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# *Second Time's the Charm*

*A Minnesota couple builds  
a lakefront cabin as their  
family gathering place.*

STORY BY TERESA L. WOLFF

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRUE NORTH LOG HOMES





**K**eith and Ann Bares are veterans when it comes to log homes. Their vacation cabin in Morrison County, Minnesota, is their second. “Our first log home was south of Red Lodge, Montana,” Keith recalls. “As much as we loved traveling from Minnesota to the Rocky Mountains for vacations, it became more difficult each year.”

Desiring to spend more time with their extended family in the Twin Cities area, the couple sold their Montana place and bought a one-acre wooded lot with 166 feet of lakeshore. During a trip between their primary residence and the lake, they passed a model home built by True North Log Homes. They were impressed by the manufacturer’s patented joinery system and promise of zero air infiltration “as we intended to use the home year-round and wanted to be sure it would be warm in the winter,” Keith says, noting the home features white pine logs.

Keith and Ann worked with True North to customize one of the company’s floor plans to provide sufficient space for visiting family. Besides their master suite, two bedrooms and a full bath on the second floor and an additional bedroom and full bath in the walkout lower level, the couple added queen-sized, pullout sofas

**Taking advantage of its sloping lot, the lakeside home is nestled into the hillside. It’s built of eastern white pine logs, with white cedar porch railings and decking overlooking the flagstone patio and fire pit. The steps are concrete blocks filled with pebbles.**





The kitchen mixes natural alder and black cabinets, leaving room at top to display Ann's basket collection. The granite countertop harmonizes with the black walnut floor and white pine wall logs.

in the loft and lower level for additional sleeping capacity.

The couple also wanted to make the most of their sloped lot and hired Rakow Construction to build the 1,924-square-foot home with a roomy lower level. "The lot contained a large hill, which we decided to use to our advantage," owner Bob Rakow explains. "We removed almost 20 feet from the top of the hill and nestled the cabin into the hill, but in such a manner as to allow the walkout basement to open on two sides."

In the three-car garage situated on the front side of the home, Rakow Construction placed the floor at the same height as the floor of the walkout. The crew then included an attic truss to allow

for 18-by-36-foot guest sleeping quarters on the garage's second floor. This arrangement provided for access from the garage to the house on both levels, using an 8-foot tunnel to connect the garage with the walkout. The tunnel, which was cemented and landscaped to camouflage its existence, provides a secure entrance into the home. An entrance into the garage sleeping quarters is located directly across from the back door of the main level of the home.

While the home was being built, Keith and Ann kept track of its progress. "Even though we had experience owning and living in a log home, we were novices when it came to the actual construction," Keith says. "We would visit the site on a regular basis and discuss with Bob our various

options. He took our opinions into consideration and made the best decision so our home would be as perfect as possible."

Construction of the home was actually a family endeavor, as Rakow collaborated with his son on the interior finishes. Jason Rakow completed all the tile work and fabricated the fireplace.

Over the years, Ann and Keith had looked through magazines for decorating ideas and purchased what they liked and thought would fit in a vacation cabin. "Our home in Montana was all logs and wood walls. We wanted more color in this cabin," Ann explains. "The interior walls are textured and painted, and fun fabrics and wildlife prints brighten the home. We shopped far and wide to find things





Durable furnishings in the great room sport a wildlife motif to reinforce the cabin's woody mood. Simulated river rock for the gas-burning fireplace emphasizes the waterfront location, which the windows and patio doors take full advantage of.





**ABOVE:** The master bedroom blends exposed ceiling beams, white pine logs, a textured painted partition wall and plush carpeting to create a relaxing setting. The door leading to the tiled bathroom and the twin windows are trimmed with 15-degree beveled top and bottom boards, a style reminiscent of the early 1900s.

that were perfect, such as old wooden snowshoes I found on eBay. In the end, we purchased all new furniture except for one lamp.”

Ann and Keith selected flooring based on foot traffic and room use. The great room is finished with black walnut, which was hand sculpted to give it a slightly uneven texture and enhance the rustic mood. Plush carpeting warms the bedrooms and lower level. Tile is found in the bathrooms and laundry.

Don Kunesh and his crew at Lakedale Landscaping, Nursery & Tree Care transformed the sloped property into an invit-

ing outdoor living space. Kunesh installed concrete blocks filled with pebbles as a staircase to allow easy access to a fire pit in front of the house. Flagstone and large boulders added rustic elegance. The majority of the property was left in its natural state, with a minimum of grass to trim so the family could spend summer days fishing, boating, kayaking or sailing across the lake on their Jet Skis rather than being muddled down in mountains of yard work.

The family enjoys the outdoors even in the cold Minnesota winters, riding snowmobiles, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing over the many miles of state-maintained

trails. “Every time we go to the lake, we are surprised how quiet it is since there are no major roads nearby,” Keith notes. “We enjoy the serenity of our surroundings.”

Ann echoes that sentiment: “Both Keith and I own our own businesses, so when we come to the cabin we just want to relax. This is our place to get away and be with our family. We achieved our goal.” ■





Twin shed dormers increase usable space on the cabin's loft level, allowing for two bedrooms and a full bath. The walkout lower level includes a fourth bedroom, permitting the owners to host a crowd.

Upper Level



Main Level

### *home details*

**SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 1,915

**LOG PROVIDER:** True North Log Homes

**BUILDER:** Rakow Construction

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 64.