

going

MODULAR

story by Trisha McMahon



Top: GreenPods are available in a handful of models, which typically range from 300 to 800 feet. **Above:** The GreenPod interiors are decorated with sustainable materials and incorporate the work of local craftsmen. *Photos courtesy of GreenPod Development.*

Port Townsend group builds homes that are healthy and sustainable both inside and out.

When architectural designer Ann Raab started GreenPod Development, “there was a lot of focus on the outside of the home being environmentally friendly,” she explains. That raised the question, “What about the inside?”

The vision behind Port Townsend-based GreenPod Development is simple — to construct sustainable, energy-efficient homes that have minimal environmental impact, but also homes that are healthy and “green” on the inside.

Partnering with designer Suzanne DeVall and collaborating with other local business people, the group is simplifying the process of building a green home, while also keeping them affordable.

One initial challenge that needed to be tackled was cost.

“We wanted to prove that green isn’t necessarily expensive,” says Ann.

The solution there was to build modular homes — called GreenPods — and offer a handful of affordable models that can still easily be customized.

Designs for the compact GreenPods range from a mere 300 to 800 square feet.

Movable walls on the inside and multi-functional furniture maximize the use of that space. Additionally, the units are designed such that they can be joined or stacked to increase space.

Prices vary due to how much customization is done during construction, Ann notes.

If the design is kept close to the model, the price is very reasonable, while customized homes will naturally be more expensive.

GreenPods can be used as accessory units to existing homes, as vacation cottages and more.

There are even Floating Pods for those interested in a nautical, on-the-water home. GreenPod

Development worked with P&T Fabrications in Port Townsend on designing the home.

By working with local businesses and now even construction taking place in a Port Townsend factory, costs and the carbon impact can be kept down.

MedPods

The newest venture for GreenPod Development is its “MedPods,” small home units that can be used for aging parents as an alternative to placing them in a nursing home.

“You might pay from \$4,000 to \$5,000 a month for a quality nursing home,” Marketing Director Renee Bennett says, a cost that quickly adds up, not to mention possible waiting lists.

A basic MedPod, which is wheelchair accessible, contains many of the home elements found in the GreenPods and starts at \$62,000, she says.

The MedPods are constructed similarly to the regular GreenPods and are also built for energy efficiency and air quality.

Like the GreenPods, the interiors are designed with sustainable materials, including cork, bamboo, composite glass and reclaimed wood.

“[The MedPods] would provide a wonderful space for a senior to live in,” Renee notes.

The interiors are designed with organic, naturally antimicrobial, biodegradable materials derived from plant fibers.

The use of these materials is especially beneficial for people who suffer from allergies or have other sensitivities, as these materials won’t mildew or mold.

Simply purchasing something labeled “natural” doesn’t necessarily mean it is healthy.

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New floors? Three options

Thinking of putting in a new floor? Here are three different types of floor that are good for the budget and great for the home.

Carpet

Tigressá, a soft and durable brand of carpet, was recently added to McCrorie Carpet One’s product line. “We just introduced it two months ago and it’s now our top selling line of carpet,” says David McCrorie.

The carpet’s technology, which uses dense nylon fibers that are small but strong, results in a plush carpet that is durable enough to withstand the regular wear of foot traffic, while still remaining soft.

Oftentimes, carpets get matted down due to people constantly walking on them and eventually lose their softness, David explains, but the Tigressá lasts much longer and won’t get crushed down.

As an added bonus, the price is comparable to other carpet brands.

Hardwood

Hand-scraped hardwood is the hottest thing in hardwood, David says.

The flooring is exactly what the name says — hardwood that has been scraped by hand.

The long planks of wood have a classic hardwood appearance, while the scraped aspect gives it a rustic look.

You can even find some of it on the floor of the McCrorie store in Port Angeles.

The wood comes in both light and dark shades and is an alternative to the common smooth, thin planks of hardwood.



