

Matt Wittman, AIA LEED AP

Matt Wittman is a founding principal of Seattle-based Wittman Estes, a collaboration with landscape designer Jody Estes. The firm, founded on the idea that buildings and landscapes can be combined into a unified expression, is best known for innovative housing—single family to multi-family—that provides a rich experience and that is in tune with the natural environment.

“I grew up in ranching country in eastern Washington and Idaho,” notes Wittman. “Our family ranch was on the Nez Perce Reservation...a dramatic landscape marked by big mountains, forests, and wide open plains. Living in that vast landscape, I learned to connect nature and people through experience—to frame relationships through architecture—rather than about treating it as a precious object. By composing architecture that works with outdoor spaces, the relationship between inside and outside is heightened.”

Housing is at the heart of the firm’s practice. Wittman’s agrarian roots led to his interest in the modernist traditions of integrating buildings with nature and doing more with less. Studying architecture in California and working in Latin America, Wittman experienced the simplicity of courtyard houses, where abundant windows and open floor plans expanded interior spaces and bring the outdoors in. His housing is modern and refined, yet possessing depth and a richness of material and detail.

Wittman approach to architecture is efficient, and derived from having grown up on 10,000-acre ranch, where necessity inspired problem solving and where the built environment was largely utilitarian. “I spent most of my time outdoors— building fences, hauling hay, moving cattle, and logging. Or when I was younger, hiking in the forest,” he adds. The spirit of hard won self-reliance and ad hoc problem solving led to his exploration of pre-fabrication and off-grid living. While working with a housing startup, Wittman developed a series of prefabricated modules that could be shop-built, delivered and erected with less waste and cost. Wittman’s interest in thrifty design has also been applied to a selection of commercial projects including re-imagining a mid-century hotel near the Space Needle.

His work, and that of the firm, has been widely published, including *Dwell*, *Dezeen*, *ArchDaily*, *Gardenista*, *Seattle Magazine*, *Luxe*, and London’s *Made* magazine. In addition to publications, the firm’s work has been recognized by awards from the AIA Washington among others, and has been featured in galleries and exhibits in Seattle and San Francisco. Wittman is currently a visiting critic at the University of Oregon and University of Washington Departments of Architecture. Prior to co-founding Wittman Estes, Matt was an architect at Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. Wittman received his Master of Architecture in 2003 from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was awarded the Gerson Prize for Design Excellence, and taught architecture and design studios. He is a LEED accredited professional.

Awards, Exhibitions, and Publications

Dwell, Mercer Modern, 4/20

Seattle Eco Guild Green Home Tour, Tsuga Townhomes, 5/20

G&G Magazine, Hood Cliff, 1/20

Arquitectura y Diseno, El Refugio Ideal, 1/20

Dwell, Stone Solar Studio: Top 10 Global Prefabs of 2019, 12/19

Dezeen, Mercer Modern: Wittman Estes brightens up a 1960s Pacific Northwest Home, 12/19

ArchDaily, Hood Cliff Retreat, 12/19

Gray Awards, Finalist, Laurelhurst Garden, 11/19

University of Washington Architecture Dept Panel: S,M,L Practice, 10/19

Puget Sound Business Journal, Civic Hotel, 9/19

Seattle Architecture Foundation Model Exhibition: Wenatchee River Retreat 8/19

Dezeen, Stone Solar Studio Uses Prefab Elements, 7/19

Seattle Architecture Foundation Exhibition, Embrace the Rain: Rain Gardens and Green Infrastructure 5/19

AIA Seattle DADU Tour, Stone Solar Studio, 5/19
Dwell, This Solar Powered Prefab Raises the Bar for Sustainability, 3/19
The Seattle Times: Of Birds and Balance, Seattle Design Festival Issue, 8/19
Midcentury Home, A Serene Modernist Retreat for Nature Lovers 3/19
The Architecture of Drawing Exhibition, Peter Miller Gallery, 12/18
Dwell, One Family's Cabin Retreat in Washington Takes Inspiration from Native Bird 12/18
AIA Seattle Honor Awards, Merit Award, Hood Cliff Retreat, 11/18
The Registry, The Great Promise of Modular Construction: Can Factory Built Homes Help Solve Seattle's Housing Crisis? 9/18
Dwell, Node Prefab Homes Aim at a Carbon Negative Future, 10/18
The Registry, Combatting Urban Densification Issues in Seattle: A New Approach to Building Multifamily Homes
Curbed, Node delivers modern, sustainable prefab homes 5/18
ArchDaily, Grasshopper Studio, 4/18
AIA Seattle Honor Awards, Honorable Mention, Grasshopper Studio, 11/17
Dezeen, Madison Alpine Garden, 7/17
Architect, Designing from the Land Up, Interview, 6/17
Seattle Architecture Foundation Model Exhibition, Figure/Ground, 9/17
Seattle Magazine, Design Team Marries Indoor Outdoor Living, 9/17
Luxe Magazine: Laurelhurst House, Inside Out, 07/16
Dwell, Grasshopper Studio, 02/16
Seattle Architecture Foundation Model Exhibition, Forest House, 9/16
Gardenista, Water's Edge: A Saltwater Courtyard Garden on Bainbridge Island 10/15
Georgetown Art Attack: Wittman Estes: Integrated Environments Seattle, Washington, 12/13