

Just the Way THEY WANTED IT

The long, low log house is everything its owners, Dan and Kathy McKenna, ever wanted.

Driving up the winding private road to the long, low-slung log house sited on a three-acre knoll overlooking the lush farm country of rural Maine, Dan and Kathy McKenna are heading home to “the perfect house.” There is every reason that their new log home should be everything they wanted: Dan and Kathy are the owners of Hilltop Log Homes, which is based a half a mile away in Bow-

doinham, and have been building log homes for their clients for 17 years. Knowing the ins and outs of log home design and construction, they had no difficulty deciding what they wanted for their own log home when it was time to build.

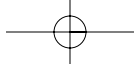
Dan has been in the construction business all of his life, much of it in a hands-on capacity, but in this case he strictly supervised. “I didn’t pound a nail in this house,” he explains, “our people did the entire thing under our direction.”

After building and living in four log homes in almost two decades, the McKennas were old hands at planning a log house. Dan recalls, “In the early stages we had a hard time remembering which of

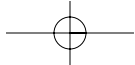
all the elements in our other log homes we liked and wanted to put in this one and which ones we didn’t. But there is one thing we did know: We wanted a single-story house, without one step up or down in it—we were building this log home for our old age.” Among Dan and Kathy’s other “have to haves” was a large (30-by-40-foot) heated garage. This was for their cherished classic ‘67 Camaro and Harley Davidson, and space that would become a workout gym—these people know how to have fun.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ESTHER & FRANKLIN SCHMIDT





Kathy used sage green, dark red, and heather to bind the colors of the kitchen cabinets, living area furniture, and accessories. This use of repeated color visually brings the space together. **OPPOSITE:** A raised gable over the front door gives the house height and architectural drama.





ABOVE: Clem and Clyde “hang out” in the master bedroom. Note the inset bookshelves that provide storage and architectural interest.

OPPOSITE: The tile shower matches the tile flooring and both play perfectly to accent and highlight the log walls.

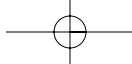
Large, light-filled rooms were also a must, so their design included cathedral ceilings, floor-to-ceiling Peachtree windows, and skylights. Living areas had to be dog- and child-friendly with space for their extended family to gather, cook, shoot pool, and watch movies.

Dan says, “Hilltop houses are all custom designed. Our drafting staff custom design homes for all our clients. Therefore, it wasn’t a problem for us to draft something unique for ourselves.”

That was normal, but the construction—or at least the duration of the construction—was

not. Says Dan, “For our homeowners, the home usually is move-in ready in four months. But it was different for us—our project took a year. This is because we built it during times when particular people were not needed helping out on clients’ homes. That way, we didn’t take anything away from our customers’ projects and still kept ours going at a reasonable pace.”

It was smooth sailing in other respects as well. The McKennas’ house didn’t offer much in the way of challenges during any of the building phases. Things went smoothly and according to plan from the time the founda-



tial installation costs for radiant floor heating are slightly higher than for a conventional furnace that routes heat around by other means, the quality and efficiency of radiant flooring heat beats anything we've ever had before, especially given typically cold Maine winters."

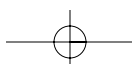
So they were snug during the New England cold months. But the McKennas believed they would get by in summer with only ceiling fans. Now, after a couple of hot summers, they are reconsidering and thinking about installing air conditioning. They are glad that retrofitting is possible.

When it came to the actual logs, Dan and Kathy knew exactly what they wanted. For some of the logs in the walls they chose 6-by-8 Alaskan yellow cedar, which they asked to be cut square. These yellow cedar logs have a whitish coloration. Interspersed among the yellow cedar are 3-by-6 Northern white cedar logs. These have a more brownish tint in comparison. The overall effect is a pleasant low-key striping. On the outside this striping is alternates with chinking. Dave and Kathy are quite delighted with the outcome.



tion was laid to the time Dan and Kathy moved in. With the McKennas so sure of what they wanted, and expert in the field of log home design and construction, there were few problems for the crew during the months of putting up the walls and the roof and of finishing off the inside. "We didn't need anything particularly unusual in plumbing or electric work," Dan recalls. "And our tradesmen know what they are doing. They did a good job for us."

