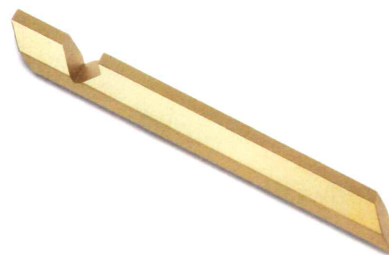


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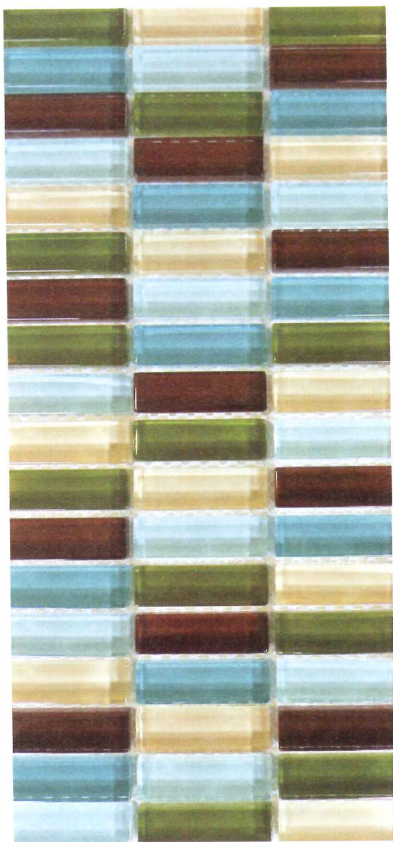
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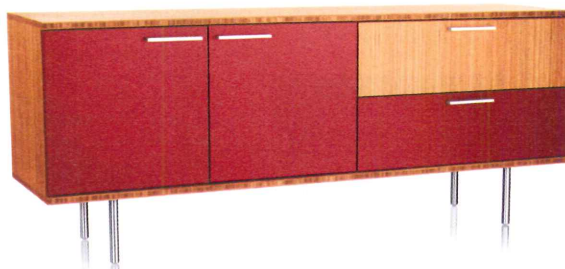


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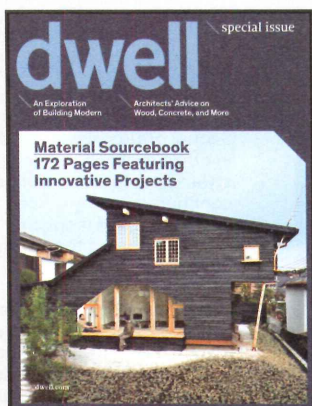


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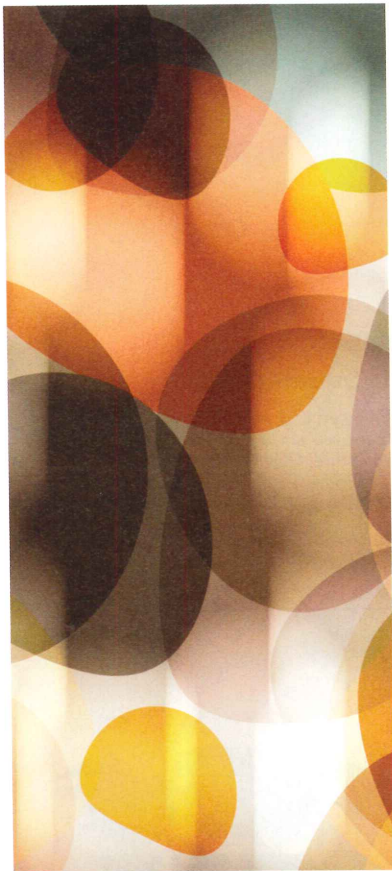
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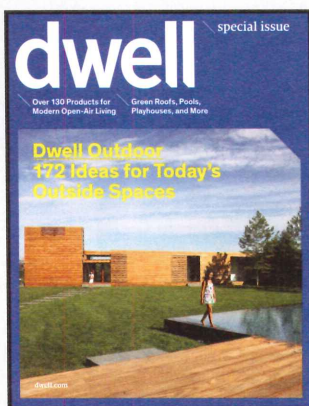
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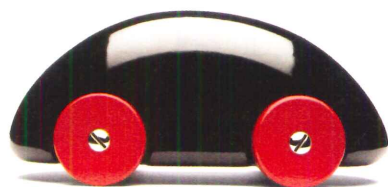
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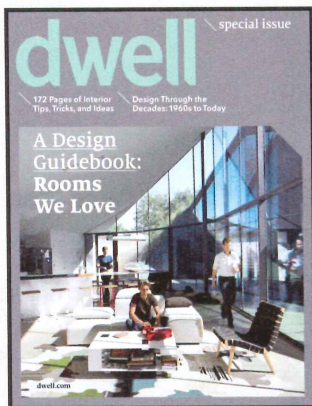


