

SUSTAINABILITY

Adam Rolston, starchitect' behind TWA Hotel spaces, discusses sustainable design ethos

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Adam Rolston details the importance of biophilic design amidst licensing out his architectural layouts. Image courtesy of NevelHaus and Matthew Williams

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

As modern cabin company [NevelHaus](#) grows, Luxury Daily exclusively presents the announcement of architect Adam Rolston's global expansion with the custom home building company.

Cofounded by two NYC-based luxury developers in 2020, the turnkey platform offers a sustainable way to build eco-friendly footprints at speed. NevelHaus is calling in the creative director of [INC Architecture & Design](#), the New York studio backing the company's rise, owned by Mr. Rolston himself the designer is responsible for such projects as the meetings and event spaces present at the TWA Hotel at the JFK Airport and 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge tapping the planner's expertise in a move that now seeks to bring his biophilic influences to properties beyond the continental United States.

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"As contemporary architects, we're always factoring in environmental considerations in our work and conduct ongoing research to stay abreast of new methods and practices that are eco-conscious and environmentally supportive," said Mr. Rolston, New York.

"We designed the LEED Certified 1 Hotel Brooklyn which was our first large-scale sustainability-focused project and helped to scale up and push the envelope on some of our ideas related to this practice," he said. "Inspired by the 14 Patterns of Biophilic Design, USGBC, and Well Building Institute, we aim to make sustainability and wellness a baseline for our industry.

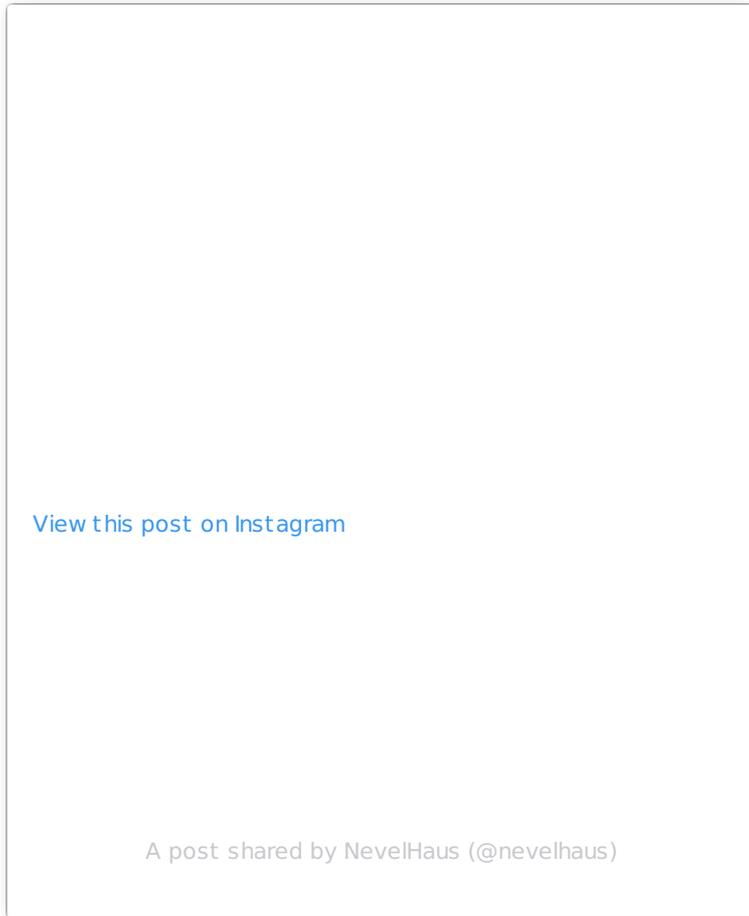
"We see wellness as the gateway drug' to an investment in sustainability, [because] what's good for the planet is good for the body, and what's good for the body is good for the planet."

License to sell

With accessibility at the effort's core, the international licensing of NevelHaus structures allows homebuyers to use the brand's thoughtful designs without the usual architectural fees.

