

Naples, Florida

TINY SURF HOUSE



CHALLENGE

Finding a cooling and heating system small and efficient enough for a tiny, tight home

SOLUTION

Zoned Comfort Solutions® from Mitsubishi Electric

RESULT

Quick, quiet cooling and low utility bills

For Mark and Jen Athanacio, their reality is what most people only dream of – casting off everything but the necessities and living in a small cottage by the sea. Featured on HGTV's Tiny House, Big Living, their 224-square-foot home in Naples, Florida, was built with the goal of living simply, without worry for bills or unnecessary items. When it came to cooling and heating such a small, simple space, the couple searched for a smart solution – one that would operate efficiently and bring them reliable comfort. It is no surprise, then, that they chose Zoned Comfort Solutions® from Mitsubishi Electric.

“We were moving around a lot – we would surf through the Tropics and Central America – so we would find ourselves in hotels a lot of the time. Pretty soon we realized how easy it was to live in just one room,” said

Mark. The couple lived in an efficiency apartment for a while, then decided to build their own tiny house. In this case, ‘tiny’ means a single room. For long-term living, they knew that a single room would have to be very smartly designed.

The couple brought on Kelly Coyle, president, Coyle Development and Building, Naples, as the general contractor, and the search for a cooling and heating system began. Coyle said, “Mark and Jen wanted to use less energy, but also wanted a lower mortgage payment. They wanted a home that was efficient and affordable. But, to begin with, there is no attic, so there was no space for ductwork” – ruling out traditional systems. Mark then ruled out window units because they are “clunky and look bad. They also don’t function well. You might as well use a fan and some ice cubes.”



To find a system that could work, the team reached out to Diamond Contractor® Peter Pietruszko, owner and president, Speedy Air Conditioning, Inc., Naples. Pietruszko went on to design and install the HVAC system. He said, "It was nice to work with a couple who was happy with so little space. We like to do high-efficiency installations, especially since, in Florida, every house needs air conditioning. We've found that, for these projects, split-ductless systems are the most suitable. For this house, there just wasn't room for anything bigger."

The Athanacios liked the idea of zoning systems, having experienced the technology in their travels, and were satisfied with Pietruszko's suggestion of Mitsubishi Electric. Mark said, "We've heard the name before, who hasn't? And when we asked around about good systems, it was the name that came up a lot."

Coyle appreciated the Mitsubishi Electric system's small footprint given the limited interior space. He said, "The size of the home is pretty compact, so we had to be really efficient with how we used the space. A lot of things had to be dual-purpose. There is a fold-out table that comes down, a raised desk that gets pushed under the bed when not being used and a loft over the bathroom and kitchen that can also be used for more storage." A Mitsubishi Electric zoning system was equally versatile.

Due to the house's small size, installing and locating the indoor and outdoor units at first seemed challenging. Fortunately, a reduced footprint helped overcome that challenge, and the installation went smoothly – taking just eight hours over the course of two days.

Everything has been going well since. Mark said, "I love the way it looks and the controls. You can adjust the

airflow – setting it up/down, left/right. You can set it to a certain angle and it blows air right there – immediately cools things. Even after 12 hours away, I turn it on and the house is cooled instantly. Or if I just want to air out the house after dinner, I open a window, set the fan to 'on,' and we immediately have clean air."

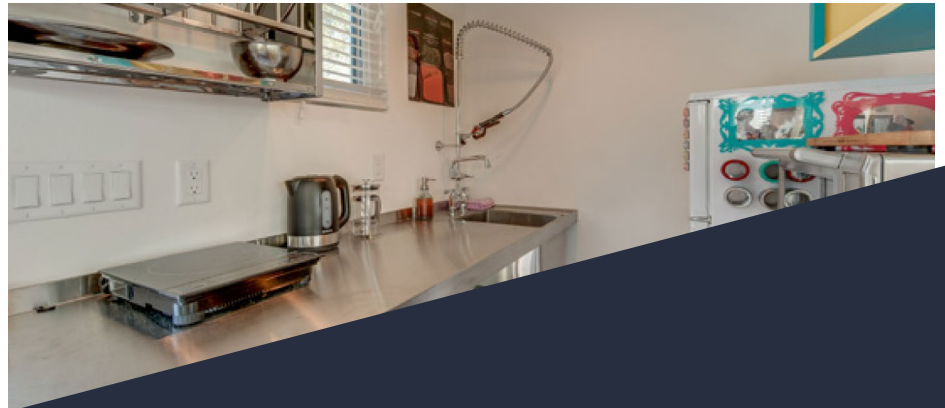
// We wanted the best, and we knew that was Mitsubishi Electric. This house is built to last for 40 years, so we don't want to spend money on maintenance; we'd rather spend it on quality construction. //

— Mark Athanacio,
homeowner

Project Completed: January 2016 |

The comfort is incredible, and it doesn't come at a steep price. Between a highly efficient cooling and heating system and general tight construction, the Athanacios are seeing a significant reduction in energy usage. Their new home consumes just one-third of the electricity that their previous efficiency apartment did.

The couple has also appreciated the system's discreet operation. Mark said, "It's so quiet. I'm standing under [the indoor unit] right now and still talking on the phone! Overall, it's just been fantastic. The system is so much more efficient and it looks so much better than window units. I don't know why more people don't do this."



Photos: Banyan Photography

EQUIPMENT

- ▶ (1) MUZ M-Series Outdoor Unit
- ▶ (1) MSZ Wall-mounted Indoor Unit

PROJECT TEAM

General Contractor:

Coyle Development and Building, Naples, Florida

HVAC Contractor:

Speedy Air Conditioning, Inc., Naples, Florida