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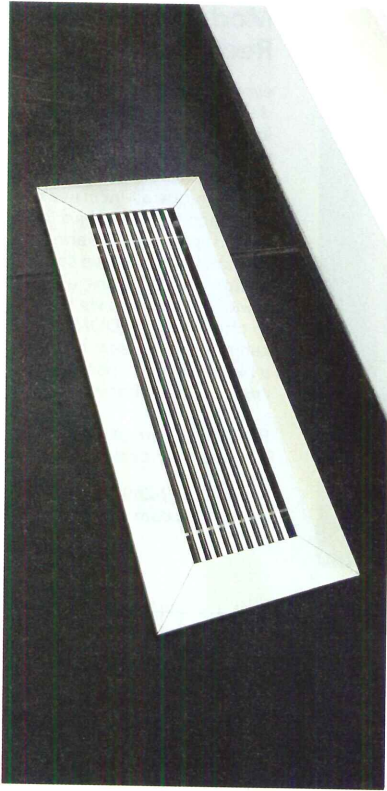


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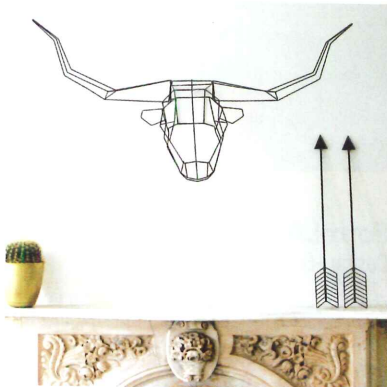
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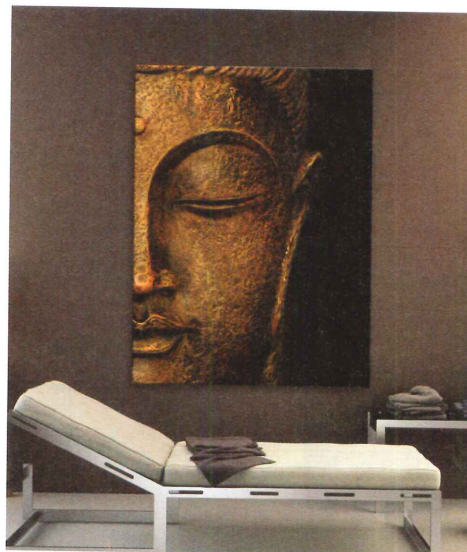
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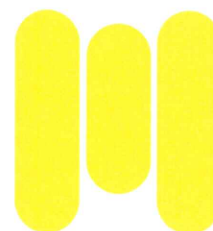


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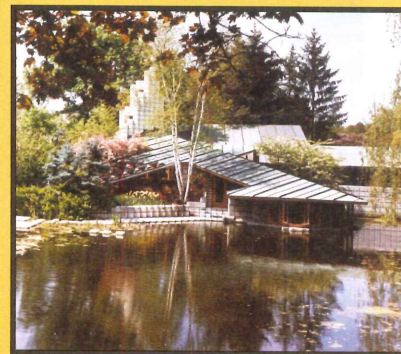
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finishing touch

Going Dutch

A new prefab company represents the future of low-impact affordable housing.

TEXT BY
Diana Budds
PHOTO BY
Christoph Morlinghaus

Cubicco's prefab houses, like the Cabana Beach model (above), are built with laminated veneer lumber, an engineered material that uses up to 90 percent of a tree—compared to typical wood timbers that use only 60 to 70 percent. Modules can be disassembled if the owners relocate.

When it comes to building sustainably, it requires more than slapping a solar array on a house. Cubicco—a Dutch prefab company that opened an office and a manufacturing facility in Miami, Florida, in August 2013—takes a holistic approach to responsible residential architecture. “We ought to construct homes that are built around social and environmental needs with a design that’s beautiful, functional, and within reach,” Randy Riteco, Cubicco’s founder, says.

Structural resiliency and longevity were of paramount importance to Riteco. To that end, Cubicco’s prefabs can withstand Category 5 hurricanes, extreme heat and cold, ten-foot snow loads, and earthquakes

(when paired with a strong foundation). “Living and working in the Caribbean, I have been through the worst situations Mother Nature can bestow upon us—I’ve seen houses lost in minutes,” says Owen Healy, a partner at Cubicco. “That inspired me to engineer a home that resists catastrophes and saves resources through rainwater harvesting and solar technology.”

The starting price for a fully built 685-square-foot, two-bedroom Cubicco model in the Miami area is just over \$115,000. “Hurricane-approved, sustainable, and contemporary design usually comes with a luxury price tag,” says Mario Espiñeira Jr., another partner in the company. “Cubicco has changed that.” □