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PreFab-ulous

Three leading design firms have transformed the prefab concept into real, livable spaces, and their creations are inspiring a growing interest in the prefab movement. » by **KYLE WINTERS, CHRISTINE KELLY**



AS PREFABRICATED HOUSING CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AND BECOME MORE POPULAR THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD, several designers and architects are at the forefront of the industry, providing chic, stylish, environmentally conscious homes.

RESOLUTION: 4 ARCHITECTURE » A leader in the prefab movement is New York-based Resolution: 4 Architecture. Headed by Joseph Tanney and Robert Luntz, Resolution: 4 originally began toying with the modular concept during the first quarter 2002. "Following 9/11, a lot of our commercial work went on hold, and we had a number of clients who tried to find a weekend retreat ... and they couldn't find anything they liked," Tanney said. "They came to us and said, 'Wouldn't it be great if you could build one of your lofts and ship it to us?'"

This impetus coupled with the recent rise in modern design consciousness inspired Resolution: 4 to consider the prefabricated home sector. The company launched its web site in the fall of 2002. In spring 2003, it won the *Dwell* Home Design Invitational for a prefabricated home. None of this, however, compared with the publicity the firm received on May 29, 2003, the day *The Wall Street Journal* featured its **Custom Modern Modular** home. "On that day alone, we had 330,000 hits on our web site," Tanney said. During the next six weeks, Resolution: 4 received 30 to 60 inquiries a day.

The Custom Modern Module features six basic floor plans, or typologies, ranging in size from 950 to 6,500 square feet. Based on a system



A profound understanding of structural relationships has given Resolution: 4 Architecture a leading edge in prefabricated housing. One example is the Mountain Retreat, a 1,800-square-foot vacation home tucked away in New York's Catskill Mountains.

called Modules of Use, the homes are intended to "articulate elements of utility that are essential to sustain domestic life."

Beginning with its most basic typology, the Single Bar, Resolution: 4 can customize a modular home in a variety of shapes and sizes. The end result varies from small weekend getaways to large lake homes that can accommodate a family of seven.

Customization options are also available regarding materials; material selection is limited merely by budget and weather constraints. Each home is prefabricated with sustainable materials and is designed to open to the structure's natural surroundings.

In addition to its Custom Modern Module, Resolution: 4 recently entered into a partnership with Lazor Office and Empryan International LLC to manufacture a variety of prefabricated structures known as **panelized homes**. The partnership endeavors to market the prefabricated concept to a broader audience.

The difference between modular and panelized is subtle, but sig-



RESOURCES:

For more information about prefab, contact these inventive designers:

Taalman-Koch Architecture
213.380.1060
tkarchitecture.com
tkithouse.com

Resolution: 4 Architecture
212.675.9266
re4a.com

H-Haus LLC
888.45H.HAUS
h-haus.com

Marmol Radziner Prefab
310.689.0089
marmolradzinerprefab.com

Michelle Kaufmann Designs
mkd-arc.com

KitHaus
310.889.7137
kithaus.com

Or visit the following web sites:

fabprefab.com

livemodern.com

prefabs.com

nificant. In Tanney's own words: Modular construction can be compared to Legos, while panelized homes are more similar to a house of cards. He added, "Modular homes are finished in the factory, so there are more constraints. Panelized homes offer more flexibility and greater options."

Though the firm's first panelized home was just recently completed, there has been much interest in the product to date. Resolution: 4 is currently negotiating the construction of a series of 15 single-family panelized units in L.A. They are additionally exploring the logistics of making alternative energy sources, such as geothermal and solar, available for the homes.

The panelized homes are available for shipment across the U.S. and internationally. On average, costs for both the Custom Modern Module and the panelized homes range from \$200 to \$250 per square foot. However, cost can vary greatly based on the design, location and the local general contractor.

H-HAUS » The H-Haus, formally defined as a panelized home, just recently debuted its new kit-house models. The company's approach culls materials from pre-manufactured construction objects and assembles them on site. H-Haus works with modular design and offers the best of custom construction coupled with the speed of a pre-manufactured house. The first prototype (the Cube 5 two-story model) was previewed in February 2006 at the Cleveland Home & Garden Show. Following this debut, the H-Haus became available to the mass market. Currently H-Haus is designing five models, varying in size from 600 to 2,100 square feet.

Fashioned to feature elegant living, efficient design and eco-friendly systems, the H-Haus boasts an impressive list of creature comforts. With the letter "H" representing a hotel, H-Haus interiors include roomy bedrooms, a luxurious spa bath, operable skylights and a cook's kitchen complete with high-end European appliances.

According to Aranus Repecka, principal at H-Haus, each model is designed to "maintain ease of construction, (be) very energy efficient, (have a) low economical cycle, high return and low maintenance."

The structures possess a multitude of eco-friendly designs and features. "Each home has a solar system standard," said Repecka. "Heating and cooling are on geothermal heat pumps, and all the walls and windows are super-insulated. ... Our standard building is R-30, the roof is R-50, the floor is R-40 and the windows are R-5." (An R rating refers to thermal resistance. The higher the rating, the better the insulation.)

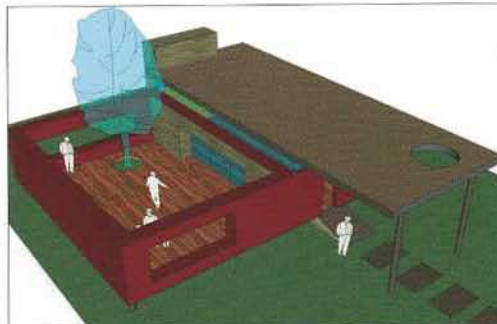
To put the home's energy-efficient features into perspective, H-Haus recently constructed a 3,000-square-foot residence that has a heating bill

of merely \$86 per month.

The home is available at an average base price of \$150 per square foot, excluding foundation and site work. Foundation design and site work are on a per-site basis.

THE IT HOUSE » Cutting-edge technology and building materials, along with a variety of customization options, help to set apart the iT house by Taalman-Koch Architecture in Los Angeles. The iT house, which originally debuted in January 2005, is available in three floor-plan options, ranging from 1,100 to 1,600 square feet. The residence is divided into public and private wings; the public area encloses the kitchen and living spaces, while the private wing holds the bathroom and two bedrooms.

According to Linda Taalman, principal at Taalman-Koch, "Design inspiration came from several sources, mainly previous projects and research that we had done before on prefabricated housing, such as the NhEW house, a one-room nomadic shelter, and the Small Sky-scraper, built out of the same structural system done in collaboration with Chris Burden."



Providing generous living space while taking up little geography, the Cube 5 H-Haus reduces energy use by conserving natural resources using elements such as heavy insulation and wastewater recycling.