

# Minimalist Living

By Marcy Marro

Photographer: Ron Lutz II



**Architect Lee Calisti has been doing a housing study since 1991, researching small, single-family homes and studying alternatives to cookie-cutter houses that make up a large amount of today's new construction homes.** "I wanted to come up with a way to provide livable, sustainable and affordable architecture to the average budget-conscious family that is trying to build a new home," Calisti said.

What better way to research housing sizes than to build your own home. Utilizing a minimalist approach, Calisti built a modern 2,217-square-foot (206-m<sup>2</sup>) home and studio on an empty lot in a traditional 1960s neighborhood within walking distance to downtown Greensburg, Pa. Building on an empty lot completed a gap in the neighborhood while not disturbing any virgin land, and by incorporating his studio into his house, Calisti was able to cut his long commute to Pittsburgh.

Completed in September 2007, the house utilizes 1,055 square feet (98 m<sup>2</sup>) of 26-gauge Galvalume flat seam metal panels from ATAS International Inc., Allentown, Pa., to complement the red brick. Used as a durable, maintenance-free siding material, the metal panels were installed in an elongated

horizontal pattern reminiscent of the brick running bond on the remainder of the house, balancing the verticality of the house.


The home also features a number of green building components, including a white EPDM membrane roof that won't reflect ultraviolet rays; high-efficiency HVAC system; low-flush toilets; no-VOC paints; and Energy Star appliances. Additionally, Calisti tried to use as many local materials and contractors as possible.

According to Calisti, the visual aspects of the exterior relied on the composition and interplay between differing materials and carefully selected window placement. The organization of public and private spaces with respect to the street are read in the degree of fenestration on each side. Material changes respond to the axial internal organization.

"I always had a fondness for metal. For me, when I use materials on a house, I want to use the materials in an honest and pure way, exactly in the matter that they come. I don't want to paint them or coat them."

The Calisti residence has captured much attention for its use of Galvalume. "I used Galvalume specifically because I didn't want to use a painted metal. I looked at some other metals, but Galvalume was an economical choice, and against the brick I had chosen, the

Galvalume will not age and transform itself as much as other metals."

"I wanted something that was edgy and would capture people's attention," Calisti continued. "I figured if I could show potential clients firsthand what it looks like in person, they'd be more willing to incorporate it into their own projects that they've hired me to design. It's not uncommon for people to drive by daily or weekly and pause in front of the house to get a better look." 

**Calisti Residence, Greensburg, Pa.**

**Architect: lee CALISTI**

**architecture+design, Greensburg**

**Builder: Vince Building Co.,  
Greensburg**

**Installer: County Roofing,  
Jeannette, Pa.**

**Metal supplier: Cassidy Pierce,  
Pittsburgh**

**Metal wall panels, coping and flashing:**

**ATAS International Inc.,**

**Allentown, Pa., [www.atas.com](http://www.atas.com), Circle #179**