

Real Log Homes

Photos by Great Island Photography
Builder: David Anderson Hill, Inc.

The best of BOTH WORLDS

Real Log Homes and Timberpeg



This off-the-grid Vermont cabin features a dovetail log profile and solar panels. The screened porch is the prominent feature of the rear of the cabin.

Opposite: The fanciful dining chairs and fairytale themed railings add whimsy to the cabin. The timber-framed roof system makes the small cabin feel larger than it is.

BY KATHERINE P. COX

“Log homes are like Lincoln Logs. Timber-framed houses are like erector sets,” says Austin Ward, regional manager at Real Log Homes and Timberpeg in Claremont. While it’s a simple analogy, it also describes the types of clients who are drawn to the company’s custom-designed homes, from small cabins to complex luxury homes all over the country. “Log home customers have wanted a log home since they were kids,” Austin says. “Timberpeg customers are drawn to ‘the wow factor’ when you walk in.”



“The typical log home buyer is someone who wants nothing else, has always wanted a log home. . . . customers are moving away from the polished, trimmed, planed interior and are asking for a more rustic, rough-hewn look.” — Jim Driesch

Both Real Log Homes and Timberpeg homes are manufactured under the same very large roof, where design, sales, and marketing staff also work. And while both were started by the same man, Jesse Ware, more than 50 years ago, they are distinct in character and appeal.

Director of Design Jim Driesch, who has been with the company for 43 years, says Real Log Homes had its genesis in 1963 when Jesse decided to retire from the building business in New Jersey and move to Vermont, where he had land in Hartland. According to Jim, “he wanted to experiment with building a log house and built one for himself. It created some interest.”

An Organic Start

Building log homes for others “just sort of happened, and he was building more and more.” The original homes were built by hand, but Jesse became interested in manufacturing them using milling equipment. He began to assemble equipment and hire people, and “the next thing he knows he’s in business building log homes across Vermont,” Jim says.

In the early 1970s, the business took off. The log homes were marketed as kits, with a do-it-yourself focus. “It was the perfect storm of the product and the timing,” says Jim.

