



Mail Order Housing

PATH is the latest prefabricated home project by Philippe Starck and the Riko Group

WORDS HANNAH CHOO PHOTOS STARCK WITH RIKO

LIKE A BUILDING MADE FROM LEGO, a prefabricated home involves the putting together of different components that have been made separately somewhere in a closed, dry, controlled setting, and then transported to the intended location. Once the foundation and initial infrastructure have been laid down, assembly can be just a matter of weeks.

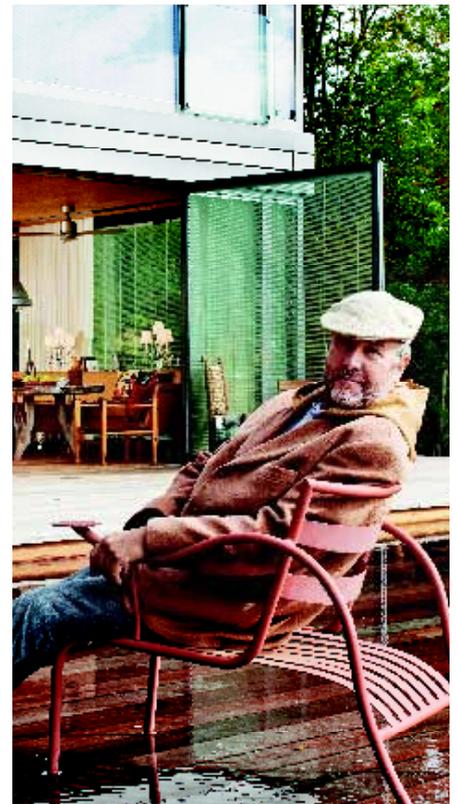
Traditionally, the process of building a home is tedious. It also takes trusting everyone involved, from the architect, to the interior designer to the construction worker, to do exactly as they are supposed to do. And when communication goes awry somewhere along the line, unpleasant surprises can pop up. Ordering a prefabricated home, however, usually leaves much less to chance, reducing the risk of something going horribly wrong.

After presenting the Democratic Ecological Architecture in 2012, a sustainable prefabricated wooden house designed by Philippe Starck and the Riko Group, the same parties have come together once more to

debut a unique line of Prefabricated Accessible Technological Homes (PATH).

Starck's mission has always been this: to create something and make life better for as many people as possible. Such is evident in the PATH houses, which provide owners the freedom to choose. Starck has developed a selection of 34 floor plans, ranging from 140m² to 350m². Prospective home buyers can simply visit the website (starckwithriko.com) and play around with various permutations. Choose the kind of roof you want, whether it's cornice, flat, or pitched, or the type of structure you want your house to be. Mix and match your interior and exterior, as well as fixtures handpicked by Starck himself. Partake in every stage of building your prefabricated home, right down to the final touches. If what you want is a wooden house, it could take only three months to complete.

These homes are a second generation of ecological houses. Thanks to impressive eco-technology that's integrated into every



CLOCKWISE A PATH house in Montfort-l'Amaury, France; kitchen and dining areas merge seamlessly; Philippe Starck on the porch, the front porch where people can hang out

component, PATH houses allow their inhabitants to reduce their daily energy intake. They are deemed as positive energy buildings (BEPOS), meaning that they produce more energy than they consume.

In the case of a traditional house, heating systems and air conditioning are guilty of at least half of your utilities bill. PATH houses however integrate excellent thermal isolation systems and eco-technological equipment (solar panels, rainwater-harvesting systems, wind turbines, etc) that use less energy.

Detractors may be concerned about the genuinity of the concept's eco-friendly

character, but know that all the materials and processes involved in its development are environmentally friendly. Wooden structures, for instance, come from wood fibres certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Overall, manufacturing a prefabricated house like PATH is far less polluting than your typical on-site construction – shorter construction time, lower energy consumption, and so on. It's hard to deny the brilliance of the idea – they're eco-friendly, stylish and timeless – but at €2,500 to €4,500 per m², and the amount you'd pay for transport, we're not sure if we are ready for it. ♻️



HOUSE IN A BOX

One of our favourite Starck moments has to be the 'build your own house' kit he devised for 3 Suisses, a French mail order company, in 1994. In this wooden box, you will find a general plan of the house, its components on a scale of 1:50, principles of woodworking, plans for wiring, and everything else you need to know about building a house. All you had to do was follow the plan, including a video on the various stages of construction to construct your very own home.