

# METROPOLIS

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July/August 2019

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## By Women, for Women



Chiara de Rege  
and Alda Ly  
at The Wing, in  
NYC's Soho  
neighborhood

# MADE Open Air

Emphasizing modularity and customizability, a new system aims to activate outdoor space.

By John S. Ives

Enormous resources are devoted to architecture and landscape planning, yet the full potential of most real estate remains barely realized. Outdoor spaces often go overlooked, particularly as functional environments in commercial settings, perhaps because designers have lacked a well-rounded, scalable solution aside from custom installations. With the introduction of Upfit, a modular

pavilion system, site furniture manufacturer Landscape Forms promises to fill this void.

Upfit is a natural evolution for the Kalamazoo, Michigan-based company, which, over the past half century, has established itself as a global leader in design-forward outdoor structures and lighting. As cities continue to develop and densify, access to quality outdoor space

will become increasingly critical, notes Kirt Martin, Landscape Forms' chief creative officer and vice president of design and marketing. The company partnered with KEM Studio's Jonathon Kemnitzer, whose team traveled around the country researching parks, hardscapes, and other outdoor environments to better understand what the "outdoor experience should look like and what it should be," Martin says.



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Panels can be added to further delineate space and enhance functionality: Slats provide shade and privacy, wire helps create plant walls, and colored glass serves as a marker board. Upfit also includes a variety of optional peninsula and in-line tables, as well as a bike rack. If the client so chooses, wiring the system for power opens the door to embedded lighting, fans and misting systems, monitors, and a louvered roof that can be operated with a remote or a smart-device app.

With this range of functionality and customizability, Upfit's applications seem boundless, from a meeting area in an educational campus or a rooftop cabana to a bike station in a city plaza. In recognizing a long-underserved spatial need, Landscape Forms is betting that Upfit's core features and adaptability will activate outdoor spaces to their full potential. **M**



Designed with StruXure Outdoor and KEM Studio, Upfit can be deployed as a stand-alone pavilion or ganged and complemented with optional features such as shading panels, green walls, bike racks, and dry-erase boards (top and bottom, this page). The lighting, fans, and louvered roof of the structures—for those wired for electricity—can be operated by remote or by an app (right).



Landscape Forms' new collection of modular structures, called Upfit, is meant to help architects and designers create inviting gathering spaces in outdoor settings.

COURTESY PETE MCDANIEL, STUDIO DVDP

"We found that each successful outdoor space was made up of macro and micro elements that created a destination," says Kemnitzer. Macro elements like a canopy or hardscaping establish distinct spaces, while micro features like seating and plantings make them appealing and inviting. "If you look at people in public space, they don't feel comfortable unless they're anchoring themselves to something," adds Martin. But there are limited options available to create these types of places: Sun cabanas, for instance, provide little more than shade. After several months of research, the team noted the need for structures that could provide designers with the tools to draw people to the outdoors.

Based on a 16-by-16-foot extruded aluminum post-and-beam module manufactured by StruXure Outdoor, Upfit can be de-

