

## Home Sweet Log Home

A Retreat: A Well Deserved Retreat

*by Scott Rouleau, Redstone Communications*

There are likely as many proverbs and sayings about one's home as there are ways to build it, particularly in this age of advanced technology. One of the most surprisingly advanced ways to build a home is one of the oldest: log homes. Now, you may be thinking of some funky little Abraham Lincoln shack or of backwoods living when America was at its infancy, but that would be like equating the Master's with an overgrown mini-golf course.

Log homes have now become the fastest-growing segment of the custom-home market, appreciating and selling well. The log and timber-frame home industry produces sales of about 1,700 new units per month throughout the United States, equaling sales that have more than doubled to \$1.37 billion since the early 1990s. Those certainly aren't little shacks.

The technology that goes into building a log home is astounding; even the milling process is an art form. In the early "Lincoln" days of log homes, logs were laid horizontally and interlocked on the ends with notches. Jay Parmeter, co-owner of Golden Eagle Log Homes headquartered in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, says, "Today, manufacturers like Golden Eagle Log Homes use a machining process that overlaps logs in the corner. It is quite sophisticated. The corners shrink to fit and are self-draining, meaning as the wood dries, the cells of the wood release moisture, causing the corner ends to get tighter, as opposed to loosening up in any way. Secondly, if any moisture gets in, it drains off by itself instead of being stuck in the wood."

Furthermore, aside from the beauty value, log homes are more efficient and eco-friendly than a standard stick-built home. "There's less waste, since the components are pre-cut in a facility, and then assembled on site," says Parmeter. "And the R-factor (the measurement of thermal mass,

which determines the heat/cold loss of a home) far exceeds that of stick-built homes, and the logs themselves are natural, not chemical-based, like many components required in stick-built homes.”

OK, so they’re technologically advanced, efficient, and eco-friendly. But do they look good, or do they suffer the fate of most hybrid cars – a bit quirky looking? In fact, log homes can be some of the most impressive and breathtaking structures built today. Not surprisingly, the booming log and timber-frame home industry has spawned manufacturers from the east to the west coast in the United States and Canada. Customers have a myriad of choices when it comes to building a log home including square footage, log style, and choosing a standard plan or designing a custom plan. At Golden Eagle Log Homes, Parmeter finds his clients are frequently looking for a home that is designed with inspiration and to fit the busy lifestyles of a family while also being a retreat and a place to entertain guests. “The increased interest in the log and timber frame home industry calls for a specialized company. We estimate that 85% - 90% of our customers build a customized home, and we work with them every step of the way to ensure the end result surpasses their expectations.” And those end results are nothing short of spectacular.

Log home customers have built and designed homes that range in size from 1,000 or so square feet to extravagant gated estates in golf and ski resort towns and communities all over the United States. “There truly is a log home for everyone,” says Parmeter. “We find that many of our clients are successful entrepreneurs, who have worked years to earn their money and now they are rewarding themselves with a log home. I think it’s because a log home feels so much more like a retreat, a well-deserved retreat.”

Golden Eagle Log Homes customers are scattered all over the West, and range from celebrities to the average Joe. As a primary or 2nd, 3rd, or

4th home, the rustic luxury that a log home offers shows that there really is no place like a "home sweet log home."

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