The company's licensing approach is customizable, keeping in mind the specific location and sites of each proposed house in the final designs. NevelHaus homes can be built almost anywhere around the world, from the rugged mountains of western Canada to the sparkling coast of Portugal the local terrain inspires said customizations, in each case.

"We're taking stock of everything around us and always looking for compelling patterns or even design solutions in nature," Mr. Rolston said.



"Rock formations, cloud shapes, rippling water, trees, and more nature is a never-ending source of inspiration."

This is the basis of his biophilic approach, as architects turn to the natural world for both aesthetic and technical guidance.

The branching structure of roots can be used as an inspiration for energy flow throughout a large home. The woods outside can act as a color palette for its interiors.

"By biophilic design, we're referring to an approach that connects people to nature through design elements such as indoor [or] outdoor living concepts, skylights, indoor gardens, etc.," Mr. Rolston said.



Built-to-order NevelHaus homes in Stone Ridge, New York are now up for sale, going for prices between \$1,495,000 and \$1,650,000. Image courtesy of NevelHaus/Noah Kalina

Sitting at the heart of the company's design ethos, this ecologically-efficient concept brings people closer to nature ([see story](#)), turning these dwellings into not only living spaces but facilitators of a human-to-nature bond, one key to an understanding of the natural world, climate action and overall well-being.

"Biophilic design has been proven to support mental health and cognition," Mr. Rolston said.

"In terms of the environment, we need people to be connected to nature [and] to be more conscious of caring for nature."

This connection is central to the licensed NevelHaus designs, with each home implementing textures from nature, raw materials, large windows and other features that integrate exterior habitats.

"The main living spaces in Nevelhaus are bathed in natural light with floor-to-ceiling windows and have an outdoor shower," Mr. Rolston said.



The eight New York homes from the brand are situated on 43 acres, allowing for total immersion into nature. Image courtesy of NevelHaus/Noah Kalina

Honoring the individual needs of each ecosystem where homes are built internationally, these projects aim to marry the green heritage and vision of NevelHaus, and, most importantly, the conscious lifestyles of the residents themselves, says the expert.

"The original concept for NevelHaus was built around modular structurally insulated panel technology with high-performance building envelope design in mind," Mr. Rolston said.

"The contemporary homes also feature efficient HVAC systems and locally available standardized building components," he said. "We customize based on a client's commitment to sustainability and can scale up the efficiency based on their desires."

Better baseline

Making sustainability the default option creates a greener baseline, transforming responsible building practices from an added plus into an expectation. As expressed, Mr. Rolston's firm is of the belief that the architect's responsibility is to offer responsible options, rather than the consumer's job to make up the difference.

"The meaning of sustainability isn't a personal one," Mr. Rolston said.



The licensed designs offer a sustainable look at housing, incorporating responsibly sourced materials, reclaimed wood and the latest environmental innovations. Image courtesy of NevelHaus/Noah Kalina

"The question isn't what it means to me, the question is, what does it mean to us the human race," he said. "It's not a matter of interpretation it is super simple.

"The word sustainability means the survival of the human race."

The very name of the brand itself communicates this prioritization of nature, as well as a sense of awe and valuing of international cultures, with "Nevel" meaning "light fog" in Dutch and "Haus" being German for "house."



As the company's designs go global, the sustainable perspective will hopefully spread into the mainstream. Image courtesy of NevelHaus/Matthew Williams

The company is currently working towards a net-zero studio footprint, maintaining an open-source database of sustainable furniture and materials used in the meantime, in an effort to democratize environmental design knowledge.

"At this stage, it is impossible to avoid the fact that our planet is in distress and is our most precious resource," Mr.

Rolston said.

"Many people understand that what we do today matters," he said. "This issue is coming to a head now and there is a general sense of urgency.

"Everyone wants to do their part the best they can and we're happy to assist in sharing this information while being responsive to societal needs."

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