

TRENDS

Log homes offer a cozy alternative

New generation of homes are light, bright and energy efficient

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Special to QMI Agency

For those looking for an alternative to the hustle and bustle of the big city, the warmth and natural beauty of a log home may be an ideal solution. There's a special charm to a log cabin, with light, bright and cozy interiors that warm the soul.

Log homes are a legacy passed on to us by the pioneers of history. Some log buildings are more than a thousand years old and still standing. Think a log home is dark and dreary? You might be correct, if you were living in the 1800s. But all that has changed with a new take on an old idea. Rick Kinsman is the president of 1867 Confederation Log and Timber Frame in Bobcaygeon, Ont.

He and his family have been building log homes for more than 34 years, marry-

ing history with innovation to produce beautiful, customized creations.

Today's log homes are professionally engineered, using precision cut logs. Confederation has pioneered a number of innovations in their manufacturing process. They've redefined the traditional way of joining logs together using modern milling techniques to cut the logs so precisely that they overlap and lock together in an energy efficient fashion. Confederation is the only log home manufacturer in Canada to achieve an Energy Star rating.

Log homes are green homes made from nature's finest renewable resource: logs are a natural product that are recyclable, biodegradable, and renewable. The log cabins are energy efficient by design with an airtight construction.

Thick log exterior walls have excellent, natural insulation

properties. Kinsman explains their unique process which seals the logs together like a solid brick wall. "We have a through-bolt system that locks the top log to the bottom log and that's what compresses the seals that are inside the tongue and groove. We can press the seals and get 50-percent compression."

The finished logs comprise the interior walls, so there's no need for vapour barriers, insulation, drywall or paint. "We use a square log as opposed to a round log and apply the tongue and groove system to it. We put a dovetail corner on the outside, which gives it a handcrafted finish so you don't see the tongue and groove. All you see is the log and the dovetail, so it's very appealing."

Kinsman literally worked his way up from the shop floor. "I started day one here in this company. I was here when we cut the first house. I graduated from working in the shop to driving the truck and then worked my way into ownership and partner-



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ship," he says. The company has shipped homes around the world.

All the wood is home-grown in Ontario. "We've been approved by the Ontario government. We are a proud partner in the Ontario wood program," says Kinsman. Confederation harvests their trees from select regions of northern white pine in Ontario and Quebec. The logs are then air-dried to reduce natural moisture, which is more of an environmentally-friendly process than traditional kiln drying.

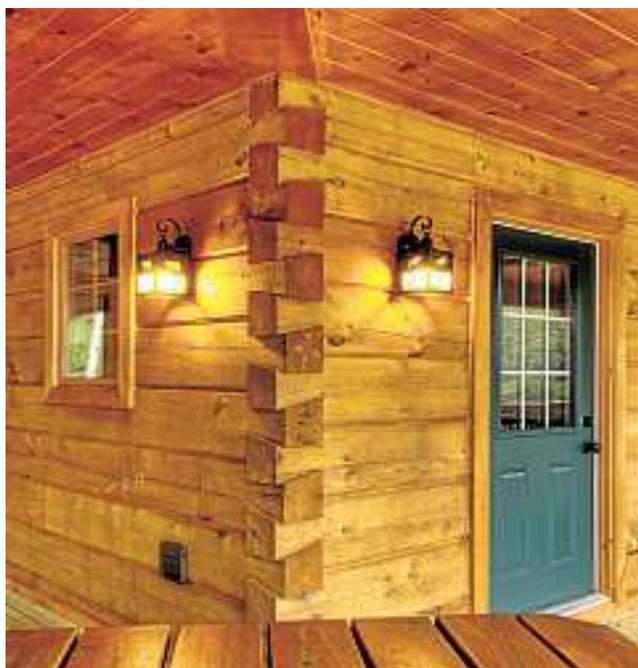
The logs are then pre-cut and assembled on the factory floor and undergo a thorough inspection before they are shipped to the building site.

Something the early settlers never had was Confederation's cutting-edge design centre where customers can view virtual floor plans that make it easy to visualize their new homes with a 3D virtual walk-through.

"Everything we do is custom. We pre-cut the house for

each individual personally," says Kinsman.

Something you won't find with a brand new condo, is a 50-year home warranty. The Confederation guarantee covers everything they manufacture for half a century. Even if you sell the home, the guarantee stays with the product.



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