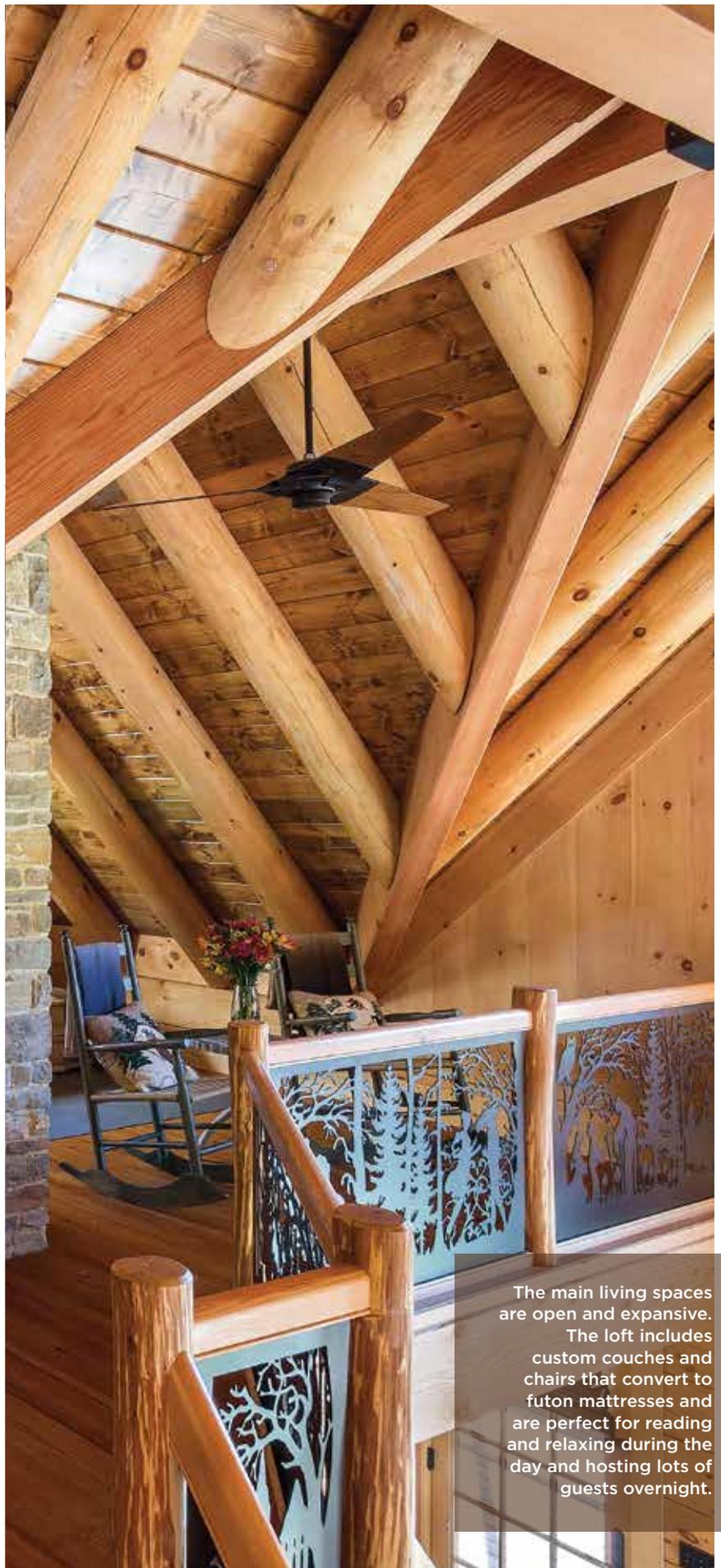


“You had people who wanted the natural, low maintenance, out in the woods lifestyle, and price-wise, they were quite affordable.”

Today’s Real Log Homes are a far cry from those early cabins. Design services and material options have evolved and advanced substantially. Both Real Log Homes and Timberpeg offer custom design services, a variety of floor plans that can be customized, personal sales representatives who help customers navigate those plans according to their wants and needs, computerized design and manufacturing processes, superior materials, and experienced contractors.

“The typical log home buyer is someone who wants nothing else, has always wanted a log home. They like the woodsiness, the comfort of them, the simplicity of them, even though some of these homes are not that simple. They want something that has a relaxed feel,” Jim says. “Today, customers are moving away from the polished, trimmed, planed interior and are asking for a more rustic, rough-hewn look.” Jim adds, “We’re going back to a simpler, less detailed look than we’ve seen in past years.”

Jim Driesch joined the company as a designer in 1975 when demand was exploding. In 1978, he switched over to Timberpeg, a timber frame division that Jesse Ware launched, which took “a much more architectural approach when designing a customer’s home.”



The main living spaces are open and expansive. The loft includes custom couches and chairs that convert to futon mattresses and are perfect for reading and relaxing during the day and hosting lots of guests overnight.

Timberpeg

Photos by GBH Photography
Builder: Old Hampshire Designs





From the Douglas fir timber frame to the beautiful custom staircase, no detail has been overlooked in this Timberpeg home on Lake Sunapee.



Timberpeg: Flexible and Adaptable

At the time, Jesse was experimenting with timber-frame structures. Jim says he wanted to replicate an architectural style that specialized in Colonial reproduction architecture such as the cape and saltbox, with timber frames an element in some of those designs. He developed three plans—a gambrel, a saltbox, and a cape—using the mortise-and-tenon joinery that distinguishes timber-frame buildings.

Today, Timberpeg has custom designed thousands of homes and has floor plans that can be adapted and customized. Douglas fir is the most common wood species used because of its strength and beautiful, distinctive grain. Eastern white pine is also a popular option, and other wood species are available if requested. The building designs are flexible and can accommodate many different plans.

“The Timberpeg client tends to be highly discerning,” Jim says. “They don’t necessarily want a large home, but they do want good design and quality finishes. They also may not want a complete timber frame but may want some timber-frame elements.” While some Timberpeg homes



“The Timberpeg client tends to be highly discerning,” Jim says. “They don’t necessarily want a large home, but they do want good design and quality finishes. . . .”



are second homes or retirement homes on lakefronts or mountain slopes, they often are clients’ “forever homes.”

Both Real Log Homes and Timberpeg customers are looking for the same thing in terms of interior design, Jim says: a first-floor master bedroom, an open-concept plan, two or three additional bedrooms, a private space such as a den or office, planned efficiency, and “a house that is comfortable and easy to live in; 25 or 30 years ago, we never saw first-floor master bedrooms. All the bedrooms were upstairs. Today, I see people also asking for a bedroom with an auxiliary space, an attached reading room or dayroom that’s part of the bedroom. In bigger houses, that seems to be a more frequent request. It’s a space dedicated to the master bedroom, not the rest of the house. It’s a nice feature if you have the space for it.”



This photo and opposite: It's nearly impossible to hide from the lake and mountain views throughout this home. Below: The Timberpeg and Real Log Homes manufacturing team as well as the design, marketing, and sales support staff work under the same roof in Claremont, New Hampshire.

Before a floor plan is developed, the site conditions help guide the design. Then, “just start talking,” Jim says. “You’re going to tell me the most important thing [for you] in the design almost immediately.” Designing and building a log or timber-frame home is a personal experience, and it all starts by connecting with a local Timberpeg or Real Log Homes representative. **TW**

Timberpeg and Real Log Homes
61 Plains Road
Claremont, NH
Timberpeg: (800) 636-2424
Real Log Homes: (800) 732-5564
timberpeg.com
realloghomes.com

