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Small Eco Houses: Living Green In Style



Synopsis

Fresh perspectives on how good design can create stylish yet ecologically sound living spaces in small-scale homes. Anyone who has faced the challenges of limited living space will find inspiration in this survey of the latest trends in environmentally sensitive, small-scale residential designs. More than fifty residential spaces are profiledâ”from woodsy houses and repurposed barns to cool apartments and urban loftsâ”both inside and out. Most of the projects were designed by up-and-coming architects, and each design proves that small-scale efficiency as well as beautiful, thoughtful design can overcome the apparent constraints of a small setting. Environmental impact is a growing concern, so each project was chosen because of its ecological sensitivity. Each case history describes the challenges confronting the designer and the solutions. Creating color schemes to enhance the feeling of openness, taking advantage of high ceilings to make multiple levels, and using collapsible furniture and sliding doors to maximize space are some of the design solutions that can be applied in any situation. Filled with beautiful color photographs and helpful floorplans, this book is a remarkable showcase of how good design can transform any small space into a comfortable, modernâ”and environmentally sensitiveâ”home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Forty-two houses are profiled in this book, ranging in size from 6.5 sq. m./ 70 sq. ft. to 294 sq. m./3,165 sq. ft. More than half the houses are over 120 sq. m./1,300 sq. ft., so they aren't necessarily small. They are architect designed in the minimalist style, mostly boxes with flat roofs,

but a few dare to step out of the box with gabled or shed or v-shaped roofs. There are houses for every budget, from low cost prefabs to luxurious, custom built houses. Each profile gives an almost too brief description of the house followed by icons with reasons why it is an eco house, floor plans and/or elevations, and color pictures of the interiors and exteriors with views of breathtakingly beautiful landscapes. Here are a few examples of the variety of houses in this book: The Joshua Tree house is a gabled roof prefab, on wheels for transport, with two bedrooms and a long, skinny bathroom with a toilet and sink on each end and a shower in the middle, all in a tiny 36 sq. m./387.5 sq. ft. space. The Float houses are low cost prefabs in New Orleans for people who lost their homes during Hurricane Katrina. They are narrow, shot gun houses that resemble mobile homes but they have unusual design innovations. They are built to withstand another hurricane and are on a chassis that will float like a raft during a flood. The roof is v-shaped with a groove to capture rain water. The Casa Pulmo house is a two story house with an outdoor wheelchair ramp connecting the levels. Half of the house in Geres, Portugal, featured on the cover, juts out over a cliff. It has a low environmental impact because part of it hovers in mid air! There are houses in Norway and Iceland specially designed to withstand a sub-arctic winter. The landscapes had no trees and little vegetation.

This is a good "ideas" book for visual concepts of a finished house and floor plans, but there are only short details on the eco features for each house. I have added it to the library next to books with more technical detail on eco ideas and implementation - they will complement each other.

Enjoyed this book with some great plans and small size houses. Well done book. Many good photos and liked how showed floor plans of each house.

Although it is most photos (which I very much like) it was very well focused into details and features pointing, it provided details on particular items or design ideas. Excellent book one of the best so far! Love Cristina Paredes B.'s editing intervention.

I was really looking forward to this book. The small house concept really intrigues me. But as others have mentioned, half of this book is houses over 1500 sq ft. Some of the houses are not houses at all, but 800 or 100 sq ft additions. I would have also liked to see more pictures of the design detail that addresses small house challenges such as storage. There are very few closets shown or explained. In all I enjoyed the first half of the book.

Cute little book with some nice photos, but it's far more about stylish dwellings masquerading as green buildings. If you are looking for serious new ideas about sustainability, keep shopping. With captions promoting things like:- the use of wood for insulation- concrete providing an impermeable surface- re-usable materials such as sheets of titanium- double glazed windows, the text can be laughable at times. The best I can say about the book's theme is that it promotes living in smaller spaces, which is paramount to reducing our negative environmental footprint. However, I would argue that most of the houses in this book use more than an average amount of energy and resources to achieve what is only an average house at best in terms of lifetime environmental impact. For the most part this book is another case of greenwashing to an uneducated public.

Has excellent photography emphasizing structural/finish details. Sadly lacks info on interior heating, primary heat source justification, etc. Only a few homes gave some details on it's primary heat source. That's somewhat of a let down since all the homes in this book are so diverse, yet intent on achieving the same goal. Overall, I'm still glad I bought it.

We should all live in such style and harmony with our surroundings, great photos but a little light on the actual details.

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