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The Model Home

Will Arnett turns to his unofficial design guru when creating a custom-prefab hideaway in the hills above Los Angeles.

Intrigued by the “smart, simple things” being done with modular housing, Will Arnett tapped architect Suchi Reddy and prefab company LivingHomes to design a house that merges

the best of on-site and factory construction. The *Arrested Development* and *LEGO Movie* actor’s new home, completed in 2017, faces down a verdant canyon in Beverly Hills.

Scrolling through Will Arnett's IMDb credits evokes the varied architectural styles of Greater Los Angeles in rapid succession. There's the Venice bungalow that belongs to his character Chip in the Netflix show *Flaked*; the terra-cotta-tiled model home in Orange County that Gob Bluth commandeers in *Arrested Development*; the art-filled oasis on a hill where BoJack Horseman, the anthropomorphic former TV dad in the animated series of the same name, looks out over the city.

In real life, if Will's home, slotted into a secluded dell in Beverly Hills, resembles any of his characters', it's BoJack's, with its similarly stacked volumes and a pool that backs up right to the edge of a dangerously steep slope. But there's an important distinction: The actor's 3,975-square-foot steel-frame house, finished last year, is a custom prefab, its stylistic origins traceable back to his childhood in Canada.

"Growing up in Toronto, we had these great ravines, and there was one house in particular that was very modern, with a lot of glass," he says. "I remember people saying, 'That place looks weird.' And I remember being like, it's not weird, it's rad."

Since the early 2000s, when his acting career took off, Will has lived in multiple houses on both coasts, with few constants. One exception is architect Suchi Reddy, the longtime collaborator whom he credits with refining his modernist instincts. "In a lot of ways, she educated me," he says.

Born in southeast India, Reddy pursued architecture in Chennai and Detroit before establishing her practice, Reddymade Design, in New York in 2002. Soon after, she met Will through a client at *Saturday Night Live*. While some might have been intimidated at meeting a breakout sitcom star, Reddy remembers being more impressed by Will's raw understanding of architecture. "He's the kind of person who knows how deep in the ground his piles are," she says. For his part, Will shared Reddy's absorption with clean design warmed by plush textures and flat-woven rugs. He soon asked her to remodel his apartment in Greenwich Village, followed some years later by another project, and then another. "You have to know your subject," Reddy stresses. "One of the things I like about Will is that he's always interested in big ideas." >



Near the front door, charred oak treads float on a blackened steel stringer to the master suite and on to the roof (below left and right). The String pendants are by Michael Anastassiades. Like the guest wing, the glass enclosure for the staircase was built on-site by VRB Construction. In the living area (above and opposite), Mori pendants by Rich Brilliant Willing hang above an Erased Heritage rug by Jan Kath. Porcelain panels by Neolith cover the cabinet.





Maximizing enjoyment of the view, a Sartoriale tub by Carlo Colombo with built-in shelving is placed against a floor-to-ceiling window in the master bath (opposite). "The light is so different here from in New York," says Reddy, who is opening an L.A. office later this year. "There, it has so much blue in it. Here, it has much more orange." A vintage El Monte lamp from Lawson-Fenning is paired with an Eames lounge in Will's room.



“I like that everything has its place—the idea of form and function coexisting.” Will Arnett, resident



In 2015, the big idea that had a hold on Will's attention was prefab. “Through the years I'd seen it get better and better, especially in Europe and South America,” he says. Separated from his wife, actor and comedian Amy Poehler, he was preparing to build a new home from scratch in Los Angeles, envisioning a place where he could spend time with their two boys and recharge between long days on set and far-flung press junkets. Going modular, he hoped, would help simplify the process. Reddy was in Cuba when she received the call of duty: Come to California and imbue the project with their shared sensibility. Will had already picked both the place, a three-quarter-acre lot on the side of a lush hill, and the manufacturer, a high-end prefab company in Santa Monica

called LivingHomes. For her first ground-up build with her longest-running client, Reddy joined an ensemble cast that featured LivingHomes director of design Amy Sims and project manager Sean Hennigan, local landscape designer Michael Fiore, and an army of contractors, specialists, and engineers. The L-shaped dwelling they created is no catalog-order kit house. About a third was built on-site, including a glass staircase tower and a guest wing (featuring a recording booth where Will—the voice of LEGO Batman and other characters—can ply his trademark baritone). Even the prefab section, consisting of six modules containing four bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms, a kitchen/dining area, and a living room, was heavily customized.

“When the company started out, we thought we'd sell homes like iPhones,” recalls LivingHomes CEO Steve Glenn. But they soon realized that mishmash zoning codes and clients' particular tastes made a one-size-fits-all approach unrealistic. For Will, LivingHomes completely reimaged its RK2 model—a design originated by legendary SCI-Arc cofounder Ray Kappe—downsizing the floor plan by 10 percent, among other changes. On installation day in September 2016, Will took his kids out of school and invited his parents to town to watch as the 12-foot-wide modules were craned into place. “These lots allow for eight- to ten-thousand-square-foot houses, but I didn't want it to look ostentatious,” the actor explains. Nor did he want the structure >



The modules' steel beams are painted Folkstone 6005 by Sherwin-Williams, while the walls are Decorator's White by Benjamin Moore. Vitsoe shelving by Dieter Rams holds books and curios (opposite, left). The kitchen's dark-stained oak millwork (opposite, right) and Corian-and-steel countertops (above) were made by Ernestomeda. The appliances are by Miele and the Cojo stools are by Thomas Hayes. In the dining area (below), Mantis chairs by Les Ateliers Courbet and a banquette upholstered in Holly Hunt fabric surround a live-edge maple table by Camilla House. The custom pendant is by Lambert & Fils and the Pivot sconces are by Apparatus.



Light streams into the master suite's dressing room through glass panes by Western Window Systems. Clothes are stored in cabinets by Molteni&C; a rustic antique bench from Amber Interiors offers a place to suit up. As in the rest of the house, the fir flooring is by Dinesen. "Having worked with Will so much, I know he responds to a very calm and cool palette of beiges and grays," says Reddy.

Evoking shou sugi ban, the cedar exterior has a Benjamin Moore Arborcoat stain (above). Steel-and-wood trellises provide relief from the sun. Abutting the canyon, the narrow backyard has just enough space for a pool, a terrace, and a handful of Ninix loungers by Royal Botania (below). "Sitting out there, having dinner with all the doors open—that's all I really want," says Will.



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dwell.com/the-model-home

"The view doesn't look like L.A. It looks like Tuscany." Will Arnett