David McCrorie stands in front of the carpet samples of Tigressá, a new carpet line available at McCrorie Carpet One, which has stores in Port Angeles, Sequim and Port Hadlock. *Photo by Trisha McMahon.*

Eco-friendly

Interest remains great in green flooring materials, including marmoleum, bamboo and cork.

Eco floor products are durable — which makes them desirable for flooring — and are made of renewable products, making them environmentally friendly.

Cork is harvested as bark from primarily cork oak trees, rather than cutting down the trees, while bamboo is a quick growing grass that can mature in sometimes just three years.

McCrorie Carpet One has three locations on the Peninsula — in Port Angeles at 547 N. Oakridge Drive (360-457-7500); in Sequim at 279 W. Washington (360-683-7500); and in Port Hadlock at 11662 Rhody Drive (360-379-9500). They are currently offering a sale on the Tigressá carpet and hand-scraped hardwood. They can be reached online at www.mccrorie.com.

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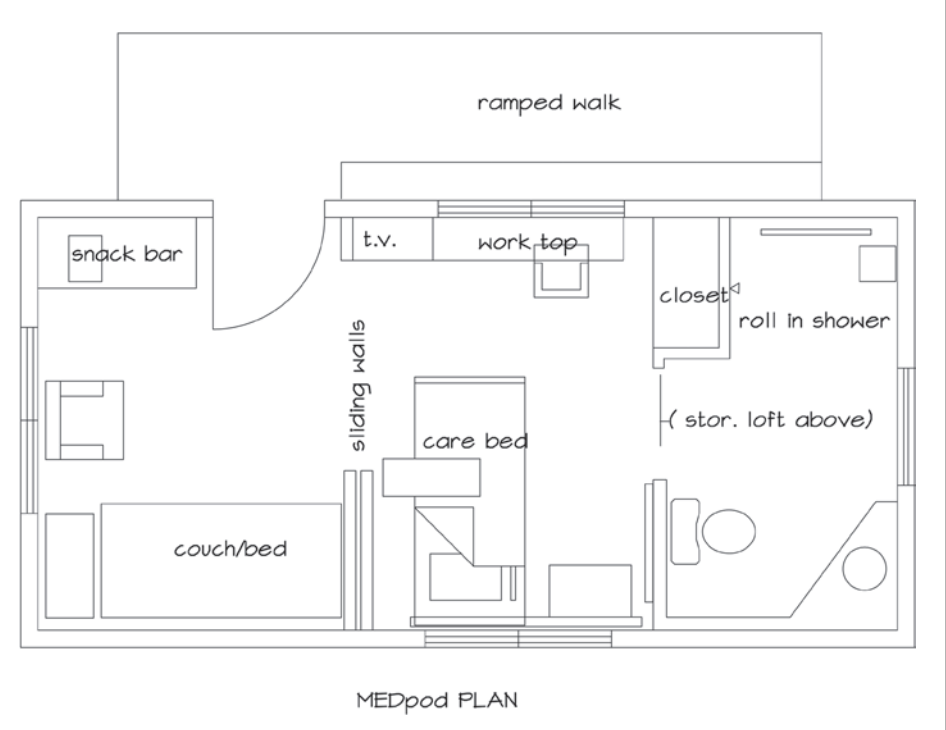
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Above: The floor plan of the MedPod, which is designed to be low maintenance and energy efficient, like the other GreenPod homes. The MedPod also includes wheelchair accessibility, monitoring equipment and separate private living quarters.

Below: The Langley GreenPod, with its flat roof, can have a roof garden and provide additional space. Photos courtesy of GreenPod Development.

For example: “Wool is organic,” Ann explains, “but if it’s treated with pesticides, it’s not as healthy anymore. We’re getting back to the basics — using products we know are safe.” “It’s all about re-educating the world,” Renee adds.

These accessory dwelling units could also be used as a housing unit for a live-in caregiver, or for those with injuries that need rehabilitation or other type of assistance.

Staying local

GreenPod Development strives to work with local contractors, business and crafters on the homes.

