

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

THE HUF HAUS DRAWS ON TRIED AND TESTED BUILDING TRADITIONS THAT BEGAN IN GERMANY. THESE PRE-MANUFACTURED HOUSES, INSPIRED BY THE BAUHAUS, DON'T JUST LOOK SLICK – THEY'RE CARBON-NEUTRAL TOO

WORDS SONIA ZHURAVLYOVA

Huf's USP is that each home is designed to blend with its environment, making the most of the flora and fauna that surrounds it.

**O**ur clients have high expectations because they recognise that their house is their third skin,' says Peter Huf, lead architect and grandson of the original mill owner who started the Huf story in Hartenfels, Germany, back in 1912. For more than a century, the Huf family have nurtured the carpentry business and since 1972 have been building distinctive high-spec timber, post-and-beam houses not only in Germany but right across the continent and even in Russia and China.

#### Lie of the Land

Each house is designed according to the topography of the land and the requirements of the owners. 'The desire is always to connect the residents with the land and its surrounding nature. That's the beauty of the UK – it's a very green island. It's our passion to open out to the countryside as much as we can,' says Peter. The houses come in different sizes and ↔



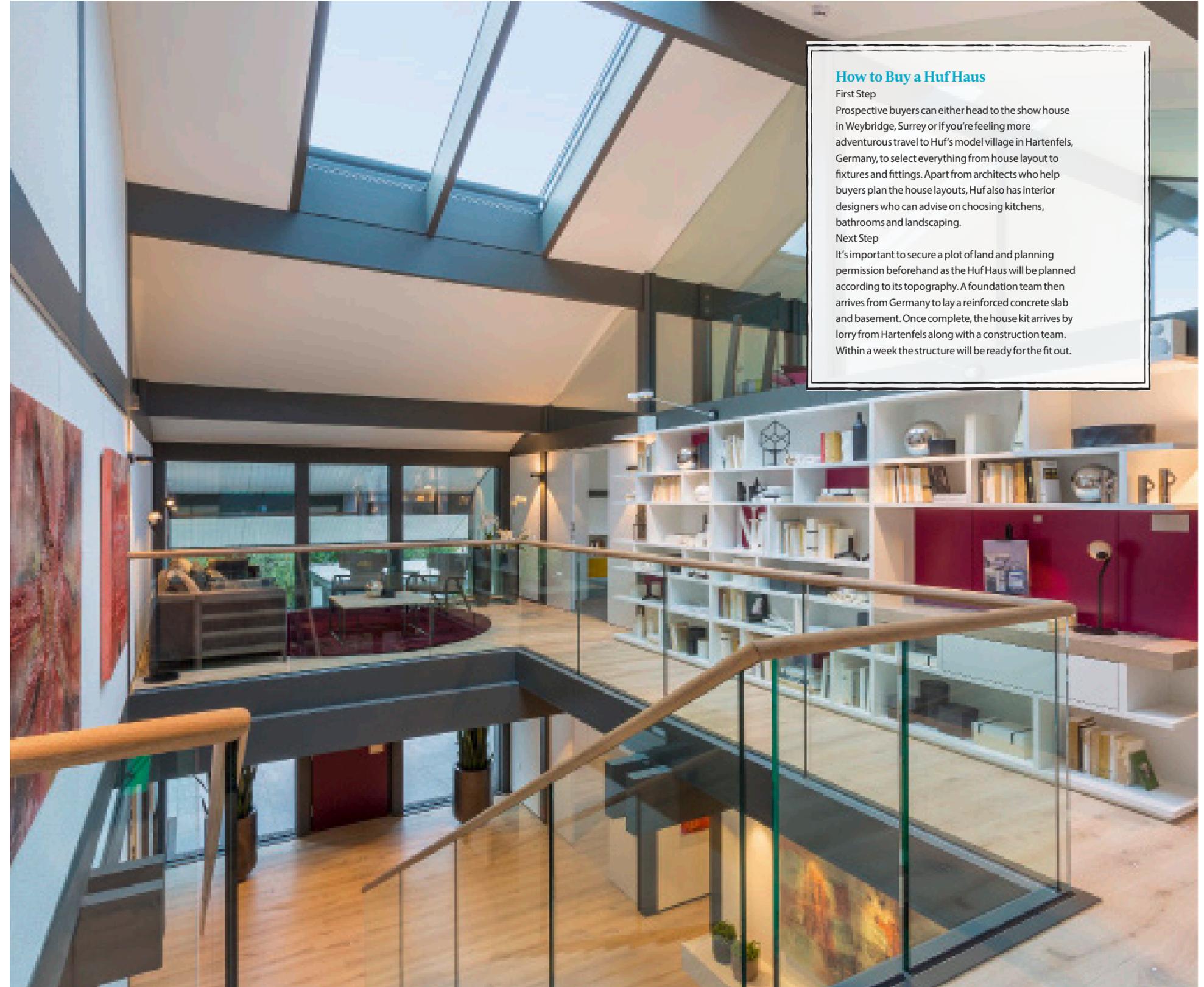


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configurations but the outside shell’s timeless aesthetic is inspired by the Bauhaus. ‘Huf houses are very contemporary and classic and have a rich history – post-and-beam is a familiar vernacular in Britain so the homes are very relatable and fit in well everywhere.’

**Best of Both Worlds**

There are around 200 Huf houses here in the UK. Each is pre-manufactured in a factory in Germany and as Huf wish to keep production numbers small only 120 are made each year, to maintain a close watch over the product and to ensure quality control. Although the houses are brought over in standard-sized sections, their design is entirely bespoke. ‘That’s the twist: pre-manufacturing and bespoke together – that’s the speciality of Huf,’ says Peter. Their post-and-beam construction allows for as many or as few rooms as desired. ‘I call it sustainable design because the houses can be used in different ways over the lifespan of a family,’ Peter continues. ‘Children might start off upstairs but can move into the basement bedrooms for more privacy at a later date. Or older parents might move in – and then you can design a bedroom downstairs.’



