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EXCEPTIONAL PROPERTIES

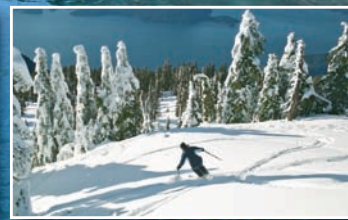
PRESENTING THE BEST REAL ESTATE AND COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

FIND YOUR OWN PARADISE

NEW ZEALAND'S BAY OF ISLANDS
GRAND CAYMAN | BRITISH COLUMBIA

Luxury Log & Timber Frame Homes
Great Game Rooms & Bars
What Will \$2.5 Million Buy?

WHAT TO DO THIS WINTER
RIVIERA MAYA GOLF | LAKE PLACID SKIING
TURKS & CAICOS BEACHES



PLUS Austin | Park City | Seattle | Cape Cod | France | Kiawah Island

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: TRUE NORTH LOG HOMES; DAN ACHATZ; MICHAEL COLAVITA

Green, Spacious & Gorgeous

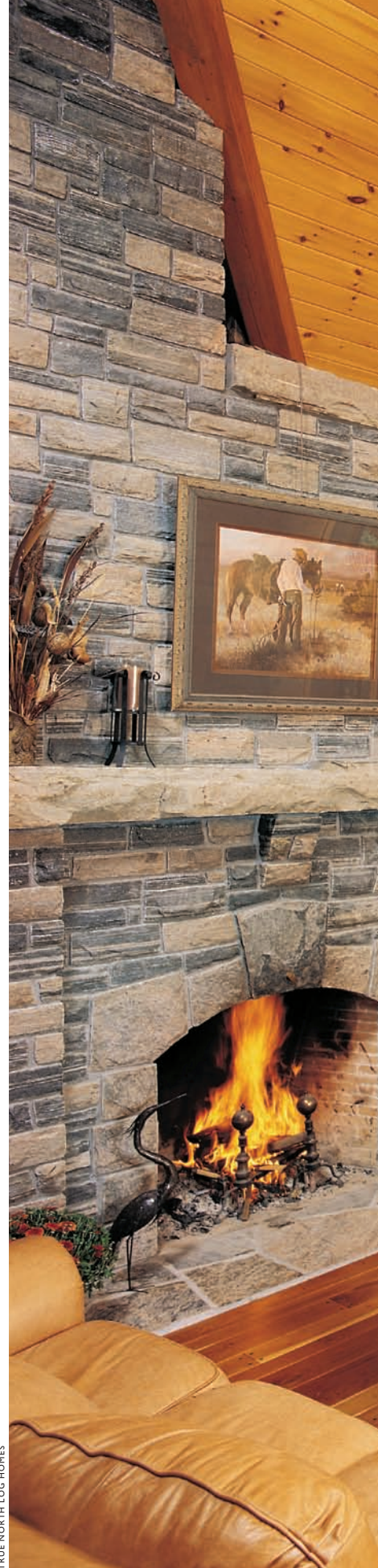
Log and timber frame homes take rustic to a whole new level. BY R.J. HARDWICK



WHEN IT CAME TIME FOR HIM TO RETIRE, David Kirsch had long known exactly what kind of house he wanted.

“It had always been my dream to find a big, old barn, renovate it and turn it into something special,” says Kirsch, a former contractor from South Carolina. “What appealed to me most was all that wood and all that space.”

But after buying property in Montana’s scenic Gallatin Valley, Kirsch and his wife, Vickie, enlisted the services of OakBridge Timber Framing, an Ohio-based firm, to give their dream a thoroughly modern twist. The happy result—a splendid 4,000-square-foot home with a 1,000-square-foot guest apartment, made of oak with hammer-beam framing and dramatic, soaring ceilings. Talk about space. There’s more than enough room for the Kirsch’s four rambunctious grandsons to roam around, and when it comes time for entertaining, 18 people can sit around the dining room table.



TRUE NORTH LOG HOMES



Left and right: Wrightman residence in Bracebridge, Ontario, by True North Homes

“I joke and tell people it’s a big, old barn. But what a barn,” says Kirsch. “I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Sentiments like that go a long way toward explaining the growing popularity of log homes and timber frame homes among those seeking luxury residences, whether as primary homes or vacation get-aways. One thing for certain—there’s no need to sacrifice creature comforts when building a log or timber frame home.

