



It takes a village

By inserting a series of gabled wooden rooms into their factory home, one family in Berlin have created a little urban utopia

Words **SARA DAL ZOTTO** Photography **HELENIO BARBETTA/LIVING INSIDE**

Living room A vintage rug contains this family space, defining it within the larger open-plan loft. On it sits a 'Hackney' sofa by Hay, a yellow 'Bubble' armchair by Sacha Lakic for Roche Bobois and a vintage Memphis-style chair, as well as a small child's seat from Ton. A 'Gravity XL' floor lamp by Space Copenhagen for Gubi is placed in one corner and an 'Atollo' table lamp by Vico Magistretti for Oluce can be found beside the sofa. The tables include a 'Pedrera' by Corsini & Ruiz Millet for Gubi and an orange 'Fulda' by BoConcept ►



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Portrait Jan Wilmking and Carmen Lazos-Wilmking with their children Friedrich, Johann and Maria in their living room

Dining room German brand Bannach's pink table from its 'Uno' collection matches the colour details elsewhere in this home. It is surrounded by six '30' chairs by Ton. The light above is a 1960s 'Atomic' design by Trix and Robert Haussmann for Swiss Lamps International, while on the table there's a small 'Bicoca' lamp by Christophe Mathieu for Marset. The industrial-style heater in the corner is a vintage model by the German firm Deutz AG

we all know the old proverb, 'it takes a village to raise a child', but one family in Berlin's trendy Kreuzberg district has created their own unique interpretation. Carmen Lazos-Wilmking and Jan Wilmking contacted Patrick Batek, founder of local firm Batek Architekten, and his colleague Anke Müller to rethink their 240-square-metre industrial loft, creating the private spaces essential for life with three children – Maria, Friedrich and Johann. Their answer was playful and practical: a self-contained miniature village of rooms slotted beneath the high concrete ceilings.

Essential to the brief was maintaining the property's industrial personality. Access is via a cargo lift that opens straight onto the large open-plan living area, and there are authentic remnants of this building's past everywhere you look. 'We had a clear style in mind,' says Jan. 'We wanted to maintain a lot of open space and leave things clean and minimal, but also make it cosy. Well-integrated storage was absolutely necessary to keep things in order.'

The apartment is now divided into two zones. To one side of the entrance are the vast kitchen, dining and living areas, where generous windows add to the impression of expansive openness. Turn the other way and you're met with the more private zone, which includes a studio, bedrooms and bathrooms. It's these spaces that are contained within individual boxes made of spruce with sloping gabled roofs, like a cluster of Monopoly

properties arranged along a diagonal hallway. 'They are houses within a house,' says Patrick. 'A little village.'

In this private utopia, life is full of joy and character. The interior was selected mostly by Carmen, who has integrated Mexican artworks and ceramics to reflect her heritage. 'We deliberately chose easy and comfortable colours, like soft pink,' adds Jan. This choice is a motif that plays throughout the couple's home, cropping up as an accent on inset walls, behind cabinetry and on the dining table (a statement piece by German brand Bannach). It's a shade that complements the raw wood of the architectural interventions, but one that could become quite one-note were it not for the inclusion of some punchy furniture selections: a sunshine-yellow 'Bubble' armchair by Sacha Lakic for Roche Bobois, a navy blue Hay sofa, the bright orange side table by BoConcept.

'We live, work and study here,' says Carmen, who is delighted by this one-of-a-kind home's multifunctional nature. 'We like the opportunity to be social and, at the same time, to be able to retreat and enjoy peace and quiet,' she adds. It's the perfect space for right now, but this is a family that is always thinking of the future, 'adding details here and there'. What's the next step for them? The room Friedrich and Johann currently share will be split into two separate abodes. A brand-new addition to village life. batekarchitekten.com ►



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Kitchen Mexican Talavera plates decorate the wall between the dining area and open-plan kitchen, with its bespoke floor-to-ceiling spruce and stainless steel cabinetry. The homeowners made the stainless steel ceiling light themselves, while the artworks above the Miele cooker include pieces by Mr Doodle and Jan Wilmking ➤



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Kid's room Tucked inside this pale-pink mini house is Maria's space. Here, built-in storage above the bed keeps things practical. The desk is from Ikea and the pendant light is the 'PH Louvre' by Poul Henningsen for Louis Poulsen

Hallway The gabled roofs of the rooms are visible from this angle. It's also possible to make out the many elements of built-in storage that keep this busy family home chaos-free. The chest of drawers (bottom left) is by USM

Bedroom Sage-coloured curtains, a rug from Berlin brand The Knots and a 'Ruché' bed by Inga Sempé for Ligne Roset, covered in a throw from Arket, set a relaxed tone in this grown-up retreat. Beside the bed, a pink 'Hide' table by Karoline Fesser matches the exact shade of the vanity unit in the adjoining en suite. The lamp is from Zara Home **See Stockists page for details** **ED**

