

Mod-Pod Living Unit Alpine Minded Design

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If a squat, thin-skinned, many-eyed modular living unit that looks like the popular conception of a future outer-planet home never becomes common in Colorado mountain country it won't be the fault of a young Estes Park man.

He's Gerry Zeitlin, originally from Philadelphia and an engineering graduate of the University of Colorado. The new Futuro distributor for Colorado, Zeitlin has erected his first 26-foot diameter fiberglass shell home just west of Colorado 93

on a bluff overlooking Boulder.

Despite strong interior appeal, the decidedly modern oval building mounted 2½ feet off the ground on four sets of steel legs appears to have two built-in problems that could delay acceptance of the innovative housing product.

For one thing, these 6½-ton structures manufactured in New Jersey and Michigan are likely to run into fire from esthetic environmentalists because of their sharp contrast with traditional mountain housing styles and radical departure from nature's own backdrop.

Zeitlin is "anticipating a little opposition" on this score but says he's working with two architects who will help his firm, Futurado, Inc., plan the installation of these "houses" to maintain a good environment.

One approach will be to insure that the units aren't located too close to one another, Zeitlin said.

The other problem, which may not seem serious to many people with plenty of extra cash for a second home, is the cost. The Futuro has a base cost of \$15,600 at the plant; to this must be added \$2,500 for shipment to the Denver area and \$750 for erection on the site, Zeitlin said.

Thus a Futuro, complete with shag rug, undercounter freezer and refrigerator, electric stove, heating and air-conditioning systems and a barbecue-fire pod, runs about \$35 a square foot for its 530 square feet.

Of course, this over-all price of \$18,850 doesn't include provision for sewage disposal, ordinarily a septic tank. On the positive side, Zeitlin expects to see a plant located near Denver to make Futuros, which would cut the freight bill to about \$500, he estimates.

Probably the most remarkable thing about the Futuro is the commanding view afforded from nearly any point in the combination living room-dining room-kitchen, which stretches about two-thirds of the way around the interior. From the 23-foot sofa that curves with the wall one has a superb view of more than 270 degrees through most of the 4 by 2-foot elliptical nautical-type windows evenly spaced around the entire building.

The only obstructions are presented by the small bedroom that accounts for 15 feet of the wall (three windows), exit space leading to the retracting stair (one window) and adequate shower-bathroom (two windows).

Although this mod-pod structure is hardly competitive with a conventional building cost-wise, within its limits it is functional. There's only one closet, but there are storage spaces nearly everywhere—under the entire sofa, under the fire pod, under the bed, in the bathroom, even under the floor in the space that also accommodates the heating, air-conditioning and electrical systems.

Because of the insulation provided by the two-inch polyurethane "sandwich" with a thin fiberglass interior coating and an exterior skin of polyester resin gel, the unit is easy to heat (electrically), according to Zeitlin, (and can be used the year around). And with the use of two sturdy, low cocktail tables for additional base with the sofa, two extra beds are readily available.

But, as Zeitlin stressed, the Futuro is a second or vacation home. It is not a family home, nor should it be used in conventional residential settings.