

***Congratulations** to Bill & Linda Kuhlman for their article in the July 2009 issue of Professional Builders.*

Bill and Linda had the photography done and submitted into Professional Builder on their own. Way to go Linda and Bill for being proactive in getting their name out there.

## Nebraska Couple Builds Dream Home Out of Logs

**HAND-HEWN ROOF TIMBERS AND MILLED LOG WALLS GIVE THIS NEBRASKA HOME AN EARTHY APPEAL.**



**By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design  
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Lots of people dream of building a log home, but not everyone has the resources to make that dream come true. The owners of this home in Fremont, Neb., had the

money and the land: a heavily wooded piece of property with several outbuildings. Having owned a log cabin in Canada, they were completely sold on the log-home lifestyle.

Enter Bill and Linda Kuhlman of Kuhlman

Construction in Pleasant Dale, Neb., who build conventionally framed and log homes. As dealers for Kuhns Bros. Log Homes in Milton, Pa., the Kuhlman's offer everything from design services and site



A wall of windows in the great room captures views of the wooded terrain. At its peak, the ceiling in this room reaches 24 feet.



The clients chose exterior colors they felt would complement existing buildings on the property: cranberry for the standing-seam metal roof and trim; a lightstained, weathered color on the logs; and off-white chinking between each log.

Log homes comprise about 40 percent of their business.

“[The clients] had heard about us from friends that built a log home in Kansas City,” says Linda. “They wanted a home that would enhance their property and a contractor that could build a quality log home and would stand behind their product.”

The couple wanted a home with a rustic, big-timber, hand-peeled, raftered roof system. This required the Kuhlman's to rent a crane to place the huge timbers. “The glulam ridge beam in the great room is 40 feet long, about 30 inches high and 8-½ inches wide,” says Bill. “It’s a tree, basically.” Unlike the logs used

for the walls, the hand-peeled logs that make up the roof structure are not dimensionally true, so each piece was a custom fit and required its own jig.

Because Kuhns Bros. cuts logs to the exact dimensions required using a detailed CAD program designed specifically for their log profiles, to achieve the desired hand-hewn look the logs had to be roughed up after they were cut. That entailed taking a 4-inch wood grinder and manually grinding the surface of the log to give it a drawknife effect.

The home has a 6-by-12 flat, dovetail log profile, with chinking (mortar) between each log. “This particular profile has a 2-inch-wide chink joint between the logs — an actual groove in the log that houses the chinking,” Linda says. Kuhns Bros. log homes don’t require chinking (it was simply a look that the clients liked) and the Kuhlman’s had never done it before. It took nearly five weeks to chink the home inside and out, using a special pump the builder purchased for that procedure.

Kuhlman’s construction manager, Lonnie Haase, coordinated the project, including the stonework and cutting of timbers and mantels. “He’s been with us for 15 years and is a fantastic craftsman,” Bill says.

### Taking Stock

With Linda’s help, the clients customized a stock plan from the Kuhns Bros. portfolio. “Our previous home had a lot of wasted space,” the client says, “so we knew what we didn’t want.”

Topping the list of must-haves were an open floor plan for entertaining, a large master suite, a guest bedroom and a large laundry room/mudroom. The clients wanted to keep kitchen cabinetry to a minimum in favor of a large walk-in pantry. They also requested two fireplaces: one inside and one outside.

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**One of the advantages of log homes is their energy efficiency; the thermal mass of solid wood logs often exceeds minimum energy-code criteria. As the client puts it, “When the house gets warm it stays warm, and when it gets cool, it stays cool.”**

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The floor plan is divided into two wings: the master bedroom, bathroom and walk-in closet in one wing and the sunroom, guest room, laundry/mudroom and garage in the other. At the core of the plan are the primary living areas: great room, kitchen and dining room. Very little square footage is allotted to hallways. Cathedral ceilings heighten the drama in the great room, kitchen, dining room and master suite.

“As we were building the house, the clients asked us to extend the front patio beyond the trapezoid windows in the great room,” says Linda. “So we built up the initial foundation in order to connect the patios from one wing to another.”

The fireplaces in the great room and the covered rear deck have surrounds made of manufactured stone. The mantel on the great-room fireplace is made of lodge pole pine that was milled on site.



The same stone on the façade and fireplace surrounds was used to enclose the custom range hood in the kitchen. Trapezoid windows draw light from the covered porch at the rear of the house.

Enamored of a marble shower they had seen in a photo, the clients asked the Kuhlman's to replicate it in their master bath. The builder cut and fitted solid sheets of marble to create a walk-in shower measuring 5 feet by 5 feet.

The entire exterior of the home was originally going to have log siding, but during construction, the builder suggested cladding the sunroom in the same stone as the fireplaces to break up the expanse of wood.

Every log home Kuhlman Construction builds is different, says Linda, because each customer has their own ideas. In this case, the clients wanted to minimize the use of drywall on the inside of the home. Instead of applying the usual brown stain to the tongue-and-groove ceiling between the timbers, they whitewashed it prior to installation. Another atypical detail is the white interior trim around the windows and doors.

The cabinets and interior doors are hand-crafted, as are the stained-glass windows on either side of the entry door. Hickory flooring was used throughout the house, excluding the bathrooms.

“The clients didn’t want to go cheap on anything,” says Linda. “They wanted a solid log garage, finished and insulated, with a tongue-and-groove ceiling. If you threw carpet down, it would be better than most houses.”

***Hand-hewn roof timbers and milled log walls give this Nebraska home an earthy appeal.***



The guest bath doesn't have log walls, but the ceiling beams carry through the home's interior theme.