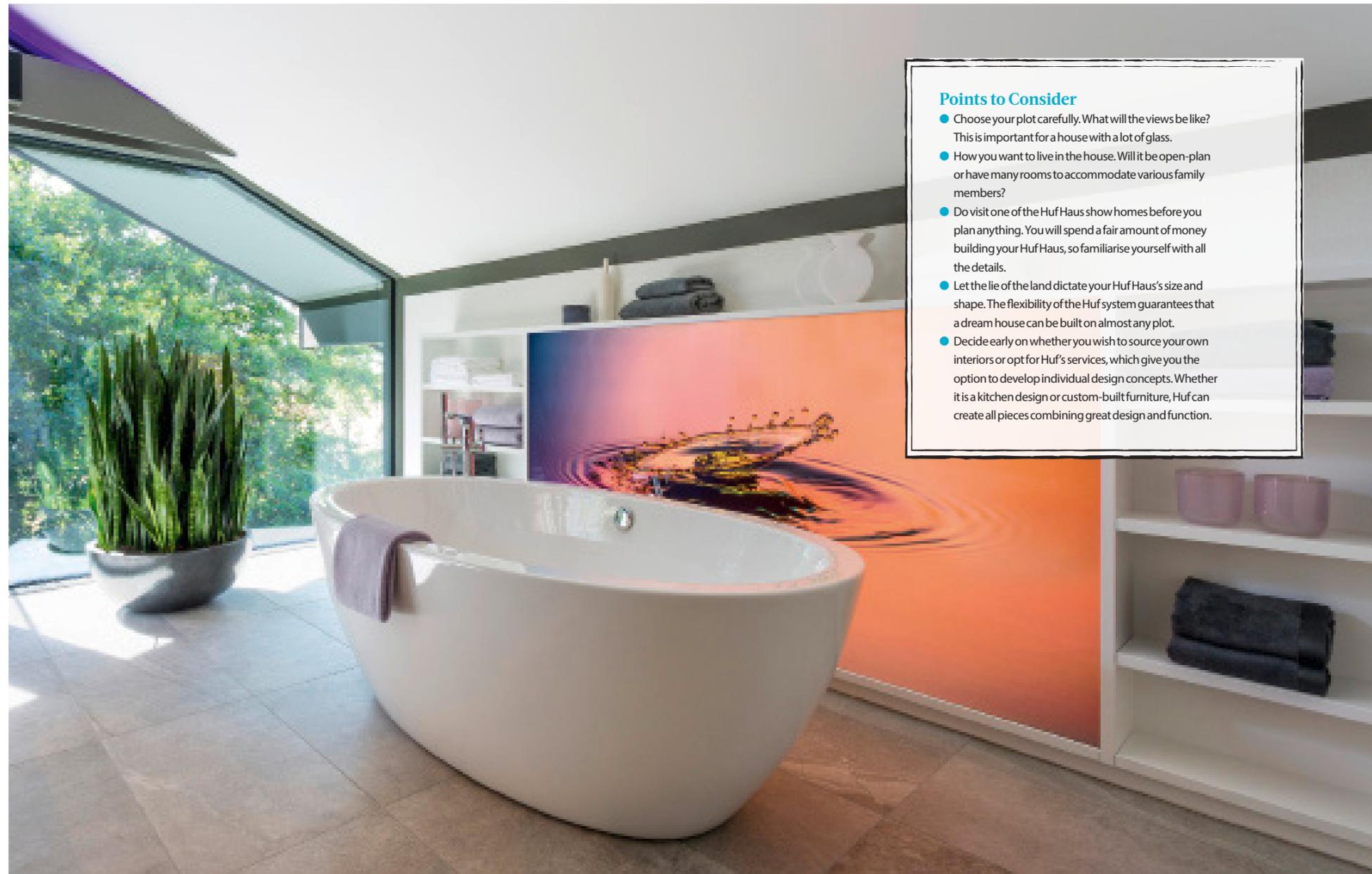
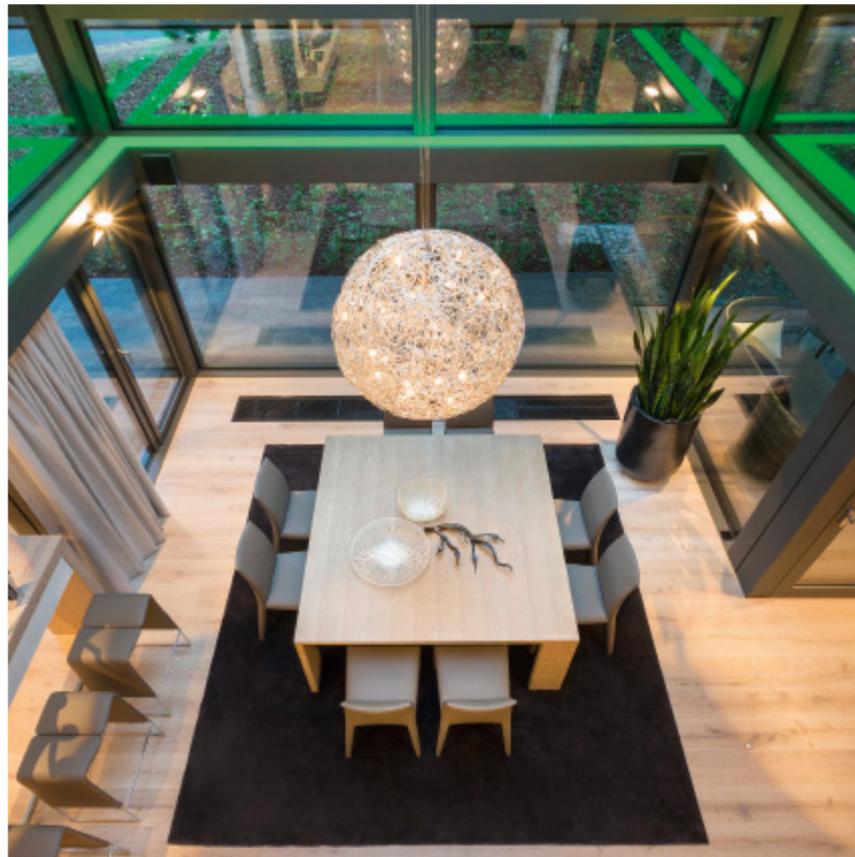
**How to Buy a Huf Haus**

**First Step**  
Prospective buyers can either head to the show house in Weybridge, Surrey or if you’re feeling more adventurous travel to Huf’s model village in Hartenfels, Germany, to select everything from house layout to fixtures and fittings. Apart from architects who help buyers plan the house layouts, Huf also has interior designers who can advise on choosing kitchens, bathrooms and landscaping.

