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dwelling
elsewhere

a worldwide view of the domestic art

hanley wood

occidental tourists / sudan moves /
original yin / shim-sutcliffe's site seeing /
outside influences / euro façades

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home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.

cultural exchange

Scott Allen, AIA, couldn't resist the chance to work on the Zhongkai Sheshan Villas, an on-the-boards residential development in the suburbs of Shanghai, China. "If you didn't do it, you'd kick yourself later," he says. Allen wasn't alone. In addition to his Seattle firm, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, the project's design team included Baylis Architects, Stuart Silk Architects, and Living Architecture Inc., all based in the Seattle area; Taylor Lombardo Architects and Hunt Hale Jones Architects, both of San Francisco;

Boston's CBT Architects and ICON architecture (Zhongkai Sheshan Villas' master planner); Atlanta-based Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects; and Architectus of Auckland, New Zealand. Each firm independently designed several one-of-a-kind houses for the high-end, 79-villa community.

The developer, Shanghai-based ZK Group, deliberately chose a wide geographic and stylistic range of architects to allow for a variety

of design approaches. "The client wants 79 totally different houses," says Chinese architect Jessie Yan, a consultant on the project. Each firm was asked to integrate feng shui principles and a Chinese-influenced emphasis on water features into its own Western sensibilities. "It was an opportunity to do a contemporary house that related to the culture and traditions of China," says Richard Bertman, FAIA, a founding principal of CBT. Because the U.S. and New Zealand firms were signed on only through the design phase, local



Courtesy Stuart Silk Architects



Courtesy Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects



Courtesy Hunt Hale Jones Architects



Courtesy ICON architecture

The master plan for Zhongkai Sheshan Villas (above) places 79 custom homes along a series of manmade waterways. Modern designs by firms such as Stuart Silk Architects (opposite) and Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects (top) will mingle with more traditionally styled houses from Hunt Hale Jones Architects (above, middle) and other firms.

Shanghai architects handled the construction drawings. But ZK Group is currently considering bringing the design architects into the construction process, which should start at the end of this year.—*meghan drueding*

movable beast

Toronto-based Sustain Design Studio first envisioned the miniHome as an off-the-grid house, but building code and zoning constraints ushered the firm in a different direction. Now, it's technically an RV, but principal Andy Thompson says it's intended—and fully equipped—to serve as a second home, cottage, vacation retreat, or guest cabin.

To keep costs down, the home is designed for mass production. Its structural insulated panel construction, panelized rainscreen walls, and rubber flooring make it green, too. Housed within its 8-foot-wide-by-36-foot-long shell are a full kitchen and bath, stainless steel appliances, and a 10,000 BTU forced-air furnace. Available upgrades include solar panels, engineered wood floors, and Baltic birch kitchen cabinets.

"It really isn't practical as a trailer because it's so heavy," Thompson says. "But the good thing is that you can use it in the wilderness and move it later, if you like." The house is priced from \$103,000 to \$160,000.—*nigel f. maynard*



