

URBAN CAMPING



Back in the mid-1990s, Michael Trudgeon and Crowd Productions looked at what it might mean to see your tiny home as a campsite. The result was a mobile kitchen – compact and tech-savvy, “more technologically flexible and convenient than the traditional fixed kitchen,” said Michael at the time.

The idea was to exploit new technology and combine it with compactness. “It went from being an architectural and urban planning framing of the problem – new housing typologies – to what variation would you need, how are cities being filled with more diverse populations, the whole Jane Jacobs idea about trying to design spaces that are not overly complicated, but can accommodate different sorts of occupants,” he said.

Now, after years of development – slotted in between the studio’s other projects – that conceptual prototype is finally a fully working prototype looking for a manufacturer. “It is a classic hot-rod,” says Michael. “It has all the appliances jammed into this matte black box as a demonstrator.”

He points out that in any home, the functional living area is limited and the greater the density the more limited it is. Having a fixed kitchen limits how much one can re-configure the living space. But, as Michael explains, if the kitchen is mobile and can slide out of the way, what you get “is a lot more living area in a compact space – and for the developers, less space is disappearing into a fixed kitchen”.

Michael indicates that in cities like Paris, Berlin and London it is quite common to have apartments without a kitchen – you have to provide and fit your own. In Singapore, they are now designing ‘unfinished’ apartments where the eventual occupants decide on the final interior plan, fittings and fixtures.

TEXT PAUL MCGILLICK

These days living space can come at a premium.
So, what about the cooking?

Answer: the Mobile Hyper Kitchen.



In Australia, the need for greater density is driving new housing typologies that can house more people in less space. Michael suggests that the granny flat, for example, can potentially house more people on suburban sites. And the mobile kitchen seems ideal for the traditional Asian wet kitchen or perhaps a more sophisticated form of outdoor cooking. Then there is share accommodation, refugee accommodation, emergency shelter, pop-up retail and hospitality spaces, not to mention, says Michael, “those who want to live luxuriously in a 21st century micro-apartment”. The idea, he explains, is “that you take a shell and very quickly bring in the cooking amenity, roll it in without the joinery and the multiple trades required to install a kitchen.”

In Michael’s words it is a mechanical camp site. “In a time-poor and space-poor environment it is a case of anything we can do to make it more flexible.” And it really does have the lot. Just roll it in and plug it in to a powerpoint.

It has a down-force extractor, centrifugal fan and a retractable splashback that curls over the cooking space. It has triple filters, an oil filter and a particulate filter. So, it takes out smells and it takes out oil. It blows the air out at four levels, providing the ventilation to deal with cooking smells. It has a pop-up retractable tap, a grey water ejection system, dishwasher, convection oven, an induction cooktop with four hobs, a sink that is re-configurable, two chopping boards that become dish racks and two mini-sinks which can be turned upside down. It has a re-configurable work surface and it has a hot water heater and recycling bins, plus many other features.

And it looks just like a tasteful piece of furniture. O brave new world that has such things in it.

■ Crowd Productions | crowd.com.au/mhk

OPENER The hyper kitchen is a self-contained mobile kitchen with space-saving features that could revolutionise the way we live.

ABOVE Simply plug in for all that a conventional kitchen can offer.