

Look who's back with style



With more attractive designs and environmental benefits, modular homes are gaining status in the industry.

With green design principles and no site waste, prefabrication is securing its place in the sustainable housing market. Caroline Kearney reports.

Promoted as a cheaper, simpler construction alternative, prefabricated homes have nevertheless been looked upon as the poor cousin of the onsite constructed home – cheap and ugly, cookie-cutter structures using discount material and standard construction methods.

That has begun to change in recent years. As designs become more attractive, modular homes have gained status in the market, alongside prefabricated extensions and renovations.

“When I was a child, my uncle in Denmark had a summerhouse that was

prefabricated, and I always found the fact that it was built in a factory and delivered to site amazing,” says director of Modscape prefab housing Jan Gyrn.

“Based on the growth of the industry in America and Europe, we believed there was a definite market for prefabricated modular housing here in Australia.

“Through our commercial construction background, we saw the use of prefabricated modular housing for large-scale accommodation projects and adapted that to a lifestyle product.”

But to really establish a foothold in a growing green market, Jan realised these prefab homes must not only look good but must also be sustainable.

“We view sustainability as how much we can reduce the impact on the environment, and we believe that prefabrication really is the ultimate medium for construction when it comes to sustainability,” he says.

“Through a careful process of

planning and design, every step of the construction and subsequent use of Modscape homes has been considered in terms of its impact on the environment.”

The most obvious environmental benefits are that site waste is reduced and the natural condition of the site is usually preserved.

“Site preparation is minimal, meaning less disruption to flora, fauna and neighbouring areas,” Jan says. “The screw piling foundation system we use also means there is no need for earthmoving or compacting.

“Having the construction take place in a factory rather than on site minimises noise, rubbish, dust and debris, and it maximises the quality of the final product. This also means less repair and rework in years to come.”

But what about waste in the factory? Jan says this is also closely monitored.

“We set up the design of the house in



accordance with standardised material dimensions. For example, if a sheet comes in at 1.2m wide, we design at intervals of 1.2m or 0.6m rather than 1m and 0.5m. This means less waste is produced in the manufacturing process.

“In addition, we sort our rubbish in the factory into metals, timber, general waste and cardboard so we are not mixing waste. Our waste collection company then sorts our general waste once it is collected.”

Modscape also ensures the use of sustainably manufactured building products and optimises green design.

“All materials used in the construction of our homes are recycled, reconstituted or plantation materials that have no environmentally unfriendly chemicals in them. In addition, with a steel frame and steel footings no chemicals are needed for white ants or termite treatments.”

“We believe that prefabrication really is the ultimate medium for construction when it comes to sustainability,” says director of Modscape Jan Gyrn.



Blackbutt Australiana solid strip flooring

keep your nails a secret

The secret is out. Wide boards can be secret nailed and Boral Timber has developed the installation method.

There has been a strong shift towards wide timber boards in recent years with 108mm and 130mm boards in demand for both domestic and commercial projects. However, architects, interior designers and consumers expect wide boards to be secret nailed in order to avoid the perceived unsightliness of top nailing. For this reason, Boral Timber Flooring has developed an installation method that allows wide boards to be secret nailed to a solid sheet subfloor such as plywood or particleboard. Now you can offer your customers wide boards with a beautiful finish.

For a free copy of the Boral Timber installation guidelines for secret nailing wide boards, email timberspec@boral.com.au, phone 1800 818 317 or visit www.boraltimberflooring.com.au

Boral Timber Flooring

THE NATURAL SELECTION



Modscape uses Powerscape, a product made up of 95% recycled material with the same look as plasterboard. Wherever possible the flooring is bamboo, a highly renewable plantation timber, and the company also makes use of recycled plastic and steel.

“The wall, floor and roof systems that make up our modules provide effective solar protection in summer and collect passive solar heat in winter – resulting in less reliance on heating and cooling. The way we position the house on site also optimises the use of sunlight.

“Rainwater tanks connected to washing machines and toilets are a standard feature of all our homes as is solar hot water up. Solar/wind power and waste treatment systems are also available as additional options.

“The power and plumbing is set up to connect to greywater and blackwater

recycling systems and solar power, and the appliances we use and recommend all have the maximum energy efficiency ratings.”

Of course simply being green isn’t enough to attract sales. Design and cost are paramount considerations for consumers.

“A Modscape home is a stylish option for prefabricated modular housing,” Jan says. “Obviously beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but the response from the market to date has been positive. Most people are attracted because of the modern minimalist aesthetic and the environmental benefits.

“We have also completed a number of schemes in association with architects, as they believe the product is high on design style and value.”

But the main reasons for buying a prefab home are cost and fewer hassles

– customers know exactly what they are getting, with no surprises or budget blow-outs.

“Modscape homes are faster to build than traditional forms of construction, taking only 12 weeks from permit to installation. The customer’s risk of weather and site delays is eliminated, as the homes are built in the factory to a timeline that is strictly adhered to for design, construction and delivery.

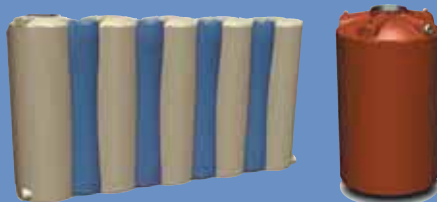
“Our homes are more cost efficient than architect-designed homes. Minimal onsite time for the builder, less time spent on consultations and travel, less wastage and fewer mistakes help reduce the overall cost and increase the value.” ■

Modscape
www.modscape.com.au

H2ENVIRO UNDERGROUND RAINWATER TANK SYSTEMS

Australia’s ONLY underground tank not requiring extensive concrete anchoring or tie downs to secure the tank underground.

15 Year Guarantee



Also available: Slimline Tanks
Round Tanks
Aquaplate Tanks
Mains water diversion Kits
Pumps & accessories
Victorian & Sth Australian enquiries contact
Everwater P/L 03 9432 0222

- 3000, 5000, 6000 & 10,000 Litre Capacities
- Suitable for Mains water diversion or top up systems
- Fully adjustable riser • Trafficable

SAVE THOUSANDS ON INSTALLATION COSTS

H2enviro P/L ABN 28099279642
6 Anvil Rd, Seven Hills NSW 2147

Call 02 9838 4877 or 1800 240 005