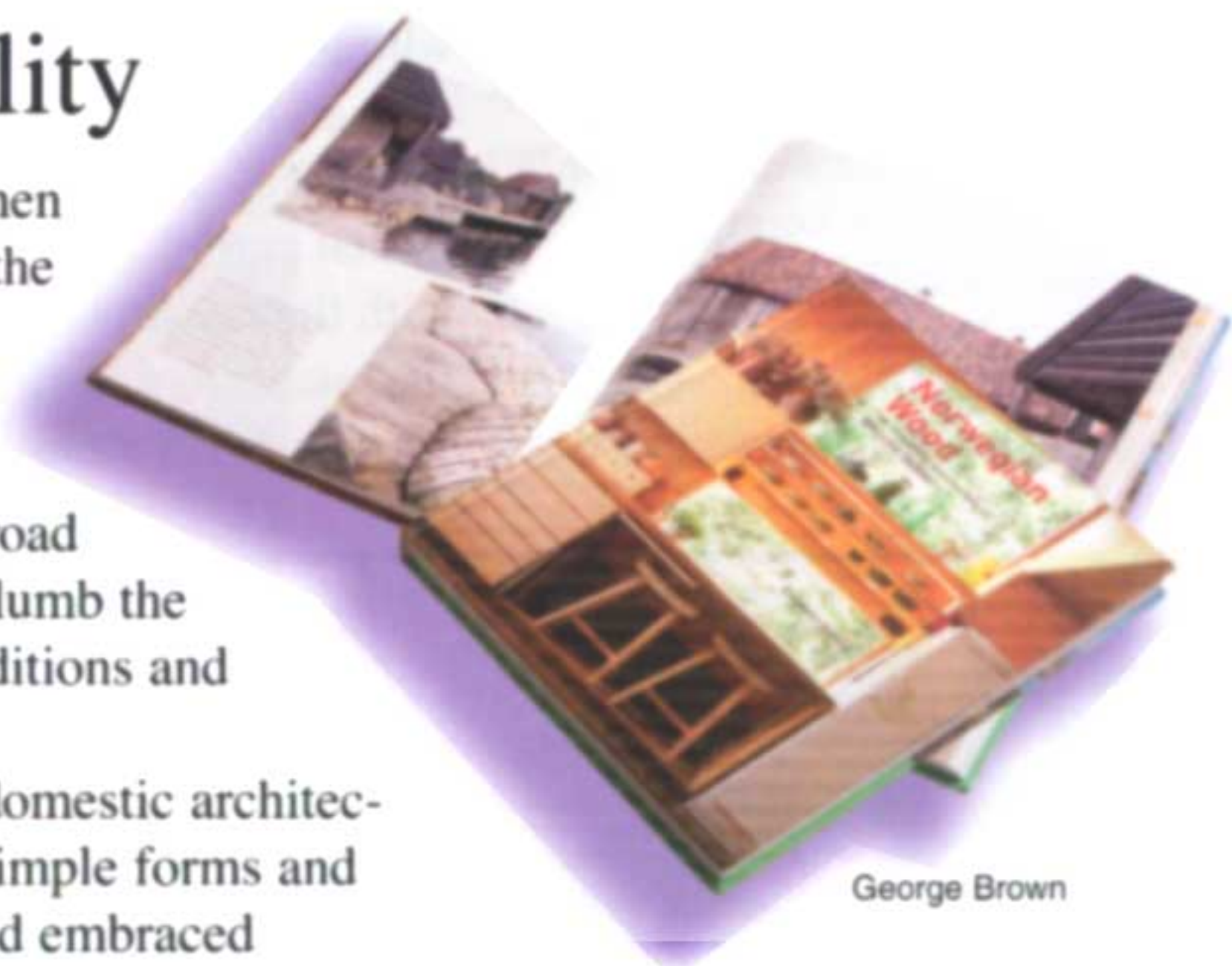
Photos: Courtesy Sustain Design Studio

The modest miniHome features a rainscreen cladding of Richlite paper-based siding, Galvalume, or cedar; Ikea cabinets, rubber floors, and low-VOC water-based finishes jazz up the interior.

domestic tranquility

One of the few prominent women architects in Norway during the last century, Wenche Selmer came of age during the post-World War II reconstruction boom. She traveled and worked abroad but returned to her native Oslo to plumb the richness of Norwegian building traditions and to raise her young family.

Delicate balances informed the domestic architecture she designed. She sought out simple forms and open plans that honored the past and embraced modern life and that brought out the natural beauty of the landscape. Her houses were so sensitive to their sites that she received permission to build close to the coastline even after conservation restrictions were put in place. As an associate professor at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (where the author of this book is a professor), she influenced scores of young architects with her technical accomplishments and her pragmatic, insightful understanding of residential architecture.—*s. claire conroy*



George Brown

Norwegian Wood: The Thoughtful Architecture of Wenche Selmer by Elisabeth Tostrup (Princeton Architectural Press, 2006)