



## A Room on Its Own

Kithaus's new prefab K3 makes building a backyard studio a snap.

Like a lot of prefab housing, K3, a 117-square-foot aluminum-frame structure, is designed to be assembled on-site quickly and easily. But unlike its ready-made brethren, K3 isn't intended as a residence; it's a freestanding auxiliary space, perhaps for a home office, guest bedroom, or yoga studio. "We're selling architecture as a piece of furniture," says Tom Sandonato, who designed the system with Martin Wehmann for their California-based company, Kithaus.

Buyers choose between a \$29,500 basic model and a \$44,900 deluxe version complete with decking, canopies, and louvers made of sustainably harvested ipe wood. Parts arrive flat-packed within four to six weeks and can be put together without heavy equipment, though Kithaus will install it for an additional \$2,000. Here Sandonato walks us through his "dressed-up" box, available through Design Within Reach ([www.dwr.com](http://www.dwr.com)). —Belinda Lanks

**Sandonato** (b. 1954), right, a designer and artist, worked with **Wehmann**

(b. 1968), a carpenter, constructing retail installations before they founded Kithaus ([www.kithaus.com](http://www.kithaus.com)).

Sandonato was inspired to make a prefab structure after seeing the aluminum-clad buildings that the architect Glenn Murcutt designed in the Australian outback. In 2004, the two completed their first prototype in Wehmann's store, Silverstream Production & Design.



The windows are low-E dual-glazed glass.

K3 comes prewired for electricity with a switch for an overhead dome light, as well as two plates in the floor, one for a data port and the other for a duplex outlet.

We're working with a solar provider in California to develop a package that would enable you to be off-grid.

The slatted louvers—solid panels are also available—lock down, so if you're not there for weeks at a time, you don't have to worry about someone breaking your windows and having a slumber party.

We will soon offer a new heating/air-conditioning unit. The compressor will mount onto the exterior slat wall, and it will have a very tasteful, minimalist box that fits inside.

The unit is essentially an Erector Set of parts, posts, and beams, held together by a patented clamping system. A device in the recess of the aluminum-extrusion profile clamps down on the flange portion of the next piece of extrusion. We licensed the technology from a company that developed it for multi-story buildings. The wall, floors, and ceilings are structurally insulated panels.

There are two aluminum slat walls. The one on the inside can hold hooks and brackets for shelving. The anodized exterior wall is meant for hanging things like a ladder, bike, or canoe.