“Just because it’s a log home, doesn’t mean it can’t have a modern theater or a wine tasting room or an eight-car garage,” says Jay Parmeter, owner of Wisconsin-based Golden Eagle Log Homes. “The stereotypical little log cabin has gone by the wayside.”

According to Jeremy Bertrand, executive director of the Building Systems Councils of the National Association of Home Builders, log homes now account for almost seven percent of all new custom home construction. For the most recent statistical year, that translated



to almost 27,000 new log homes in the United States and Canada.

“And these aren’t your granddaddy’s log home by any stretch of the imagination,” says Bertrand. “People are coming to appreciate the concept of luxury in a log home. Plus, the whole green movement has really spurred the popularity. Log homes were green before green was cool.”

The demand for log and timber frame homes is not confined to North America. Ontario-based True North Log Homes, which has been in business for nearly 25 years, has built homes in England, Ireland, Mexico, Korea, Japan and the Bahamas.

“Asia might seem an unlikely place for a log home, but there is a great following of people there who want a truly North American product, something that is steeped in heritage and delivers high quality,” says Rob Wrightman, chief executive officer of True North Log Homes. “Log homes are also increasingly popular as vacation homes in Caribbean countries, like the Bahamas, where



Kirsch residence in Belgrade, Montana, by OakBridge Timber Framing. Above: Formisano residence near Pearl Lake, Michigan, by Riverbend Timber Framing.

TOP: RIVERBEND/RAUTH PHOTOGRAPHIC; BOTTOM: ROGER WADE PHOTOGRAPHY © 2009

building a house can often take years thanks to the difficulty of getting construction materials. With a log home, everything can be shipped at once as a package and owners don't have to wait forever to enjoy their island home."

Energy efficiency is one of the big draws of a log or timber frame home. And builders have demonstrated innovation on a number of fronts. True North, for example, devised a spring-loaded "Log Lock" system that draws the logs tight as they shrink, keeping the house well-sealed as it settles.

"All in all, innovation is what drives our business," says Wrightman. "While log homes have one foot in history, they have the other foot planted in the future."

Another plus mark on the green side of the ledger: Log and timber frame homes don't necessarily use more wood in their construction than other homes.

"There's really a lot less wood, in terms of total board feet, that goes into one of our homes than in a stucco or block house, once you figure in all the two-by-fours that get hidden behind the walls," says Johnny Miller, of OakBridge Timber Framing, who began his building career raising barns as part of his family's Amish heritage. "And there's no reason why one of our homes, if properly maintained, shouldn't last hundreds and hundreds of years. That's what sustainability is all about."



Frantz residence in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, by Golden Eagle Log Homes

Environmental matters were high on the list of priorities for Bob Formisano and his wife, Joni, when it came time to build a second home on Pearl Lake, near Traverse City in northern Michigan. Their 6,200-square-foot home, designed by Formisano, an architect, and built by Michigan-based Riverbend Timber Framing, has won a long list of notable awards for its energy efficiency, including a Michigan Energy Grant. The five-bedroom, four-and-a-half bath home used forest-salvaged inland fir for the main timbers, along with walnut-stained oak and cherry wood for the braces and pegs. The flooring comes from sustainable maple farms in Canada. And the timber frame is enclosed with structural insulated panels to make it even more energy efficiency.

"While our goals were sustainability and green design, we also wanted our home to showcase everything that a timber frame home can be. We built this to be a generational home, a place that can be enjoyed for century after century," says Formisano. "The wood, the color, the light—everything just comes together so that when you walk in, the house just fits like your favorite old sweater."

That same desire to own a home that would offer a generational retreat is what appealed to Steve Frantz when he first walked into a 5,524-square-foot home in Rineland, WI, built by Golden Eagle Log Homes.

"When I was a child, my aunt and uncle had a vacation home in upper Wisconsin and spending summer there was the best time of my life. Whenever I went there the relaxation was automatic," says Frantz, president of a Milwaukee manufacturing firm. "I walked into this house and I stopped dead in my tracks and said: 'Holy cow, this is everything I remember. And then some.' I knew immediately that it was a home where we could create everlasting memories." **EP**



Wrightman residence in Bracebridge, Ontario, by True North Homes

TOP: GOLDEN EAGLE LOG HOMES; BOTTOM: TRUE NORTH LOG HOMES