

From city slickers to country bumpkins, homeowners have always longed for a special place from which to escape the toils of day-to-day life. In 1783, Marie-Antoinette notoriously commissioned architect Richard Mique to design a Petit Hameau (Little Hamlet) of small buildings on the grounds of the Petit Trianon at the Palace of Versailles. Fleeing the scrutiny of the royal court, Marie and her attendants would run off to the mock farm, dressing up as milkmaids and shepherdesses and pretending to live "normal" peasant lives—which we can only assume involved eating cake.

Nearly 150 years later, British author Virginia Woolf heralded the benefits of a private abode in her 1929 book

*A Room of One's Own* with its famous phrase "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

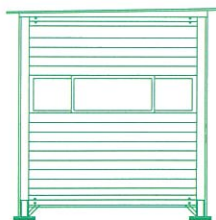
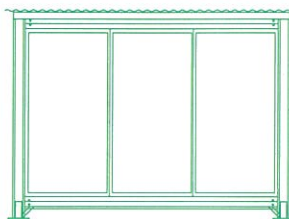
A more modern, unisex version of backyard escapism comes in the form of miniature prefabricated outbuildings. "The traditional definition of a shed is a lean-to or stand-alone structure that provides shelter or storage," says Debra Prinzing, a freelance garden and design writer and our expert reviewer this month. "I tried to come up with a contemporary definition: a space that contains whatever you're passionate about."

We've rounded up five of the modulars that make the perfect homes (but not too far) away from home.

**A Note on Our Expert:**

While scouting backyards for *Seattle Homes & Lifestyles* in 2000, then-garden editor Debra Prinzing repeatedly stumbled upon sheds retrofitted for everything from potting plants to serving supper. The more she saw, the more obsessed she became, and she was soon crisscrossing the country in pursuit of outdoor abodes, now featured in her book *Stylish Sheds and Elegant Hideaways: Big Ideas for Small Backyard Destinations*, published in 2008. Now based in Los Angeles, Prinzing, a freelance writer who also blogs at [ShedStyle.com](http://ShedStyle.com), took a trip around town to help us find the best place to shack up.

# Out Back



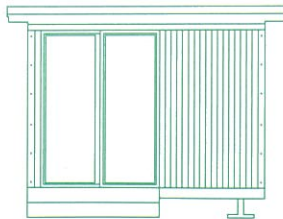
## K3

By Kithaus / 13' W x 8'9" D x 9'10" H / From \$29,500 / [kithaus.com](http://kithaus.com)

**Expert Opinion:** This shed is perfectly suited for a contemporary setting. I like the flexibility of rearranging doors, windows, and screens to provide privacy or ventilation; the configuration is very adaptable without having to be highly customized. My only reservation is that the deck, which is integral to the design because it extends the space and visually doubles the square footage, really jacks up the price.

**What We Think:** Form and function work beautifully together in the K3. The layered aluminum-slat walls, SIPs, and ipe flooring and siding mean the K3 is not only kind to the environment and easy on the eye but comes ready for you to hang everything from clocks to carpentry tools on its walls. (Plus, the optional solar package turns us on.)

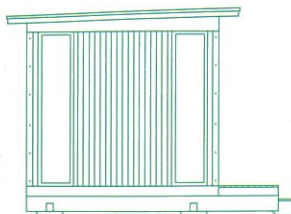
Story by Miyoko Ohtake  
Portrait by Amanda Friedman



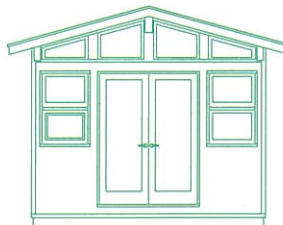
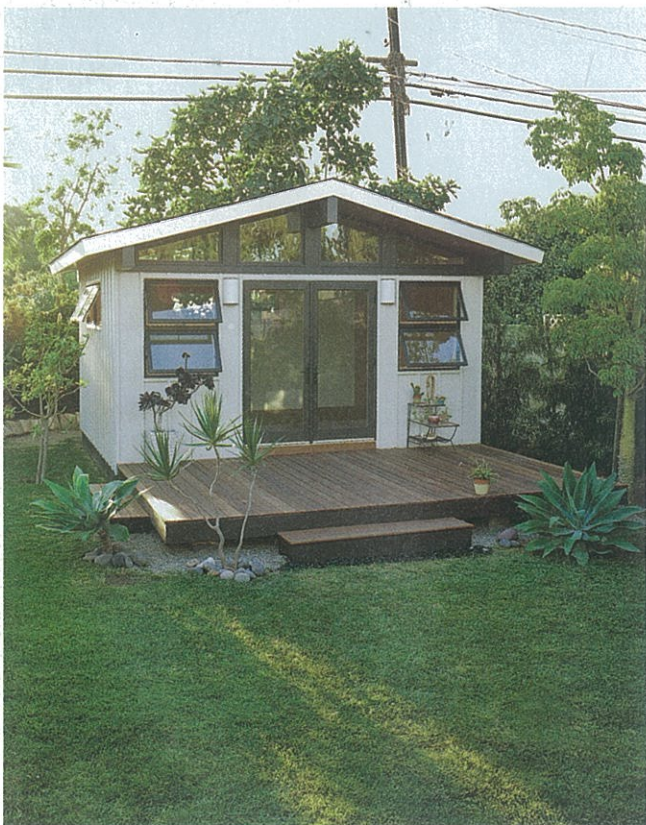
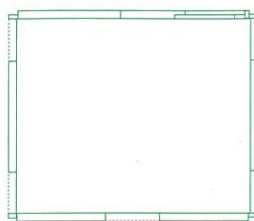
## Standard Cabana

By Modern Cabana / 12' W x 10' D x 9' H / From \$11,500 / [moderncabana.com](http://moderncabana.com)

**Expert Opinion:** This is the greenest prefab I've seen: They use FSC-certified lumber, recycled denim insulation, and low-VOC paints (where paint is used at all) and reduce waste in manufacturing and shipping. All that is really great, but the design is wonderful, too. It would look perfect next to a mid-century or ranch-style house.



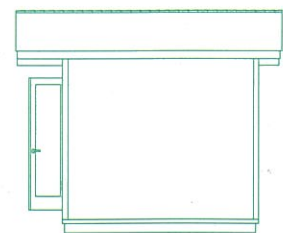
**What We Think:** Modern Cabana's goal is to create spaces that are "simple and affordable yet look great." Check. Check. And check. With its eco-features, there's nothing standard about the Standard Cabana.



## Type 03

By Neoshed / 14' W x 12' D x 11'4" H / From \$25,000 / [neoshed.com](http://neoshed.com)

**Expert Opinion:** The rectangular shape of the Neoshed is an appealing alternative to the squarish sheds you often see, and that makes it feel very open; it's like taking one room of a house and plopping it in the garden in terms of proportions. It feels very livable and could be the perfect guest room, office, or studio.



**What We Think:** The largest and most houselike structure in our roundup, the Type 3 was clearly inspired by California's mid-century Eichler homes, and it stands as a viable (if somewhat kitsch) Scrappy Doo to the original's Scooby. What's better than one Eichler? One and a half Eichlers. ▶

