

# GRAND PRIZE

FORTUNE SMILES  
ON A WISCONSIN  
FATHER AND SON

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PHOTOS BY JAMES RAY SPAHN



Multiple rooflines, muted exterior colors, and a combination of logs, stone and shakes help the home blend seamlessly with its conventional neighbors. Positioned on a sloping lot, the home doubles in height when viewed from the rear, revealing two levels of windows and exterior doors. The octagonal sunroom-office accentuates the verticality.



For years, Gary Bartley dreamed of building a home customized to his lifestyle. Then in one unforgettable moment, his dream came true. And it happened on Christmas Eve.

While visiting a local casino with his out-of-town brother, Gary plunked four quarters into a slot machine. Suddenly, sirens went off and lights flashed: Jackpot! Gary celebrated the rest of that night with family and friends, then, after Christmas, “called in rich” while he decided what to do with his winnings. He didn’t need long to realize he could afford his dream home.

An avid hunter and outdoor-sports enthusiast, Gary wanted his new home to bring the outdoors in, yet have all the advanced technologies to make it a “smart house.” He bought a lot in a developing area around a small lake. Referrals from friends and family brought Gary to Green Bay, Wisconsin, to visit WLH Builders and Wisconsin Log Homes.

He hadn’t been thinking about a traditional log home, but the meeting opened up possibilities. And Wisconsin Log Homes seemed eager to tackle the challenge of designing a hybrid log home in a suburban development. A large home Gary saw during his visit particularly appealed to him. “The biggest challenge was modifying it to accommodate his desired square footage, the locale and budget,” says the company’s design manager, Brian Delwiche.

Gary did hit the jackpot, but he didn’t want to put all his winnings into the home. He did have a wish list, however: a contemporary, open floor plan, walkout basement, large garage, an exercise and billiards area, and a theater room. He also wanted to move in as soon as possible.



Brian designed a 2,000-square-foot home nestled against a hill with a walkout basement that nearly doubled the home's usable space. "It's all the little details that add up to one spectacular home," Brian says.

"Because Gary wanted his home completed quickly, we decided to use our component-based building system," WLH Builders project manager Dennis Gaestel says. "We finished the home in three months and four days."

Viewed from the front, the home appears as a rambling ranch, full of angled rooflines and stone-accented bump outs. From the lake side, the home doubles in height, with two levels of windows and exterior doors. The octagonal sunroom-turned-office lends a castle touch to the home's contemporary lines. A hot tub and rock garden, cleverly tucked under the upper-level deck, offer a welcome hideaway. "I wanted an everyday home and a vacation home all in one," Gary says. "That's exactly what I got. We even built a sand beach, complete with a dock and a pontoon boat, ready whenever I am."

Deciding how to incorporate the exterior logs, stones and shakes took some thought.

**ABOVE:** The great room fireplace mixes logs and stone as complementary texture to the plaster walls. A raspberry rug adds a splash of color. **OPPOSITE:** Homeowner Gary Bartley didn't want a log interior but favored rustic log accents, such as this wall of windows in the great room, framed with wide log trim.



**OPPOSITE:** A handcrafted round-log dining set enhances the rustic interior. **LEFT:** A log-trimmed tray ceiling, high accent windows and French doors leading to a private deck highlight the master bedroom.

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Brian and Wisconsin Log Homes's interior designer, Stephanie Gauthier, helped Gary choose a muted exterior color palette that blended seamlessly with the neighboring brick and vinyl homes. "I get so many compliments on my log home and enjoy it so much I can't imagine ever not building it this way," Gary says. "There are so many people that hit their brakes while driving by, just to get a better look."

Inside, he elected to go without logs, preferring rustic log accents. Guided by Gary's wishes, Brian designed strong architectural elements, like a wall of windows in the great room, framed with wide log trim. Decorative round collar ties, headers and knotty interior doors frame the plastered walls perfectly.

Stephanie worked with Gary to select interior furnishings that blend with his existing furniture, as well as complement the rustic architecture without overpowering it. Approximately 1,500 square feet of hand-scraped maple flooring provides a rustic underpinning. "That floor was meant to be in that home," Stephanie says. "In addition to being the perfect balance for the plastered walls and log accents, Gary has a dog and did not want to deal with scratches, yet wanted the home to be open to his Labrador. This distressed floor will age gracefully and look beautiful for years to come."

The team paid special attention to the master bedroom to turn it into a true sanctuary. "We incorporated a log-trimmed tray ceiling, high accent windows and French doors leading to a private rear deck," Brian notes. "A walk-in tiled shower and tub set into a bump out with the same high windows lets natural light in, yet allows for privacy." Adding dark bedroom furniture against a light background creates drama and elegance but with a masculine touch.

Gary's 19-year-old son, Brad, likes spending time with his dad and welcomed the comforts of the new home, but he also wanted a place to call his own. The solution was a finished bonus room above the garage, with its own stairwell.

Today, Gary and Brad's home reflects their passion for living and their good fortune. "The complete experience was a dream come true, from hitting the jackpot to working with the team at Wisconsin Log Homes and WLH Builders," Gary says. "I am still amazed. I couldn't have asked for a more relaxing escape to call home." **LHI**