**Next Step**  
It’s important to secure a plot of land and planning permission beforehand as the Huf Haus will be planned according to its topography. A foundation team then arrives from Germany to lay a reinforced concrete slab and basement. Once complete, the house kit arrives by lorry from Hartenfels along with a construction team. Within a week the structure will be ready for the fit out.



(above and below)  
Huf's 'Riverview' show house in Weybridge, Surrey is great inspiration for how to fully enjoy open-plan living.



### Points to Consider

- Choose your plot carefully. What will the views be like? This is important for a house with a lot of glass.
- How you want to live in the house. Will it be open-plan or have many rooms to accommodate various family members?
- Do visit one of the Huf Haus show homes before you plan anything. You will spend a fair amount of money building your Huf Haus, so familiarise yourself with all the details.
- Let the lie of the land dictate your Huf Haus's size and shape. The flexibility of the Huf system guarantees that a dream house can be built on almost any plot.
- Decide early on whether you wish to source your own interiors or opt for Huf's services, which give you the option to develop individual design concepts. Whether it is a kitchen design or custom-built furniture, Huf can create all pieces combining great design and function.



‘The homes are a luxury but customers get value for money. People invest in the future with these houses because the running costs are very low.’

(above) The luxury bathroom at the show home in Weybridge. Huf's eco-efficiency means that heating and electricity costs are kept to a minimum.

(left) Outside 'Riverview'.



If you'd like to build your own home, HufHaus is one of the least stressful ways to go about it.

### Green Living

Apart from boasting clean lines, open planning and copious amounts of glazing, Huf houses also have outstanding eco-credentials. Much of the house is constructed from north Scandinavian spruce that is sustainably sourced. The beams are cross-laminated, meaning they are sturdy and won't warp or shift around with time. And the generous use of glass is Huf's signature. 'We avoid tiny windows – we work harder on the glazing instead,' says Peter. Huf has recently introduced triple glazing and it is common to see entire façades made of glass. The houses never overheat though. 'We've been in the house-building business for more than 100 years so we've had a lot of feedback from our customers. The houses have a large roof overhang to protect them from direct sun, external window blinds and cross ventilation. So no Huf Haus overheats – it's engineering and common sense brought together in a sustainable concept,' explains Peter, proudly. Being manufactured under perfectly regulated conditions in a factory means that the houses are extremely well insulated. It's what Peter calls a 'fabric-first' approach. Layers of timber, insulation and fibreboard in the walls mean the house doesn't leak any heat or let in drafts, resulting in low heating bills. 'It's like when you go skiing – it's better to have more layers

than one big sweater,' says Peter. 'It's a much more efficient way to retain warmth.' A high-efficiency air-to-water heat pump that heats the floors throughout is all that's needed, while PV panels supply the electricity.

### Smart Homes

Huf pride themselves on making their homes as smart as possible – ventilation, for example, is carefully monitored in all rooms, while fresh air is heated before it's brought into the house. A filter keeps bugs and pollen out while an iPhone app controls light switches and blinds. 'The homes are a luxury, yes, but I'd like to think that our customers get value for money. People invest in the future with these houses because the running costs are very low,' says Peter.

And as people catch on to the joys of sustainable and open-plan living, Huf, which is rooted in solid timber-building traditions but with a firm eye on the future, is bound to gain in popularity in the UK. 'The current market is getting more sensible to good architecture, bespoke design and being sustainable,' confirms Peter. 'People aspire to this – they understand that living well is important.' 

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