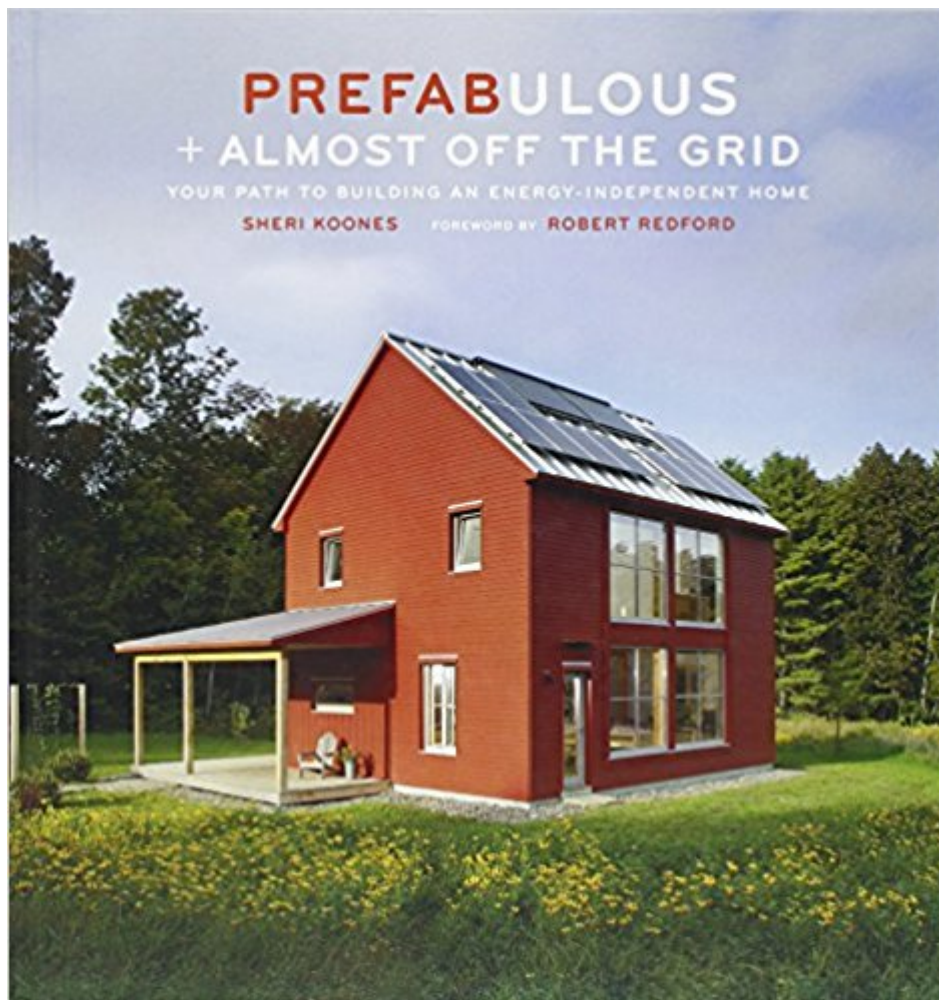


The book was found

# Prefabulous + Almost Off The Grid: Your Path To Building An Energy-Independent Home



## Synopsis

Prefabrication offers a simple path to the green home of your dreams, and in her latest book, *Prefabulous* author Sheri Koones highlights the many ways of using prefabrication to create almost-off-the-grid homes; houses that are not only environmentally friendly but often operate at nearly zero annual energy cost. Taking energy from the grid when necessary and returning any excess energy produced, almost-off-the-grid homes function on a fraction of the energy required by most houses, and additionally are more comfortable, healthier, quieter inside, and far cheaper to operate. As energy costs continue to rise, the almost-off-the-grid house proves its worth.

*Prefabulous + Almost Off the Grid* profiles more than 30 of the most energy-efficient homes in the United States, and this hardworking guide reveals how homeowners can achieve similar results with floor plans, the latest, most efficient technologies, and multiple images of the exterior and interior of each home. Praise for *Prefabulous + Almost Off the Grid*: Recipient of the 2013 Robert Bruss Gold Book Award from the National Association of Real Estate Editors (NAREE) "You can build a high quality, environmentally friendly and efficient home at a reasonable price with a look and feel of a traditional home. Advancements like those used in our house and the other houses in this book will transform the homebuilding industry." Christine Todd Whitman, former governor of New Jersey and administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency "The time has come to throw out the old stereotypes and to embrace prefab building techniques as the way of the future; and the best approach for today. For anyone wanting to create a house that's sustainable in every sense of the word, this book is an excellent place to start."