"However, one unique aspect to the house is the floor-based radiant heat we had installed," Dan explains. "Even though ini-

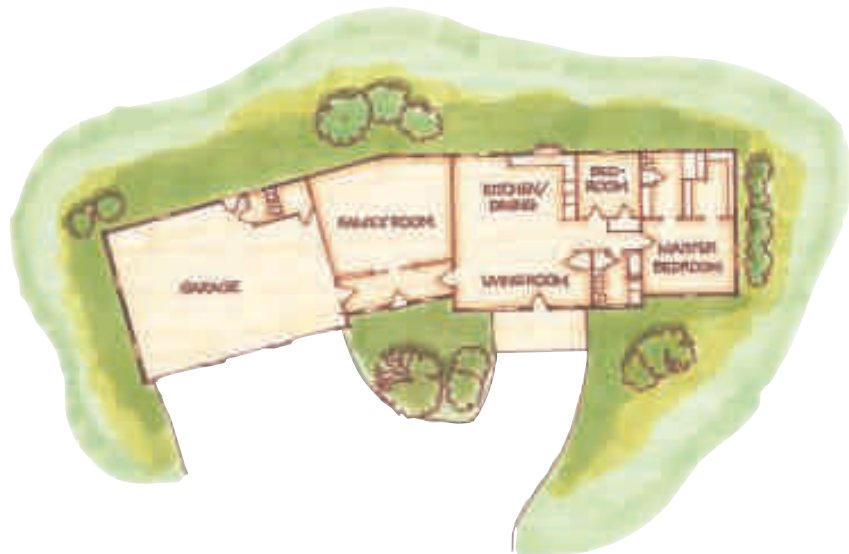


“WE WANTED A SINGLE-STORY HOUSE,
WITHOUT ONE STEP UP OR DOWN IN IT—WE WERE
BUILDING THIS LOG HOME FOR OUR OLD AGE.”



ABOVE: Kathy says she loves the plate rack installed both for convenience and as a design feature.

OPPOSITE: Despite the fact that this space is part of an open great room, once you sit down in it you feel it is a separate dining area. The table and Windsor dining chairs are stained cherry.





The McKennas designed the home to provide a feeling of openness and spaciousness. And this is what you do sense. The kitchen and dining room area measures 12 by 24 feet. This opens directly to a living room that is 26 by 16 feet. Nearby is the 14-by-18-foot master bedroom, along with the 12.6-by-7.6-foot master bathroom.

The McKennas also wanted a large family room. The one they planned is 27 by 22 feet. In it are a large pool table and giant screen television. This was the large “hang out” space that both Dan and Kathy knew they would need when their young

grandsons come to visit, and for puppies Clem and Clyde, who all need plenty of space to play and race around each other.

In keeping with the family’s informal lifestyle, Kathy chose Broyhill furniture upholstered in a tight weave. “My initial inclination was to do a country décor,” says Kathy, “although given the more formal window treatments, the house has a more eclectic style.”

It’s been almost two years since the McKennas moved into their newly built log home and just about three years since they began construction. In this time the landscaping has been filling out; the trees and shrubs have matured and the grass has grown into a rich green

carpet. All this makes for a most pleasant site and home. Although the headquarters for Hilltop is less than a half mile from their new log home, once Dave and Kathy have arrived back at the house at the end of the day, they can both put their feet up and feel that they have actually gotten away from the demands and constraints of the office. Thus they have created the kind of log home retreat for themselves that they have done so often for their customers. 🍷

LOG HOME MANUFACTURER: Hilltop Log Homes, Bowdoinham, Maine;
BUILDER: Hilltop Log Homes, Bowdoinham, Maine.