

Wind River Tiny Homes and Walden Studio seek to satisfy living-smaller vibes

July 5 2016, by Nancy Owano



Credit: Wind River Tiny Homes

(Tech Xplore)—Years back, a tiny structure in the woods evoked words like "hovel" or "shack" but tiny homes in the news now suggest that engineers, craftsmen and designers are on to a new train of thought about

little houses, taking all they know about morphing furniture to accommodate small spaces and energy-saving techniques to their work tables.

Wind River Tiny Homes reflects the back to nature small home concept. Appealing to those who are fed up with ecologically harmful environments in big city life, their structures are designed to be sustainable. The Chattanooga, Tennessee based company states that sometimes you have to think tiny to live big.

They are in the business of designing and crafting tiny homes. They live in the same homes that they sell and they tweak their own living spaces. That, they said, gives them "a practical perspective on what works and what doesn't in a tiny living space."

The team can build a [house](#) on a trailer and deliver it to a customer in the continental U.S. or if the customer lives in a country touching the U.S. they can take the house to the nearest border.

Living costs? For one, tiny homes have low utility bills. They said a couple, "Travis and Brittany are currently paying \$35 a month for water AND electricity combined."

Don't compare their homes to RVs, though. They said their goal is "to build beautiful custom homes that are permanent [dwellings](#)."

The features include composting toilet. Heating options include small propane heaters or space heaters.

Another option is radiant heated floors, which may not heat the entire home to the ideal temperature, but come close; another option that some choose, they said, is a small fireplace.

As for powering a house, they said their standard practice on their level 2 and 3 tiny homes is to use propane appliances for large inductive loads such as hot water heater, heater, and cooking range and then to use only 120v efficient appliances and LED lights.

As propane appliances are costly, they said their level 1 homes include all electric appliances. They said the homes are designed to be plugged into a standard 30 amp RV connection.

A fully off the grid home would take on a solar system with a battery bank. "In this case we would use the propane appliance method to decrease power usage and you would have a fully self contained solar system that would power lights, small appliances, and outlets for charging."

How long to build a house? They said a typical mobile tiny house build takes around 12 weeks, provided that all the funding is available on schedule. They said their homes can be built for anywhere between \$25,000 - \$70,000 or more.

In the Netherlands, a tiny house is a sign that the general tiny house movement attracts interest. This house is from Walden Studio which mounted it on a trailer for Marjolein Jonker in the Netherlands.



Credit: Walden

The advantage of the house, like other small eco-houses, is that it uses up less energy.

The makers here said, "a small wood stove can easily heat the entire home and the roof is fitted with three big solar panels that produce the required electricity." A composting toilet is also a feature in this home,

"The house will also harvest its own rainwater and take care of waste water with a natural wastewater treatment system." Included in the building materials are birch plywood and a white finish for the walls.

The facade is made out of thermally modified pine wood from Scandinavia, treated naturally to last as long as a tropical hard wood. Construction includes spruce wood studs and Ecoboard, a sheet material made of agricultural waste products, painted with ecological paint, they said. The floor is made of cork and the house is insulated with a layer of sheep [wool](#).

The house is the first tiny house to be legally placed by a municipality in the Netherlands. For now it's a temporary permit, reported *ArchDaily*, an architecture web site, last month.

Associate Editor Lauren Ro of *Curbed*, in fact, reported recently that in the Netherlands, "the mobile tiny homes movement has recently been gaining [traction](#)."

The key feature, Ro said, about this house is light—it is light-flooded. The entrance has a French-door and all four walls have windows, along with skylights on both sides of the roof.

Adam Williams in *Gizmag* said, "to ensure that the various appliances and fridge/freezer can run off-the-grid, a solar power [setup](#) was installed. This comprises three 300 W solar panels, an inverter, and two 12.8 V batteries. A monitor displays how much juice is left."

More information: www.windrivertinyhomes.com/

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