

Building Family Memories in Western Rugged Style

A family uses Wisconsin Log Homes design & build services to create their dream retreat cabin on a lake.

June 17, 2008 - [PRLog](#) -- The Hennigan family, originally from Pennsylvania, relocated to Wisconsin four years ago. Like most young families, they live a fast paced life during the week, but on weekends they yearned for a spot that would take them back to a simpler time and give them some moments of peace.

“A few years ago, friends of ours bought a 19th Century log cabin. Sure, it needed a little—okay, a lot—of work, but it turned out really beautifully. I fell so in love with the place that I started scouring log home magazines,” JoAnn recalls. “Soon, my husband and I were looking for property of our own. We were completely bitten by the log home bug.”

The couple wanted to be on the water or at least close enough to live the lakeside lifestyle. Familiar with Door County, a charming historic region that is only an hour’s drive from their home, they envisioned their log sanctuary there. For well over a year the Hennigan’s searched to find the “right spot” until they got a little help. A friend of the couple had found a beautiful piece of property that was the perfect fit for the Hennigan’s retreat. Located only a few hundred yards from Lake Michigan, the wooded site was on the “quiet side” of the peninsula on a Door County Lake.

A Lasting Impression

When the vision of their future lakeside log home started taking shape, the Hennigan’s quickly shared their dream. Like many prospective log home owners, JoAnn and Shawn researched and read a lot of magazines. “Wisconsin Log Homes would come up quite often throughout our research and the decision to use them was an easy one. We could see the high level of quality in their insulated Thermal-Log building system.” Shawn adds, “They could handle everything from design to construction to helping us with the décor.” After touring the company and meeting the team, the couple organized their design requirements list to start the custom home planning process immediately.

Most pleasing to the couple was the discovery that they could custom design their home with the company’s in-house architectural and interior designers. “We have a big family (four young kids and a dog), so designing a home that best suits our needs, now and in the future, was really important to us,” explains JoAnn.

The best homes are a synergy of the structure and the site it rests upon. As the Wisconsin Log Homes team, along with Shawn and JoAnn, discussed ideas for the plan, they began with the lay of the land, its dimensions, scenic views, and seasonal path of the sun. The property is heavily wooded so one of the challenges was to design a home that wouldn’t require clearing too many trees. “We wanted to preserve that woody feel and the privacy that is important to us,” says JoAnn.

Lifestyle Preferences

Knowing their day-to-day living preferences helped the design team create a home that harmonizes with its surroundings as well as with its inhabitants. Their first priority was to have open living areas, with the foyer, dining room, greatroom and kitchen seamlessly flowing from space to space, so they would have a great place for entertaining or just hanging out as a family.

Despite the fact that Shawn and JoAnn are only in their thirties and very active, the couple planned for the

future with a first-floor master bedroom, and with a laugh JoAnn adds “that’s when we’ll want and probably need to only live on the main floor.”

Creating Something Special

“We wound up combining design features from three of Wisconsin Log Homes’ standard floor plans,” said JoAnn. “We created a design that’s compact, simple and perfectly suited for our family.”

“Using our 3D computer software makes it very easy for our clients to understand their design ideas and comfortably make decisions about moving forward,” explains Brian Delwiche, Director of Conceptual Design for Wisconsin Log Homes. “You don’t have to wait until after the home is built to tell us what you do or don’t like - you tell us as we draw, and we implement it immediately.”

Working with Wisconsin Log Homes design team, the couple made the most of their magnificent views, opting for twin gable dormers upstairs and sliding patio doors on the main level. One of the defining details the couple requested for the greatroom was a beautiful prow window wall to capture the view and let in lots of natural light. “We also wanted the quintessential log home feature— a loft—but with a twist-- it had to have its own bar and space for a billiards table,” explains JoAnn.

“We didn’t go crazy with square footage (the house is roughly 3200 square feet), and included only two bedrooms upstairs instead of giving each child their own room. We did, however, opt for two separate baths in hopes of keeping bathroom brawls to a minimum.”

Bringing It All Together

To ensure the project went smoothly, the couple also took advantage of Wisconsin Log Homes other in-house services. WLH Builders, the building division, was the general contractor and Stephanie Gauthier, interior designer, helped them bring all of the finishing details together. “I just told her this is what I want to do and she pulled out furniture and fabric samples,” JoAnn said. “She didn’t take over and do everything; she worked with me.”

They wanted “rugged elegance,” explained Gauthier “a natural home with exposed logs inside and out. That is just one of the many choices open to our clients.”

And that’s just what they got in their lakeside cabin after selecting every feature of their dream home, from floor coverings to window design to roofing materials and decking. “It has ‘an outdoorsy-even-when-you’re-inside feeling,” JoAnn reflects. “The kids call it their ‘Cabin’ with a capital C.”

While log home designs range from deep woods cabin style to contemporary, city loft chic, JoAnn had a specific vision in mind: a home like those they’d seen while visiting relatives in Tucson, AZ. They wanted a western, “ranchy feel,” adding that her cousin, Eric Hubbard, designed and built the powder room vanity from knotty alder and mesquite.

A Place for Family Time

“Everything worked out perfectly, and I was amazed with how fast it all happened.” In less than six months from their first trip to the headquarters of Wisconsin Log Homes, the family was able to enjoy a weekend in their cabin.

“It’s what we always wanted, to have a retreat to take the kids to,” says JoAnn. Last summer they purchased a pontoon boat to take advantage of their lakeside property. The four children never want their visits to the cabin to end. “The cabin has turned out to be much more than we anticipated”, JoAnn says, “It’s a dream come true for each one of us.”

“We’ve turned off the TV and we’re actually outside doing things together. We’re putting down some serious roots here,” JoAnn said.

To video tour the Hennigan’s log home or to learn more about Wisconsin Log Homes national design & build services, log on to www.wisconsinloghomes.com.

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