

right David and Greta with one of the many modern sculptures dotted around their garden *below left* Retro furniture such as the Eames loungers and an Arco floor lamp contrast well with vibrant artwork *far below* The sleek exterior of the couple's Huf Haus



Words of wisdom

A home that took six days to erect and not a single fault in seven years. No wonder TV grand designers David and Greta Iredale are Huf Haus evangelists. We quiz them on the nitty gritty

Words Luke Tebbutt *Photography* Helen Fickling and Adrian Briscoe



What's the main priority about building a prefabricated home?

Greta: 'You need to plan for months before you start. It's so important to know what you want out of a house so you can look at every little detail.'

David: 'You can't go to the Huf Haus (01932 586 550; huf-haus.com) headquarters in Germany without a plan as you'll be overwhelmed. During a three-day trip, everything you like is added up; we had to compromise on a few things to fit our budget.'

What are the advantages of building like this?

Greta: 'Each crew that comes has been together for years. They work like clockwork to a fixed price.'

David: 'You get a complete schedule from beginning to end, week by week, trade by trade.'

What should you check before selecting a company?

Greta: 'We found a completed Huf Haus in England to visit. It was built for an architect and he had nothing but praise for it. But we also had to consider that if the company went belly up, we would have half a house that couldn't be finished – it's not like any builder could complete it. So we paid to get a financial examination of the company through Dun and Bradstreet (0800 001 234; dnb.co.uk). Everything was solid, so off we went.'

How do you keep all those windows clean?

David: 'Because of the way this house is designed, with overhanging roofs, they don't get that dirty. We only get them cleaned every four or five months.'

You've built two homes before this one. What tips would you give to others embarking on a grand design?

Greta: 'My first question would be why? Unless you go down the prefabricated route, it's an extremely stressful process. But if somebody wanted something different then I would say do it, because you can have your very own home, made to your very own specifications. Mine gives me daily joy.'

What about people with limited space?

Greta: 'Think about whether you need doors everywhere, and what colours you can use to make rooms lighter. When we had a small house we had big mirrors that could make a room look twice as big. OK, it's been done a million times, but it does work.'

You are both passionate about design – Kevin McCloud called your home a 'design autobiography' – how important is furniture in creating a home?

David: 'If you're going to build a house but don't know what furniture you're going to put in it, that's the first mistake. In *Grand Designs* you get to see all the problems with construction, but hardly anyone talks about the furniture. Not until they try to fit it in that is, they then find it looks silly because there's a vast room with only three chairs in it.'

How do you compromise differences in taste?

Greta: 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Fortunately our eyes are very similar.'

To see more of the house, visit channel4.com/4homes