

House Port does for houses what Ikea did for home furniture

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The chain store Ikea has ridden to success on the popularity of its inexpensive and ready-to-assemble furniture. Now, a New York company has taken the idea to the next level.

House Port Inc., founded in 2004 by artist Hally Thacher, specializes in eco-conscious “pop-up” houses — a twist on traditional modular homes — that can be ordered online and shipped in flat packs.

The company, which has sold two houses and built a prototype in Petaluma, plans to build five model homes in the L.A. area, including one in Culver City in the coming weeks.

The homes feature insulated, prefabricated walls and roofs that when assembled create a simple but stylish living area. Included is a separate galvanized metal roof — the so-called house port — that stands over the house like a big umbrella, and shields it and the patio from the elements.

The cost is \$75,000 for a single unit with more than 1,000 square feet, and \$160,000 for one double the size. The concrete slab and fixtures, such as toilets, are on you — as is the lot.

Thacher, who grew up in Southern California, came up with the design years ago while decorating several homes near Joshua Tree National Park.

“I had made some flat-pack furniture for the houses in the desert,” said Thacher, 58.

“I thought, well, why can’t I make the house flat pack?”

The prefabricated materials are manufactured by local suppliers and come shipped via big rig. Step-by-step building instructions on a manual and DVD are included — though Thacher acknowledges some customers may want to hire a contractor to put it all together.