

Not Your Grandpa's Post and Beam

Often when we think of "post and beam" construction, we conjure up images of 19th century barns or even 20th century mountainside lodges. Post and beam construction arrived on the continent along with the Pilgrims. It was their structure of choice because it could be simply crafted with their rudimentary skills, limited tools, and the abundance of wood that the new land provided.

But what was once built for functional necessity in the 1620's has since evolved to a choice of structure for the design options, look and appeal the post and beam offers today's homeowners

So what direction will post and beam design take in the 21st century? In 2005, Empyrean International joined into a partnership with Dwell Magazine resulting in '*the dwell homes by Empyrean*,' a collection of homes that answers that question with a decidedly modern point of view.



From the first American post and beam structures built by early settlers and the rustic vacation lodge appeal of a mid 20th century Acorn Home (both left), *the dwell homes by Empyrean NextHouse* (top right and bottom left), offers a post and beam design with nod to the 21st century modernist movement.



"Empyrean's engineered Post & Beam building system delivers three important architectural features: large spans of interior spaces resulting in open floor plans; the beauty of exposed structural materials, Douglas Fir Beams & Inland Red Cedar Ceilings; and the ability to allow large expanses of glass creating a desired ambiguity between the interior & the exterior environments," explains Deck House lead designer, David Vannicola.

At the core of *the dwell homes by Empyrean* is the Deck House post and beam system. *The dwell homes by Empyrean* modified the Deck House look to provide two new design collections called NextHouse and HingeHouse. Both styles are strongly influenced by the modern design movement. Both collections offer striking simplicity, clean detailing, open spaces and abundant natural light to create uncluttered homes that define a modern lifestyle in relationship with nature. Both collections use as its base the Deck House standard 'kit of parts.' And both homes offer a range of sustainable and energy efficient features. However, a closer look helps to define and differentiate these two new collections and identify the unique beauty and characteristics of each.



A flat roof, natural wood siding and wood trimmed doors and windows create a rich warmth to the look of NextHouse.

NextHouse

NextHouse, first introduced in 2005, provides a double volume space. Wood accents provide a rich warmth that is contrasted by soaring spaces, uncluttered lines and clean details. "NextHouse re-introduces *modern* as a warm, comfortable, and ultimately familiar way with which to live and observe life," notes Jay Eli, lead designer in the NextHouse studio. The post and beam structure allows the main living area to be an open expanse. A key feature of this area is a 24 foot accordion glass door that opens onto a large outdoor living space. When the door is open, it creates a seamless transition between indoors and out. The interior is organized by layers in zones such as public living spaces, bedrooms and utility areas, which reflect the way families live today. The specific layouts and design features are determined by your own tastes and lifestyle, as well as your specific site requirements. The NextHouse exterior is defined by a flat roof, wood siding and natural wood framed doors and windows.

HINGEHOUSE

by Maryann Thompson

HingeHouse, designed by award winning architect Maryann Thompson and launched just this year, is a single volume or a series of single volumes that connects at a hinge point. This hinge point offers a design flexibility to fully integrate or blend with the landscape, even on a sloping grade. In contrast to the warm wood tones of NextHouse, the interior decking and exposed beams of HingeHouse are stained white. The sloping roof planes bring in streams of natural light, which serve as a design element that enhances the bright airiness of its interior spaces.

Like NextHouse, HingeHouse is designed to keep public areas and bedrooms in separate zones. The 'hinge' joins these two living spaces together. Not only does the hinge serve as a functional property to join the two spaces, it also creates an outdoor living room, complete with outdoor fireplace.

A sloping roof plane, white interior decking and beams and an outdoor space at the hinge point are the design element unique to HingeHouse.



“Empyrean’s post and beam component system has been the quiet medium through which HingeHouse and its family of designs truly shines,” notes Maryann Thompson. “The structural logic of the system, along with time proven techniques of efficient space planning, has allowed for the development of this new family of ‘the dwell homes by Empyrean’ that elevates the value of the site for the homeowner. The concept of the hinge in each design is the starting point for a unique and collaborative opportunity with each new homeowner to achieve a fully customizable, sustainable and modern home, one that takes advantage of natural light, topography and views.”



Both NextHouse and HingeHouse are manufactured in our factory according to precise, standardized details and both offer unlimited design flexibility. In every possible application, Empyrean uses responsibly harvested products, including laminated Douglas fir and cedar, finger-jointed pine and bamboo flooring. In addition, we strive to exceed all energy codes by using highly efficient windows, doors and wall and roof assemblies. The energy efficiency of Empyrean homes begins with an evaluation of the site to determine best design and orientation to maximize passive solar heating and cooling, natural light and ventilation. Options such as solar panels, geothermal, radiant heat and other renewable resources and environmentally friendly finishes can be accommodated based on the homeowners’ desires.



The ‘hinge’ of the home where the two living spaces come together creates a highly desirable outdoor living room.

Find out more about [NextHouse](#)

Find out more about [HingeHouse](#)

For specific information or to schedule a site visit, [contact the Client Service Director in your local area.](#)

