

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO DREAM WOOD HOMES

TIMBER HOME LIVING


The Perfect Floorplan

Large or small, design
rooms just right for you

How to Choose:
Hardwood floors,
entry doors, stone accents

Create a
Comfortable,
Inviting Home

**Dine-In
Kitchens**
No-fail tips
for every
space

A two-story wooden cabin with a gabled roof, a balcony, and a porch, surrounded by trees. The cabin is constructed of light-colored wood siding and features a prominent gable with exposed rafters. A balcony with a wooden railing is located on the second floor. A wide set of wooden steps leads up to a porch on the first floor, which is also enclosed by a wooden railing. Two wooden Adirondack chairs are positioned on the lawn in front of the porch. The cabin is set in a lush, green environment with tall pine trees in the background and foreground.

The western exposure of the broad front steps and porch offers great late-afternoon light, making it a comfortable spot to enjoy the creek that runs through the Captains' property.

Natural Light

Taking cues from Scandinavia, a Montana couple embraces their bucolic surroundings in a peaceful, sun-drenched home.

STORY BY REED KARAIM | PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEIDI LONG

The Captains' house features 8-by-12-inch main beams and 8-by-8-inch posts of Douglas fir, all hand-pegged by Centennial Timber Frames.



Warm cherry cabinets give the kitchen a homey feel. Plentiful natural light from the large, unadorned windows is supplemented by strategically placed track and pendant light fixtures.



Some people might consider it a bit of a hardship for a family of four to live through a Montana winter in a 29-foot travel trailer eight miles from the nearest town. But when you've recently moved from a small fishing village in the wilds of Alaska, it doesn't seem like such a big deal.

In fact, Pierre and Lisa Captain, who had just such an arrangement with their children, Pierre III and Julian, while the family's new timber home was being built, say the experience brought them closer together. Living on the construction site also allowed them to take a hands-on approach with the house, assisting their contractor, Keith Billi, and doing much of the finishing work themselves.

"I definitely think it has to do with having lived in Alaska," says Lisa. "You do become pretty self-sufficient."

Roughing it during the winter may have been easy for the Captains, but choosing timber framing as the construction method for their new home was

even easier. "We really wanted something that fit in with the environment," says Pierre of the home, which is located on a 20-acre spread adjacent to untrammeled U.S. Forest Service land. "Being unified with nature is part of the whole feeling of owning a timber home."

Working from design books and magazines, the Captains came up with the basic floorplan of their 2,600-square-foot, three-bedroom home. With their preliminary ideas sketched out, the family then turned to a local architect to draw the final blueprints.

Next, it was time to find a timber company. Pierre and Lisa chose Centennial Timber Frames, after hearing positive recommendations from friends in the area. The company exclusively provides custom-cut packages, and the timbers, mostly kiln-dried or recycled Douglas fir, are all hand-finished. "One of the things customers tell us when they visit us is that it feels like an old-fashioned woodworking shop," says Centennial's Mike Koness, who owns the Kalispell, Montana-based company with his

LEFT: The ornate, Scandinavian-style balusters on the loft, stairway and catwalk were made by local artisan Richard Cook.

RIGHT: Having previously lived in a small Alaskan fishing village, the Captains (from left, Lisa, Julian, Pierre and Pierre III) are no strangers to the rural lifestyle.

wife, Sandy. “It doesn’t feel like a factory.”

Pierre says Centennial deserves a lot of the credit for making their home possible. “Initially, we were a little intimidated by the price,” he says. “But they showed us how we could avoid a lot of duplication and keep costs low.”

With hand-pegged Douglas fir timbers, skyscraping windows in the great room and vaulted second-floor ceilings, the home’s interior has a bright, airy feel. “I love spending Saturday mornings in the great room with a cup of coffee,” says Pierre. “When we first moved in, I was enthralled. I just sat there and stared up at the rafters.”

A dramatic catwalk spanning the top floor features elaborate balusters chosen by the Captains because they reminded them of Norwegian cottages in their previous hometown of Petersburg, Alaska, which has a strong Scandinavian heritage.

The couple spent many long nights sanding and staining the balusters. Although Pierre also helped their contractor, Keith Billi, with other work, he notes that Keith, who had also lived in Petersburg, often preferred to work alone. “He did the framing himself. He roofed the house himself,” Pierre says. “Every day he would show up with a load of lumber in the back of his pickup truck and get to work.”

It must be an Alaska thing. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The master bedroom is bright and full of light, thanks to a lofted ceiling and plenty of windows with views of the sweeping Montana countryside. The Captains’ home office is

tucked into a corner of the great room. The master bath on the main floor is narrow enough that the couple had to order a shorter tub. To compensate, they chose one that was especially wide and deep.

Home Details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 2,600

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
Keith Billi Construction

TIMBER PRODUCER:
Centennial Timber Frames



MAIN LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL