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Living: Saturday, November 05, 2005

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Prefabs: They're all grown up

By **Sandy Dunham**
Seattle Times desk editor

You might picture a **modular** home as a half-finished hulk on a speeding semitrailer, but don't think for a minute they're all destined to be double-wides.

Some, in fact, are multilevel masterpieces, and with up to 13,000 square feet of living space, they put the "size" in "oversize load."

In her hefty new book "**Modular Mansions**" (Gibbs Smith, \$39.95), author Sheri Koonos tours 20 top-of-the-line **modular** homes, from the Glidehouse in California (built by Redmond's Construction Resource Group) to Governor's Island Paradise in New Hampshire. Koonos tells the story of each home and illustrates it with impressive full-color photos.

Koonos says **modular** home-building is the fastest-growing method of home construction in the country, with the number of houses doubling in the past 13 years. One reason: A **modular** house can be finished in three to eight months, she says, compared to 12 to 14 months for a site-built house. Another? A **modular** home usually costs 10 to 15 percent less than a similar site-built house. Add in increased structure strength; reduced waste; and amenities such as hot tubs, vaulted ceilings and custom kitchens, and you've got a trend.

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