

## Project: Magazine article pitch

### Sustainable Tiny Living Grows Big in Colorado

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If you ask a friend to describe their vision of the American Dream, the answer may surprise you. The reply might be, “A tiny house on a piece of land so I can live big.” Historically, the American Dream was defined by owning stuff. Stuff might include, two cars, a white picket fence, and a three-bedroom house.

The traditional dream is evolving as many people strive to find balance in their lives. Now the dream may revolve around a small living space combined with big life experiences. Many people are dreaming of a tiny house between 150 to 300 square feet. Living tiny means freeing up resources to live life big in other areas, such as travelling, experiencing the outdoors and spending time with family.

For those in Colorado interested in living tiny, the options are growing. In August, the first Tiny House Jamboree was held in Colorado Springs. More than 60,000 people toured over 20 tiny homes, leaving with big stars in their eyes and dreaming of the possibilities of making a small home a reality. In 2014, Walsenburg, CO became the first city in the state, and one of the first in the nation, to allow tiny homes on a foundation, on any residential lot. Local Boulder Company, Rhino Cubed, offers free tours in Poncha Springs of their repurposed shipping container tiny home model. Wee Casa in Lyons, CO is the nation’s first tiny house resort and dealership, offering the chance to “try before you buy.” The world is ripe for a change in how we use the earth’s resources and tiny houses offer a reasonable start for many to embark on a simpler lifestyle.

For those ready to make the move to tiny, the choices can be overwhelming. However, one local builder stands apart from the pack. Rhino Cubed, mentioned above, constructs tiny homes that are built like a custom home and are secure, low maintenance, sustainable and have artistic character. The company takes cast-off shipping containers that are headed for the landfill, and transforms them into heirloom living structures. Differing from their stick built competitors, the shipping container tiny homes are wind proof, waterproof, rodent proof and fire-resistant.

There are relatively few tiny homebuilders using shipping containers. But the uniqueness of a shipping container shelter is worth further exploration. Co-founder and chief architect of Rhino Cubed, Sam Austin, transforms the steel bones of each container into an artistic abode. Wooden timbers, a cedar trellis, weathered steel and metal add character and unique elements to each Cube. Unlike many tiny homes today, all Rhino Cubes are built to 2012 International Residential Code.

Cubes range in size from 160 square feet up to 640 square feet, depending on the plan. Each unit can be purchased in an “on-grid” or “off-grid” configuration. For those looking to minimize their environmental footprint on the earth, the off-grid solution comes equipped with solar appliances, a composting toilet, self-contained water tanks and various energy-efficient heating options.

Rhino Cubed's most recent build is affectionately named "Nola," after one of the last five remaining northern white rhinos on the planet. The real Nola, age 41, resides at the San Diego Zoo. Nola the Cube is just as tough and resilient as the live Rhino. She is a 24-foot container equipped with a full size shower and kitchen. She boasts closed-cell foam insulation, providing R54 on the roof and R22 on the walls - exceeding the most stringent American requirements for wind, heat and cold. Nola is currently resting in a scenic pasture and can be toured for free in Poncha Springs, CO.

Rhino Cubed's dwellings offer a more secure and stable tiny home option, as they are not built on wheels. However, they can be transported atop a flatbed trailer, if they need to be moved. A Cube can be attached to a foundation but also can be easily detached and transported to a new location if needed. Best of all, there are no building hassles or architectural fees to navigate. In addition to tiny homes, Cubes make excellent cabins, hunting outposts, backyard man caves and even art studios.

Every smart consumer will do research before making a home or cabin investment. A repurposed shipping container should definitely be included as a viable option. If you have redefined your American Dream and are starting to think tiny, the benefits of living small in a shipping container abode are too numerous to overlook!

**Nicole Brooks** came to Colorado by way of Northern Idaho. She loves living anywhere a mountain can be seen. Nicole is an avid gardener, skier and backyard chicken farmer. When not homeschooling her children, she passionately devotes her time and marketing expertise to furthering Rhino Cubed's sustainable tiny living crusade.