

Systems-Built Homes are Energy Efficient and Cost Effective

Times have changed. In the past, when you asked someone about a systems-built home, the best reaction you could elicit was a confused look. Today, an industry study estimates that more than 50 percent of all new homes are built using a form of systems-built housing—a type of home construction where certain components of the home are manufactured and assembled in a factory or plant before arriving at a home site.

Virtually indistinguishable from conventional site-built homes, systems-built homes can offer the consumer a number of unique advantages. Whether you are compelled by the efficiency and appeal of a modular or panelized home, the rustic charm of a log home or the dependability and beauty of a concrete home, consider a systems-built home for your next purchase.

Concrete Building Systems

Concrete and cement-based building systems long have been praised for durability and strength, but more recently these building types have been recognized as aesthetically appealing. In 2004, the official show home of the annual International Builders' Show was built using as much as two million pounds of concrete. Traditionally used in foundations and basements, concrete and cement-based building systems now account for more than 14 percent of all wall systems in new homes. All types of concrete building systems, including Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs), concrete masonry, removable forms and precast panels share similar qualities of fire and noise resistance and energy efficiency while remaining comparable in cost to wood-frame homes.

Log Homes

The log home has held a special place in America's heart. Millions of Americans associate log homes with the serenity of mountain retreats, lakeside villas and ski chalets. Modern log homes have evolved into the ultimate combination of lifestyle, leisure and functionality.

Aside from their distinctive look, log homes retain the natural thermal mass qualities of wood, resulting in well-insulated homes suitable for any region. With designers adding amenities like media rooms and home offices, it's no wonder that today more people use a log home as a primary residence than a vacation home.

Modular Homes

Gone are the days when modular homes conjured images of boxy, one-story homes. In 2002, a record number of consumers bought new modular homes, a testament to the construction method's benefits and growing popularity. Modular homes are built conventionally but in an off-site location, usually a climate-controlled factory. Homes built in a controlled environment can be built with more precise machinery and reduced amounts of weather damage and worksite pilferage, resulting in substantial savings for the home buyer. Modular homes leave their production facilities complete with walls, floors, ceilings, stairs, closets, doors, wiring, plumbing and even carpet intact.

Modular home buyers also have benefited from the advent of computer aided design (CAD). CAD programs allow modular producers to build customized modules and incorporate more intricate designs into their plans. Additional customization can take place after delivery so whether you want your home to have nine-foot ceilings, elaborate dormers or a wrap-around porch, a modular home might be in your future.

Panelized Homes

Panelization—where certain segments of the home are prefabricated before arrival on site—is an increasingly popular method of home building. In fact, many stick-built homes incorporate methods of panelization, whether in floor or roof trusses or wall systems. Panelized homes, like modular homes, benefit from being produced in a climate controlled environment, and once the panels are delivered to the site, the home can be under roof in a few days. Building a panelized home gives home buyers both the strength and efficiency of a systems-built home and the flexibility and intricacy of a custom home. In fact, most panelized homes can be customized to any amount of amenity or luxury.