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KAA Design Group's prefab homes, top, come in three models ranging from 1,000 to 3,600 square feet. The company plans a green furniture line for 2009; it will include the Alkira chair, above, made with leather ropes from old sewing machines.

modern marvels

PREFAB HOMES BREAK THE COOKIE-CUTTER MOLD

You might think manufactured houses lack style and character, but KAA Design Group is out to debunk that myth with its new line of green prefabricated homes, HOM Escape in Style. While prefabs are environmentally friendly by default (building in bulk allows for the recycling of viable scraps in-house, whereas at individual home-construction sites, unused materials typically get tossed), these homes go above and beyond, incorporating elements such as natural cork flooring and FSC-certified wood. As an added bonus, the structure arrives on site 90 percent complete; all that's left to build is a pedestal foundation. "They don't require much excavation, and you can move the home without damaging the land. It's like you're floating on the land, really," says KAA architect Brian Adolph, explaining how the homes were designed to harmonize with the natural environment. Plus, you don't have to sacrifice your personal style: Buyers can customize certain interior and exterior finishes. \$200/square foot. 877-960-4466; HOMlifestyle.com.—Leigh Camp

style update

MIXING MATERIALS: A TOP TREND IN KITCHEN DESIGN

Just as blending different furniture styles in a room can give it a more sophisticated look, so can mixing and matching finishes in a kitchen. Alno's Look line, right, with colorful mango-hued cabinet fronts on walnut-finished bodies (alno.com) illustrates this bright idea. Jan Kepler, owner of San Luis Obispo, California-based Kepler Design Group (keplerdesign.com), says she's been doing more painted finishes on islands and hutches, while using classic stained wood for the rest of the cabinetry. "People want an eclectic look today," she says, explaining how she may use a traditional cabinet door style but pair it with contemporary stainless steel rod hardware, or utilize different countertop types, such as soapstone and marble, to distinguish separate areas. One thing that never goes out of style, Kepler notes, is clean design that showcases the quality of the materials.

