Micro housing developer Patrick Kennedy is on a roll (and not just because of his treadmill desk, below). His latest project in Berkeley, Calif. proves the tiny living arrangement is here to stay in the US.

San Francisco is the trendsetter, with Patrick's firm (Berkeley-based Panoramic Interests) delivering the country’s first prefab micro housing project in SoMa last year: 23 units less than 300 SF each, gobbled up in a flash. Now he’s diving in nearby at 9th and Mission, with 120 microstudios and 40 microsuites, or two and three-bedroom apartments, at 625 SF. That diverse sample size will prove or debunk the concept in the city, he says. (Leasing starts in March for a June delivery.) The trend is
popping up coast to coast, in Seattle, Vancouver, NYC, Boston, and DC. The ideal tenant: People who land in cities with a suitcase, laptop, iPhone—and not much else, Patrick says. (So expect a lot of Amazing Race contestants.)

Northeastern economist Barry Bluestone expects demand to stay strong for the next five to 10 years, especially in cities that are Millennial favorites. (That would be Everwood, Smallville, and Deadwood.) It’s the kind of housing he thinks will make a big difference for grad students to medical interns to line chefs; pretty much any young professional who might be strapped on cash and time. Patrick’s going through entitlements to bring a 65-unit microhousing concept just a third of a mile from Berkeley’s campus. In his SoMa project, Patrick was going to install washer/dryers in every unit but found he was too tight on space, so they’re going in the hallways instead. (He has a matchmaking motive for that placement; he doesn’t want to deny residents from meeting Mr. Right or Mademoiselle X.)
Still, there are skeptics; at Bisnow’s BMAC West multifamily conference in LA last week, Harley Ellis Devereaux principal Daniel Gehman said he foresees a backlash against the "all-tiny, all-the-time" trend. You can do a big bundle of tiny units if you’re close to a major university, a major tech hub, and not too far from Mom and Dad’s house. When you start designing units in the 275k SF range, you’re taking your cues from an Airstream trailer. No one’s furniture will fit, so you need built-ins that do more than one thing at a time. "You get this little Faberge egg of a unit, but you’re spending big bank to deliver that."