

CUSTOM WOOD HOMES MAGAZINE

Interview with Homeowners

Inside the Design & Construction of this Hybrid Timber Frame Home

CWH: Can you describe the construction of the home? Would it be considered a timber frame, or a hybrid, and can you define what makes it so?

At first glance, this home looks and feels like a true timber frame design; but once inside you'll quickly realize that it's really a work of art built on the design freedom that lends itself to the most impressive and exciting modern day hybrid designs.

By definition, we refer to this home as a "hybrid timber frame" because it not only incorporates timber frame design elements, but also boasts other rich building materials such as wood, post & beams, shake, drywall, stone, and tongue & groove. Each home is inspired from its homeowner and reflects their individuality and style. With such design freedom, homeowners are never limited by building restrictions that are common with solid log and true timber frame construction.

Our hybrid homes are built utilizing energy efficient, super insulated 2x6 framed exterior walls. This shell creates the framework of the exterior of the home and eliminates air infiltration and heat loss. Homes benefit from both the insulated core of the wall as well as the thermal mass of the logs attached to the exterior and interior framework, yielding an extraordinary R-value. Wood and other natural and synthetic building materials are applied to the interior and exterior of the home to create the popular hybrid timber frame look and feel. Because of this conventional framing technique, decorative posts, beams and other architectural timber details can be easily added to achieve any desired look.

CWH: Discuss the architecture of the home. Was this a new design or modified from an existing floor plan? What rooms were designed first, and where did you want to focus attention?

As newlyweds, our first big test was to design and build a home that would be ready for us as soon as possible. Unlike my wife, I grew up in a log home and was always spoiled with the natural ambiance of wood. She on the other hand had a difficult time visualizing how her contemporary taste would fit. We quickly knew that building a timber frame inspired hybrid home was the perfect choice once we explored our possibilities. We were able to meet in the middle by blending an eclectic array of styles and colors that we both loved.

Since we were just getting started with our life together, we really had to design a home for today as well as the future with kids. The public spaces were our first focus when beginning our plans. We wanted an impressive, yet warm entrance that would welcome friends and family to the heart of our home. The great room is light and airy with a grand window wall, and the unique wood trusses add architectural character and warmth. The dry-stacked stone fireplace and stair system were designed to have a contemporary, craftsman style edge, and the furniture, lighting and accessories were chosen to repeat the same style. Hickory wood flooring flows throughout

the kitchen, dining and great room and harmonizes well with the timber accents, adding to the comforting wood home feel. Because we entertain often, it was important to have our great room open to the kitchen, dining and screen porch so our guests could enjoy each other from all areas of the home.

CWH: Talk about some of the interesting materials used. What type of structural and/or accent timbers were used? What about the stonework? What went into the making of the fireplace?

We chose Northern White Pine for the interior posts and beams. To emphasize the wood and its history, each piece was smooth planed and hand distressed for a true vintage look. We wanted our home to look like it had history, even during its first year. Outside, we used Cedar from British Columbia and mixed different widths and angles of flat timber siding with stone and shake. We chose a transparent tan stain as the main exterior color and highlighted it with medium brown as a complimentary accent to add depth to the architecture of the home. We deliberately mixed these colors to achieve a warm contrast that blends but is still eye-catching. The exterior entry features massive timbers with double upright posts and arched collar tie beam and kingpost, and that same look is also in the gables.

We see our fireplace as a natural anchor that ties our home and its architectural elements together. Because of the great room's height (23-foot tall ceiling), we didn't want straight vertical lines in the fireplace to be the focal point of the room. Also, because of TV and loft placement, the fireplace needed to be slightly off-centered. Our interior designer came up with the single-sided stepped fireplace design to compensate for both the height and location of the hearth. We brought the outdoors in by using the same caramel-colored stone on our fireplace that we used on the exterior.

CWH: What were some of the primary considerations during the creation of your home? What were some potential challenges and solutions?

The biggest challenge was designing a plan that represents each of our individual styles and would suit us now and as our family grows. Our goal was to create as much living space as possible, without letting the square footage or cost get out of hand. We accomplished this by designing open spaces that flow together, and we didn't waste any space. We also have an incredible amount of storage throughout the home – we will never be short on storage space no matter how many kids we have!

CWH: How did your interior designer at Wisconsin Log Homes help throughout the design and construction process?

Wisconsin Log Homes interior designer generated a furniture layout as an AutoCAD layer right on the architectural drawings prior to finalizing the plans. We were able to see exactly how our furniture pieces would fit into each room and how the arrangements related to things like door swings, detailed ceiling treatments and timber posts before purchasing a single piece of furniture. Then she helped select properly scaled furniture and lighting in the styles and colors that we liked. She encouraged us to explore the possibilities of accenting with color and texture and also respected our desire for an overall clean line neutral palette.

CWH: Can you point to specific areas in each room to give us examples of cool “stories” you'd like to show people who visit your home?

Foyer: We had to have a unique stair system since it would be the focal point of the foyer. An open timber style staircase designed with a double top rail was chosen to resonate a craftsman vibe for guests entering the home and established a sense of strength and stability not often seen in ready-made stair and railing systems. When you first walk in the home,

your attention is immediately drawn to the substantial size and beauty of the custom staircase. It also adds dimension and acts as a transition from the foyer to the great room.

Great room: We wanted the fireplace mantel to be just as unique as the rest of the home. So we designed and hand-made our own custom mantel that incorporates classic dentil-pattern detail to mimic the stepping of the fireplace chase and stonework.

Kitchen & Dining: Both of us love coffered-style ceilings, so we designed our own with timbers. The glazed cabinets are a simple mission style with a distressed face to give a rustic yet contemporary flavor. Opaque amber low-voltage mini pendants add a pop of color and modern edge without bulk.

Half-Bath: A spa-like, contemporary feel was the goal for the half-bath. Our interior designer hand-drew a very modern vanity based off of a design we had seen in a magazine. Our cabinet maker was able to build it off the drawing. A modern, shallow vessel sink was the perfect compliment to this furniture style wood vanity. All piping was left exposed and beauty wrap lighting was used over the raw glass mirror to give a very modern feel to a small, simple room. We also accessorized with color and not clutter by choosing a soothing Golden Fleece color for the walls and accented it with a chocolate brown ceiling and dropped border adding tasteful, simple flair.

Master Suite: We wanted our bedroom to be comfortable yet luxurious. The deep dusty colors of the bedroom speak volumes. A challenge in the bedroom was to create light while maintaining our privacy. Transom windows were planned for above the headboard and also in the bathroom. Our must-have was a spacious walk-in tile shower, and we decided on a black and white claw foot soaking tub. We opted for his and hers walk-in closets and designed them with a modular storage system that was flexible and could keep us organized.

Window Trim: It was important for us to make sure our new home had an old home feel to it. One way we were able to achieve this was with simple, yet hearty window trim. We were inspired by period style millwork but did not want anything too ornate. The trim surrounding each window was created using a series of "blocks" and not built as one solid casement piece which was time consuming but well worth the effort.

