

# HOME DELIVERY

Lizzie Pickard and Daniel Cogan built their house from a \$45,000 kit—and bought themselves the freedom to customize every detail.

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Daniel Cogan and Lizzie Pickard keep things simple with unfinished furniture, such as this \$30 occasional table. **OPPOSITE** The couple's completed home in New Lebanon, New York, sits on six and a half acres.



“My childhood was spent in houses filled with gold froufrou,” says Lizzie Pickard, of growing up during the opulent '80s. “So I was aching for plainness.”



Give an otherwise neutral room an unexpected burst of color and pattern with a bold rug.



**IKE SO MANY NEWLYWEDS,** Lizzie Pickard and Daniel Cogan wanted to buy a place of their own. But back in 2003, the overheated housing market priced them out of desirable options in Brooklyn, where the pair were renting an apartment.

So they set a budget of \$150,000 and started looking north of the city—only to discover costs there almost as restrictive. “All we could find were falling-down shacks on stamp-size lots,” says Cogan, a nurse practitioner. After he and Pickard saw enough dumps to make their hearts sink, a real estate agent persuaded them to consider six and a half acres of undeveloped land in New Lebanon, New York, site of America’s first Shaker community. The two were dubious about the idea of building a home from scratch, but when they arrived at the wooded lot, Cogan remembers, “I saw a lightbulb appear over Lizzie’s head.”

They purchased the acreage outright for \$35,000 and planned to construct a small one-room cabin, but a local homeowner’s association regulation required a minimum of 1,500 square feet. Pressed to come up with a cost-effective solution that didn’t feel like a compromise, Cogan and Pickard turned to Shelter-Kit,

**LEFT** The living room’s \$2,000 woodstove paid for itself within a year by dramatically reducing heating costs. An Ikea sofa and chair flank one major splurge: Vivienne Westwood’s Magnolia Ice rug. **ABOVE** Pickard and Cogan painted their living and dining rooms with Benjamin Moore’s In Your Eyes.

Ultimately, the couple spent more than they intended, but gained the liberty to create exactly what they wanted.

A few strategically placed nails provide handy and artful storage for cutting boards.



Pickard and Cogan opted for Ikea base cabinets, but skipped upper cupboards in favor of an open and airy kitchen. A Haley & Lucas print reminds diners to eat their veggies.

SEESHOP GUIDE, page 126, for more information on Shelter-Kit, as well as a rundown of Pickard and Cogan's favorite sources.

a company that sells customized modular houses (essentially, pre-cut, pre-drilled lumber for a weather-tight shell, plus subfloor and roof). The couple went with a two-story, three-bedroom model that cost \$45,000. While the kits are supposed to require no carpentry experience, Pickard and Cogan played it safe by hiring a local contractor—a decision, they say, that was well worth the expense.

**STILL, THE DUO FOUND** inspired ways to cut costs. “We sent pine trees cleared from our lot to a local mill for credit and used that to get floor planks,” Cogan explains. And though they chose a style that looks luxe—wide boards—he adds, “it ends up the same price as regular boards because they’re half the labor to install and half the price to cut.”

A former clothing designer, Pickard did most of the decorating (her husband admits to making about “three of the 19,000 decisions that went into this place”), and she took her cues from the town’s Shaker history. “There’s a love of simplicity that dates back to the earliest days of American history. The Shakers were masters of this,” Pickard says. “My childhood was spent in houses filled with gold froufrou,” she adds, of growing up in the opulent ’80s. “So I was aching for plainness.” Fittingly, the pair whitewashed their floors, and Pickard stitched up curtains in place of cabinet doors in the kitchen. A dark-wood dining table that she inherited from her grandmother was stripped to fit in with the light, airy decor. And the majority of the couple’s furniture—including tables, chairs, and dressers—came from American Unfinished Furniture, which sells fairly inexpensive pieces that haven’t been stained or painted.

Ultimately, the couple spent more than they intended, but gained the liberty to create exactly what they wanted. The total cost for Pickard and Cogan’s land, home kit, contractor, and essentials such as plumbing and electricity? \$275,000. “Astonishingly,” Pickard says, “I can’t think of anything I would change.”

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*CL* senior editor **Joshua Lyon** bought his favorite sweater for \$1 at a Goodwill in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.



**LEFT** A wooden dining table, inherited from Pickard’s grandmother, was stripped to complement a new set of unfinished chairs. **BELOW** The couple turned a spare upstairs room into a sewing and music nook. **BOTTOM** Pickard bought the guest room’s iron bed frame from Lands’ End and painted the walls Benjamin Moore’s Violet Dusk.