"Sarah Susanka, architect and author of *The Not So Big House* series "I'm passionate about prefab because I know that it can spark an incredibly positive change in the building industry and dramatically reduce costs and construction duration. *Prefabulous + Almost Off the Grid* is an enlightening guide on using prefab to create your own affordable, energy-efficient home." Bruce Ratner, chairman and chief executive of the Forest City Ratner Companies "Sheri Koones highlights the many ways of using prefabrication to create almost-off-the-grid homes that are not only environmentally friendly but often operate at nearly zero annual energy cost. . . . This is an easy-on-the-eyes guide that includes floor plans and multiple images of the exterior and interior of each home. It is not a manual for green construction, but a general overview of aspects of prefab and green construction. And it does that well." Natural Life magazine "If you're ready to do something about your energy dependence, or if you enjoy stories of people who've bucked the trends, you owe it to yourself to give *Prefabulous + Almost Off the Grid* a look. Beautifully illustrated, it ends with a great resources list for

the homes showcased. —;Examiner.com —;Indispensable guide to creating the ideal, almost-off-the-grid home. . . . This text is both timely and tempting to anyone interested in inhabiting a more comfortable and cost-efficient abode. —;Bask —;This attractive coffee-table-style book, the third in Koones's Prefabulous series, features 32 prefabricated houses that, to a greater or lesser extent, boast environmentally friendly, efficient, and renewable-energy elements. —;Publishers Weekly —

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sheri Koones is an award-winning author whose previous books include From Sand Castles to Dream Houses, House About It, Modular Mansions, Prefabulous, and Abrams's — Prefabulous + Sustainable. She lives in Connecticut.

basically just a series of 3 page vignettes of houses made on the prefab motif, most with serious commitment to energy conservation. By scanning the book, you can get a lot of good ideas for a house that uses minimal fossil fuels, and see what works for you; as the included houses run the gamut from fancy inner city penthouse to rustic hunting lodge. This is a very useful exercise to cement in your mind what you want vs what you are willing to pay for, as a general per sq ft cost is included in most vignettes. No real "how to" here, not that kind of book. Only downside is that the book is basically a big advertisement for the authors' favorite builders, architects, etc. Some bias in reporting present, but if you watch CNN you are used to that already.

The path to energy independence can be considered as either A) demand reduction with shelter from rising energy costs and reduced fossil fuel dependence, or B) as a solution during power outages, or C) living entirely disconnected from the grid. One review of this book seems to insinuate that the book should require that projects include renewable energy, with which I disagree. As a professional in the industry the goal we target is typically A (similar to the book), rather than B or C, and sometimes involves renewable energy, but often just plans for renewable energy in the future. The path typically involves three steps. First, plan for conservation by using a very tight, super insulated building shell while considering all the related passive attributes (shading, orientation, etc). Second, select exceptionally efficient versions of the systems in the home that consume energy, including heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, appliances, and ventilation. And then third, add renewable energy systems to offset the consumption. The first and second steps need to be implemented when the home is constructed, if at all possible. A later retrofit of these aspects is far less cost effective, and often not practical. Renewable energy however, is very possible to add to an existing home, and typically less cost effective than the first two steps during new construction. With limited examples of exceptional energy performance available in the marketplace, as I read about homes in this book that are on the path to energy independence with a superinsulated building shell, efficient systems, and either renewables in place or plans for renewables, I found the common thread to be very satisfying. It's important to keep priorities straight and the book delivers.

Full disclosure, one of the projects in the book is mine. Having worked with Sheri Koonen to get the data for our project, I can tell you she was more than thorough, asked great questions about the technology, the design, and the intent of the project. The result is a very detailed, accurate and informative snapshot of an ever changing pre-fab industry. For anyone looking to lessen the impact of building, maintaining, and living in a home, this book gives great insight into the rapidly increasing variety of designs, pre-fab building techniques, and choices available a potential home buyer looking for new, better, (sometimes) less expensive, ways to create a very livable home. No longer does manufactured housing mean a simple colonial house with 8' ceilings and boxy rooms. As much as every pre-fab maker wants to standardize their product, almost no one wants a 'standard plan' house. Everyone wants changes, additions, modifications to suit their individual needs and preferences. Every customer wants, or depending upon climate and location, needs a different level of 'energy' or 'green' features for their particular home and site. Sherri's efforts to show the wide variety of designs and building techniques now available from pre-fab manufacturers and forward

thinking developers is admirable. For anyone looking to build or learn more about what's currently available in the pre-fab world, I highly recommend you start your journey with this highly informative, well written book.

This book is full of nice pictures of wonderful houses. It is definitely inspirational. You can discover many ideas. In general this is not a book for finding detailed actionable information. Aside from the inspiration I found, I think the design could use a bit of improvement. I read this on a Kindle and I don't like having to go back and forth between the body of the book and the back of the book to match the details listed in the resources section with the photos and descriptions of each house in the body. I think a better design would be to integrate the resources more tightly on the same pages. This book was a good value to me for the inspiration I found. I saw several houses in which I would want to live, and I would enjoy seeing even more houses and more pictures.

Good overall book a great intro to the off grid world! Thank you for the fast shipping to!

I have read most of Sheri Koones books and they all are easy reads and informative. This book is typical of her work. If I were to build a modular house, her expertise would be Priceless. This book has many examples, lots of pictures and is very informative. The book is somewhat repetitive, with many of the house examples, having the exact same certifications, energy ratings, or end results. There was nothing revealed in this book that I felt I had to have in my next house. The person who invented the first clear glass window had a revolutionary idea that was a game changer in the housing industry. The idea of modular housing ( factory built housing ) is a game changer. This book didn't reveal any game changing ideas (to me at least). I also thought some real world examples of owners making cost benefit energy decisions would be informative. For example, what is the ROI on buying X's solar panels, or installing R38 fiberglass insulation Vs a higher grade of open cell or closed cell insulation in ... Chicago, or in Florida? Is it better to buy more insulation or to buy more solar panels? Overall it is a good book.

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