

BARBARA BUONO: Her
Quest to Unseat Christie

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Ospreys on the Rebound

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SPRING GETAWAYS

Make plans to savor the season with our guide to daytrip-worthy parks, gardens, farms, wine trails and more here in the Garden State.



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Making the trip to the Garden State's varied botanical showcases means a walk through the past. *By Lauren Payne*

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Montclair Public Library

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A factory-made farmhouse delivers old-fashioned looks and up-to-the-minute style and environmental savvy.

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A greenthumb and a greenhorn turn fallow land into a productive garden.

By Lauren Payne

p.72 Tracking Design Trends

Eight top interior designers reveal the latest ideas and materials for the home.

By Lauren Payne

THE NEW OLD HOMESTEAD: Craig Annis, his wife, Kate, and her parents, John and Christine Whitman, wanted the young couple's house on the family farmland to provide the best of old and new home design. That's exactly what New World Home's customizable, modular system delivered.

Prefab: Easy Being Green

The family of former governor Christine Todd Whitman wanted a house that looked like it had always been part of its bucolic surroundings, but was ecologically state-of-the-art. They found exactly what they needed—in a factory.

WRITTEN BY LAUREN PAYNE

NIGHT WAS FALLING AS FIVE LARGE FLATBED TRUCKS lumbered off the country road onto the rolling Hunterdon County farmland long owned by the family of Christine ("Christie") Todd Whitman, the former New Jersey governor and Environmental Protection Agency chief. Each flatbed, flying WIDE LOAD flags, carried a prefabricated section of a 3,100-square-foot house ordered by Christie and John Whitman's daughter Kate and her husband, Craig Annis.

By the time the sun set the next day, a fully assembled, weatherproofed house stood firmly on the Oldwick property. In looks, the house fits in with the vintage farmhouses of the area, but in its energy efficiency and environmental bona fides—it meets the most stringent standards of the U.S. Green Building Council—it is pure 21st century.

The Oldwick Historic District, where the house is located, is listed on both the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, so preserving the visual integrity of the district was important. But environmental sustainability mattered to the family as well. Craig, Kate and her parents together picked materials, appliances and fixtures, and even visited the house when it was under construction—at the factory.

Yes, factory.

"It was truly an amazing experience for an adult, but especially for our little boys, who love to see things get built," says Craig Annis. "It was fun to watch their eyes and facial expressions when we told them this section would be their bedroom, and that one would be the kitchen."

The Annis/Whitman project represents the transformation of prefab housing—an idea long associated with cheap and shoddy—into an engineering and design process that is fast, efficient, infinitely customizable and green as all get-out.

PHOTOS: EXTERIOR—PHILIP JENSEN-CARTER; PREFAB—COURTESY OF TYLER SCHMETTERER; LIVING ROOM—LAURA MOSS

Not to mention sturdy. Speeding down the highway on flatbeds at up to 75 miles per hour between the Pennsylvania factory and the Oldwick site, the house sections were buffeted by wind and vibration “essentially equal to a Category 1 hurricane,” says Tyler Schmetterer, founder of New World Home, the award-winning company that has been designing, building and erecting modular homes according to what he calls “the most current state-of-the-art green principles” since 2007. (See Eco Elements, next page.)

As for the highway hurricane, not only did the sections come through unscathed, Schmetterer says, but when they were bolted to the foundation and then to each other, “the entire home was redundantly engineered. Which is why modular homes are in fact stronger than a typical site-built structure.”

Annis says he discovered New World Home while searching the Internet for sustainable, prefabricated construction. He appreciated the historic look of the company’s New Old Green Modular (NOGM) homes, he says, as well as the system’s speed of completion—typically, six months from design to move-in—and the control a factory provides. For instance, because the house is built indoors, he says, the wood stays dry.

ALL IN A DAY’S WORK: After the foundation of the Annis/Whitman home in Oldwick was installed (in one day), a crane lowered the sections into place, where they were bolted to the foundation and to each other. That, too, took one day. Below, the family room has easy-to-clean vinyl windows and an efficient direct-vent gas fireplace.





STAR POWER: All kitchen appliances are efficient and Energy-Star rated. The materials used—quartz countertop, utility island of reclaimed wood, bamboo flooring—all further sustainability. The cabinets contain no formaldehyde or VOCs.

SUPER SAVER: Below, the powder room, off the kitchen, features a low-flow faucet and a dual flush toilet for minimal water waste.

LET THERE BE LIGHT: Opposite page, top, side-lights flank the front door, bringing in natural light. The house faces south (passive solar orientation). In the dining room, center and bottom, that allows for maximum sunlight. The coffered ceiling was built in New World Home's Pennsylvania factory and installed on-site. The dining table once belonged to Kate Annis's grandparents.

Eco Elements

New World Home worked closely with the Annis and Whitman family to make sure the house would comply with the U.S. Green Building Council's highest standards. Here are a few of the energy-efficient and sustainably produced materials used:

- Bamboo and cork flooring
- Recycled brick
- Insulated prefab concrete foundation
- Low-flow showerheads and faucets
- Dual-flush toilets
- Formaldehyde-free wall insulation
- Non-VOC paints and finishes
- Quartz countertops
- Tankless water heater
- High-efficiency HVAC system
- The broad side of the house faces south (passive solar orientation) to let in more light and warmth
- Energy Star-rated windows, doors, appliances, lighting, ceiling fans and metal roofing.



PHOTOS: LAURA MOSS

reducing the chance of mold developing in the finished house.

"A healthy interior environment is a major concern for us because we have four young children," Annis says.

Equally attractive was that NOGM homes are highly customizable. While New World offers some 30 to 40 layouts, "they serve mostly as inspiration," Schmetterer says. "The plans are a starting point, and then we modify it specifically for the customer."

The house sections are delivered to the site complete with finished floors, baseboard, molding, doors and windows, installed appliances and fixtures, even painted walls and ceilings. Prior to delivery, the site is prepped and the foundation dug. The foundation itself—built in pre-insulated sections by Superior Walls of New Holland, Pennsylvania—is delivered and locked in place, ready to support the weight of the house, in one day. "The entire design-build process is turnkey from the client's perspective," says Schmetterer.

Even so, the residence is not quite ready for its certificate of occupancy. It takes eight to ten weeks "to button up the house," Schmetterer says. The biggest task is covering the exterior with 30-year-guaranteed siding, which cannot be installed in the plant.

Having participated in the process from start to finish, Governor Whitman says she is well satisfied. "We'd been searching the market for many years for an authentic green modular-housing company that incorporates traditional architecture," she says. "My family and I were very excited when we connected with New World Home, since the company is clearly making great strides in transforming the home-building industry." ■



Ab-Fab Prefab

The Annis/Whitman house is featured, along with many other stunning, prefabricated, energy-efficient homes, in Prefabulous + Almost Off the Grid: Your Path to Building an Energy-Independent Home, by Sheri Koones (Abrams, 2012).

