

Read up before you build, buy or remodel

From staff and wire reports

Before you start your building or remodeling projects, check out the bookstores for practical help. Among new titles:

■ "Build Your Dream House for a Song: And Own It Free and Clear in Five Years" (Warbeck Publishing, San Rafael; \$29.95) by David Cook of San Rafael is a self-published book that gives down-to-earth information that would be especially suited to the very crafty and very young and energetic.

It's all based on Cook's personal experiences in doing just what the title of his book says you can do, too. He sold a home with a 30-year mortgage and used the equity to build his Marin County dream house.

The introduction to the book says: "You can live a house that you own outright and it can be your dream house. Thanks to modern technology, building your own house has never been easier. Nail guns are available to do every kind of nailing job, electric saws to do every kind of cutting job and a myriad of other helpful tools that were not available a generation ago." The book tells how to buy land for as little as 20 cents on the dollar; how to buy building materials for 10 cents on the dollar, and how to live on your land comfortably and rent free while you build.

■ There's also "The Owner-Builder Book: How You Can Save More Than \$100,000 in the Construction of Your Custom Home" by Mark A. Smith with Elaine M. Smith (The Consensus Group, Provo, Utah; phone, 888-333-2845; \$29.95). This book is somewhat similar to David Cook's book and includes such chapter headings as: "You Will Profit by Building a True Custom House," "How to Get the Subs on Your Side," and "How to Make Your Lender Swoon."

■ "The New Cottage Home" (Taunton Press, \$29.95 hardcover),

BUILD YOUR DREAM HOUSE FOR A SONG

AND OWN IT FREE AND CLEAR IN FIVE YEARS



David Cook

by Jim Tolpin, is a deliberate antidote to what the author calls "a Madison Avenue drive toward continued conspicuous consumption."

Noting that the average American house has grown larger even as the average family has grown smaller, he says that some people are ready to come back to smaller, unpretentious homes. He celebrates the compact and comfortable by looking at recent-vintage cottages in coastal and mountain areas, the forest, the open fields and in town.

■ Also focused on scale is "One-Room Living" (DK Publishing, \$18.95 hardcover), by Sylvia Katz. City dwellers (or those with small pied-a-terre in the city) already familiar with studio or loft apartments might find some new ideas for making the most of the space they have, such as creating storage under a new false floor and its step. Included in the book, part of DK Home Design Workbooks series, are a questionnaire, instructions for making plans, and grids to help you analyze and design your small space.

■ Lighting, shelving, interior surfaces and soft goods are all covered in "The Complete Home Dec-