

# The next big thing: A home-in-a-box

## Factory-built green homes could be a recession hit

BY JASON TURCOTTE

With some saying the luxury market is dead, and new development at a standstill, many are wondering just what the residential market's next "it" product will be.

Two entrepreneurs may hold the answer, as they hope to capitalize on the less-is-more market with a new product they believe has the power to transform the housing industry: factory-built green homes.

Tyler Schmetterer and Mark Jupiter, two Skidmore College roommates who have been best friends for a quarter century, pooled their resources together to launch New World Home in 2007 — a company specializing in factory built green homes that reduce energy consumption by at least 50%.

The new concept combines the nostalgia of designing homes with a piece of Americana in mind, with the best materials and tools available to reduce energy consumption — without gaudy and pricey solar panels and wind turbines.

"The new-old movement of traditional design is making a comeback and the green market has obviously reached a tipping point..." said Mark Jupiter, New World Home's product division president and co-founder. "People are much more willing to listen to new ideas now than they were in the boom days."

That new idea is the mass creation of factory built green homes inspired by historic American architecture. The tandem hopes to create a mass market for LEED certified homes that, well, don't look anything like green homes. And they hope to dispel a few energy-saving myths along the way.

The company, with headquarters in New York and Atlanta, spent more than two years reverse engineering a home, rebuilding from the ground up to develop ways to cut energy consumption and save buyers money on the fly. The product they came up with, according to Jupiter, proves that green homes don't need a complex mechanical infrastructure and can deliver instantaneous savings.

New World Home uses air-tight and toxic-free materials. To name a few of their inherent green elements, the homes are designed to collect 100% of all rainwater; low flow features save 15-20,000 gallons of water annually and light sensors reduce lighting consumption by 40%. And homes are set on panelized foundations, which require much less concrete.

"We don't sell our homes on pretty counter tops," Jupiter said. "We sell our homes on the foundations that they're built."

Their models are simplistic and evoke an appreciation for the past. With open

floor plans that maximize airflow, covered porches and fireplaces, New World shows that green homes can offer function and form.

"We all long for that period of time when things were simpler, cleaner...and there's a connection between the house and the region where we're building," Schmetterer said.

The biggest obstacle they face is educating the brokerage community on green sales and quelling fears that these homes are just another modular unit.

While they are delivered in pieces, buyers can select an already-designed model or a custom-built home, opting in additional green features beyond those offered with each model. The biggest surprise to a prospective buyer is how little New World homes resemble modular design.

"The design decimates that trailer park notion," Schmetterer said.

And anything a buyer wants, the pair says they can design.

"We can make it look like anything... so, if we just want a classic Greek revival that looks like a house from 20 years ago, we have it," Jupiter added.

The company also hopes this product will create a supply-and-demand mentality in what it feels is an antiquated construction industry — an industry prone to overbuilding. Rather than building



The eco-friendly pre-fabs are springing up in the Hamptons and upstate New York.

before having a buyer, a sale must first close before New World builds, preventing oversupply and breeding greater market efficiency.

Moreover, building from within the walls of a factory is less harmful to the environment and the buyer gets a much swifter turnaround time; most units are completed within 60-90 days.

With new development dead and land developers looking to make some money, New World is seeing increased interest from that front.

To date, the company has distributed homes nearly everywhere east of

Mississippi and has seen recent sales activity in Atlanta, upstate New York and the Hamptons. With plans to expand nationally, New World is also set to launch an affordable housing arm aimed at making green living a reality for all homeowners.

And one of the builder's upcoming homes will earn an NHB Emerald certification, the highest green distinction available.

New World Home units typically range from 600 to 3,500 s/f and cost between \$110-500,000, or \$150-200 psf.

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