In a recent move, the pods are now constructed in Port Townsend, cutting down on gas and transportation costs.

GreenPod Port Townsend, owned by Lesley Barron, is set to start constructing a GreenPod this month that will ultimately be transported to Bainbridge Island.

GreenPods have already been built locally in Quilcene and Port Townsend.

“Once the permitting process has been completed

and the site is ready, construction of the home can take five to six weeks,” says Greg Barron of GreenPod Port Townsend, who initially met Ann back during construction of her first GreenPod.

Since the homes are constructed in a factory under controlled conditions, modular

homes typically take less time to build, cost less, and produce less waste during construction, Greg explains.

All the pods utilize tall windows that let in more light, a passive solar design — south-facing so the sun naturally warms the unit — low flow plumbing and energy efficient appliances.

Additional green options include greywater recycling, rainwater storage, roof gardens or living roofs.

Pods can also be placed on Diamond Pin foundations, further reducing the environmental impact on the site.

The use of nontoxic and sustainable textiles and chemical-free materials on the inside extends the vision to the interior.

The modular type of design creates endless possibilities for arrangement and room layout, while functional art — such as a table that could double as the centerpiece of a room — keeps things useful and green.

“We’re creating something that is functional and nontoxic,” Ann explains.

A showroom displaying the interior options and locally-made furniture, including furniture by Port Townsend artist Seth Roland, is set up in downtown Port Townsend at April Fool & Penny Too, 725 Water St.

The eco-friendly pods are designed to obtain Built Green Three Leaf and LEED Platinum certifications.

GreenPod Development is based in Port Townsend. For more information about GreenPod Development or any of the GreenPod and MedPod models, visit www.greenpoddevelopment.com or call 360-385-5614 or 800-569-0831.

Inexpensive kitchen tricks

Updates that will help you love your kitchen don’t have to come with a heart-stopping cost.

Here are four do-it-yourself ways to give your kitchen a whole new look for not a lot of money:

1. Fabrics. Never underestimate the power of fabrics. The right curtains on that window above the sink can really make it pop, while new cushions can punch up the appeal and comfort of mundane kitchen chairs.

2. Paint. Another powerful and budget-friendly way to upgrade your kitchen is to give it a fresh coat of paint.

3. Metal accents. Turn your attention to some of the easy-to-replace metal accents in your kitchen that might be looking worn or dated, including cabinet knobs, drawer

pulls, electrical faceplates, even the kitchen faucet.

4. Furniture. If your kitchen is in good shape but has just seen better days, consider refinishing it yourself to remove scratches.

Or, hit used furniture stores and yard sales in search of a newer set that may be in better condition. A third option is to buy new, unfinished furniture and do the finishing yourself.

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Window Replacement Seminar
Hartnagel Building Supply
Tuesday, Oct. 19
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window seminar

Learn about rebates and credits available for homeowners.

If you’ve been putting off doing something about those old, drafty windows in your house, this is the time to replace them.

Besides saving money in energy costs with new windows and having a more comfortable home, you may also qualify for various tax credits and rebates.

Hartnagel Building Supply, 3111 Highway 101 E., Port Angeles, will host a free Window Replacement Seminar on Tuesday, Oct. 19 at 6 p.m.

The seminar will be presented by Brian Stimson of Cascade Windows, who will explain the basics of window replacement, plus other representatives will discuss local and federal rebates and credits available.

Attendees will learn the benefits of replacing those old, drafty windows and find out which types of windows and UV coatings qualify for local rebates and a federal tax credit of up to \$1,500.

They will also have the chance to meet window installers and hear about the installation process.

Bob Kajfasz, commercial energy analyst and Weatherwise Service administrator for the city of Port Angeles, will explain the city’s energy rebate for qualifying windows and doors.

Weatherwise Service is an energy conservation program offered by the city in cooperation with the Bonneville Power Administration and the Conservation Rate Credit. The city offers rebates of up to \$6 per square foot to replace windows and glass sliding doors.

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