

GRAND AND SPECIAL FOCUS

# BARRIO METALICO

Tucson, Ariz.

**B**ARRIO METALICO'S developers originally envisioned the nine-unit project as a way to create momentum for a larger development they were planning nearby. Little did they know that the appetite for hip, urban-style housing would be as good as they had hoped and stronger than they imagined. To wit: The first unit was bought sight unseen. "It set a standard for the neighborhood," says architect and developer Rob Paulus.

The project is located east of downtown Tucson in a sparse, largely forgotten and overwhelmingly industrial neighborhood called Millville. The team wanted to revive the area while embracing its roots. "We knew we would have to use budget materials so we wanted to have fun with it," says Paulus.

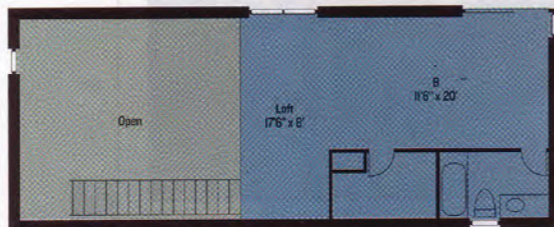
Each 1,557-square-foot house is clad in corrugated metal and prominently features exposed steel and modest materials. This theme continues on the inside with concrete floors, exposed ducts, and maple cabinets. The materials may be low budget, but the architect spent time on design. "We try to articulate every piece we do," says Paulus. "It's a challenge working with basic materials because it's really

in the detailing more than the material."

Loft-like spaces receive light from large sliding doors, and floor-to-ceiling corner windows offer views of the main courtyard. Despite these large openings, Barrio exceeds local energy standards thanks to super-insulated R-48 walls, 1-inch-thick insulated glass, and integral low-E coating. Further pushing the sustainable agenda, the developers gave each home a 12-foot rainwater harvesting tank, pre-plumbed each house for solar water heating, and installed a solar array to operate the main gate. Moreover, the perimeter fence, which our judges gave a special focus award, is constructed of salvaged wood from an old building on a nearby site.

Paulus says the project was a huge financial and design success. But the coolest thing is that the houses have created something more: a community. —N.F.M.

**Categories:** Production/Semi-custom, less than 2,000 square feet; special focus, fencing; **Entrant/Architect/Land planner/Interior designer/Landscape architect:** Rob Paulus Architect, Tucson, Ariz.; **Builder:** Caliber West, Tucson; **Developer:** Fremont Partners, Tucson

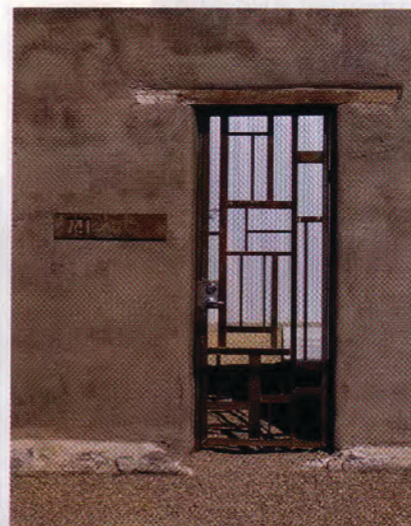


SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

PHOTOS: BRADLEY WHEELER/ITALIAFOCUS.COM



## LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

**M**ost people think of the terms "industrial" and "modest" as euphemisms for cheap. But perceptions can be altered with creative use of low-cost materials, says architect Rob Paulus. Honoring Barrio Metalico's very tight budget, the architect used "a simple industrial box that was hard on the outside yet very livable and inviting on the inside." Off-the-shelf materials do cost less, but when juxtaposed with color or with natural earthy materials such as wood, cork, or bamboo, they come alive. In this case, Barrio's weathered recycled wood fence completes the balance. "The two separate elements work together to provide a pleasant contrast," Paulus says.

