

As the sun goes down and the lights go up, a golden glow overcomes Donna and Michael's rustic retreat, while the wall of windows reflects the twilight sky.



# *For the Love of Logs*

A lakefront plot in America's heartland provides the ideal backdrop for a remarkable log home family retreat.

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The half-log home features a steeply pitched double roofline over the front entrance. This design decision helps shed snow and gives the house storybook charm.

**D**ONNA AND MICHAEL HAD A HEAD START WHEN IT CAME TO BUILDING THEIR LEGACY HOME.

With a generous tract of wooded land that had been in Donna's family, the couple had the perfect spot to make their dream of a lakeside log home come true.

"We always had a vision of a log home there," Donna says. With two grown sons and crowds of extended family, friends and business associates to entertain, the couple knew that the small fishing cabin that was on the site would have to be replaced. "We needed a bigger place," Donna says.

Donna and Michael began searching for a log home company to produce a rustic-yet-elegant home they could enjoy with their family now and eventually pass on to later generations. After discovering Wisconsin Log Homes, the couple made the trip to their National Headquarters in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to see the company's work in person and meet the staff. "We had great rapport, and we fell in love with the product," Donna says.

That product is an insulated-log wall system that Wisconsin Log Homes pioneered. Every exterior wall is framed with a 6-inch insulated core that can be faced with half logs both inside and out. This system creates the company's airtight, draft-free homes and allows for large expanses of glass walls, like the soaring two-story wall of windows that overlooks the lake. For their home, the couple chose a mix of logs and drywall on the interior walls and a 12-inch round half-log profile for the home's exterior.



**LEFT:** The cozy reading loft not only provides a little solitude for enjoying a good novel, it provides a place to truly appreciate the warmth of the wood-enclosed environment.



The manufactured stone that lines the soaring chimney sets the color scheme for the interior. Distressed-leather sectionals provide plenty of seating for friends and family around the fireplace.



**Donna searched for a long light fixture that would be a focal point in the spacious, open-concept dining room. The table extends to seat 18.**

Once constructed, attention turned to protecting the home's most valuable asset – all that gorgeous wood. The Wisconsin Log Homes team turned to trusted partner, Euclid Ohio-based Continental Products, for the home's stain and sealant.

"We offer Continental Products as a 'value added' feature for our clients," explains Wisconsin Log Homes Vice President, Greg Diederich. "The longevity of their WeatherSeal stains seems to

be better [in some cases, much better] than others. Plus, it's reasonably priced and has a nice selection of color options available for our clients to choose from."

"WeatherSeal is our flagship product. It's been in the market for over 40 years," says Bob Leshner, Business Development Manager, Branded Products for Continental. "It's kind of a game changer in the log home market, because it's a hybrid oil-and-water-based product. It has the ease of application of

a water-based stain and the longevity of an oil-based one. It has the best of both worlds."

According to Bob, applicators love WeatherSeal because of its thick, rich character. With an almost pudding-like consistency, WeatherSeal spreads on smoothly and evenly and isn't messy. Unlike traditional water-thin stains, WeatherSeal won't run down your hands and arms while you're applying it, and it doesn't bleed or run onto



**A wrap-around deck with plenty of space for outdoor living overlooks the private lake. Manufactured stone clads the home's foundation and accents the round log walls.**

chinking between the log courses.

Homeowners appreciate Continental's products for their durability. "We hear time and again that WeatherSeal leads the market when it comes to stain longevity," Bob says. "It's not uncommon to hear that, with regular maintenance, a log home treated with a three-coat WeatherSeal stain application can go up to five years before needing a re-stain, even on south-facing exposures."

Another benefit of Continental's WeatherSeal line is that its natural oil blend penetrates deeply into the wood fibers, protecting and beautifying without the need for a solid top coat. According to Bob, clear top coats, while aesthetically pleasing at first, are prone to cracking, peeling and chipping and must be physically removed prior to touching up or re-staining. "With WeatherSeal, maintenance is easy. You simply re-stain or touch up right over top of the existing stain without having to cob-blast or sand off any other finishes."

The product the Wisconsin Log Homes team selected for Donna and Michael's house is Continental's WeatherSeal in "Saddle Brown," a rich, mocha shade that really accentuates the extensive wood detail of the home's exterior.

Inside, Donna's overarching vision was to create a home with rustic elegance; a look epitomized by the distressed leather sectional sofas around the fireplace and the aged wood and iron chandelier that hangs over the dining room table. "It's not country, it's upscale without being pretentious," she says. "It has a little bit of Western style, but I didn't want it to be kitschy or cliché."

To begin outfitting the five-bedroom home, Donna and Michael partnered



**TOP:** A lowered, beamed ceiling makes the open kitchen feel cozy. Granite tops the oversized island and the counters. Comfortable cushioned stools allow guests to linger over good food and lively conversation.



**LEFT:** In the master bedroom, log walls and warm neutral colors make for a soothing mix. Patio doors open onto the deck overlooking the lake.

**RIGHT:** A double vanity is surrounded by knotty alder cabinetry in the master bath, providing plenty of storage.



with Wisconsin Log Homes' in-house Interior Designer to choose the retreat's finishes. The same knotty alder cabinetry is used throughout the 4 1/2 baths, two laundry rooms and kitchen. A consistent color scheme and uniform flooring choices give the 6,000-square-foot home an even flow.

As beautiful as the home is inside, the family enjoys spending time outdoors. They've cut miles of trails through the woods for running or walking the fam-

ily dogs. Michael and the boys hunt for deer or turkey on the property. In warm weather, they swim in the lake or motor around on their electric pontoon boats. Fishing is another favorite pastime on the lake, which is stocked with bass and bluegill.

A huge deck spans the lakeside of the house and allows the family the outdoor living they crave. They share the home with guests frequently – whether it's 35 of their son's young-adult friends



for a July 4th barbecue, or 12 friends of Donna's for a girls' getaway, the doors are always open to friends and family. Because the lake house is just a short distance from the couple's primary residence, they spend time there often and

in every season.

For Donna, the home is just delightful. "When I wake up, I'm looking at these magnificent logs, and through the glass doors I see the log railings. Everywhere you look you see gorgeous

logs." Taken all together, the warmth of the home is magical and enveloping, she says. "You just fall in and you don't ever want to leave."

**In Donna and Michael's majestic log home, the attached garage sits at an angle to follow the contours of the site, forming a point out into the private lake beyond.**



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