

THE ALLURE OF LOGS

From our forefathers' functional cabins to the splendour of contemporary log homes: an evolving legacy! By Marilyn de Lang

We humans are an innovative species, continually exploring variations on every aspect of living. Throughout history, we have invented countless ways in which to eat, to drink, to dress, to work, to play, and to take shelter. Our residences have been built using every conceivable substance, contour, and process that our minds can imagine.

Evidence indicates that log homes date back to the year 30 BC, with pyramids constructed from stacked timbers. Dwellings gradually became more complex, and it is speculated that the

Vikings' ship-building expertise was transferred to their houses. North America became noted for its log homes, with the first recorded example built in 1638 by Swedes who settled in Pennsylvania. As the Western frontier was developed, log cabins symbolized the pioneer spirit; and Canada's vast supply of forests, as well as its severe cold, made log homes a prime habitat for the early settlers.

With the 19th century's industrialization, logs were supplanted by building materials that could be mass produced. But the singular charm of log homes

did not disappear. Nowadays, particularly in natural settings like Muskoka, they are becoming increasingly popular. From simple cottages to elegant homes to opulent resorts, with contemporary or with traditional aesthetics, the beauty and durability of log homes make them an appealing option. Warm in the winter and cool in the summer, they exude a rich woody fragrance and serene atmosphere that delight their owners.

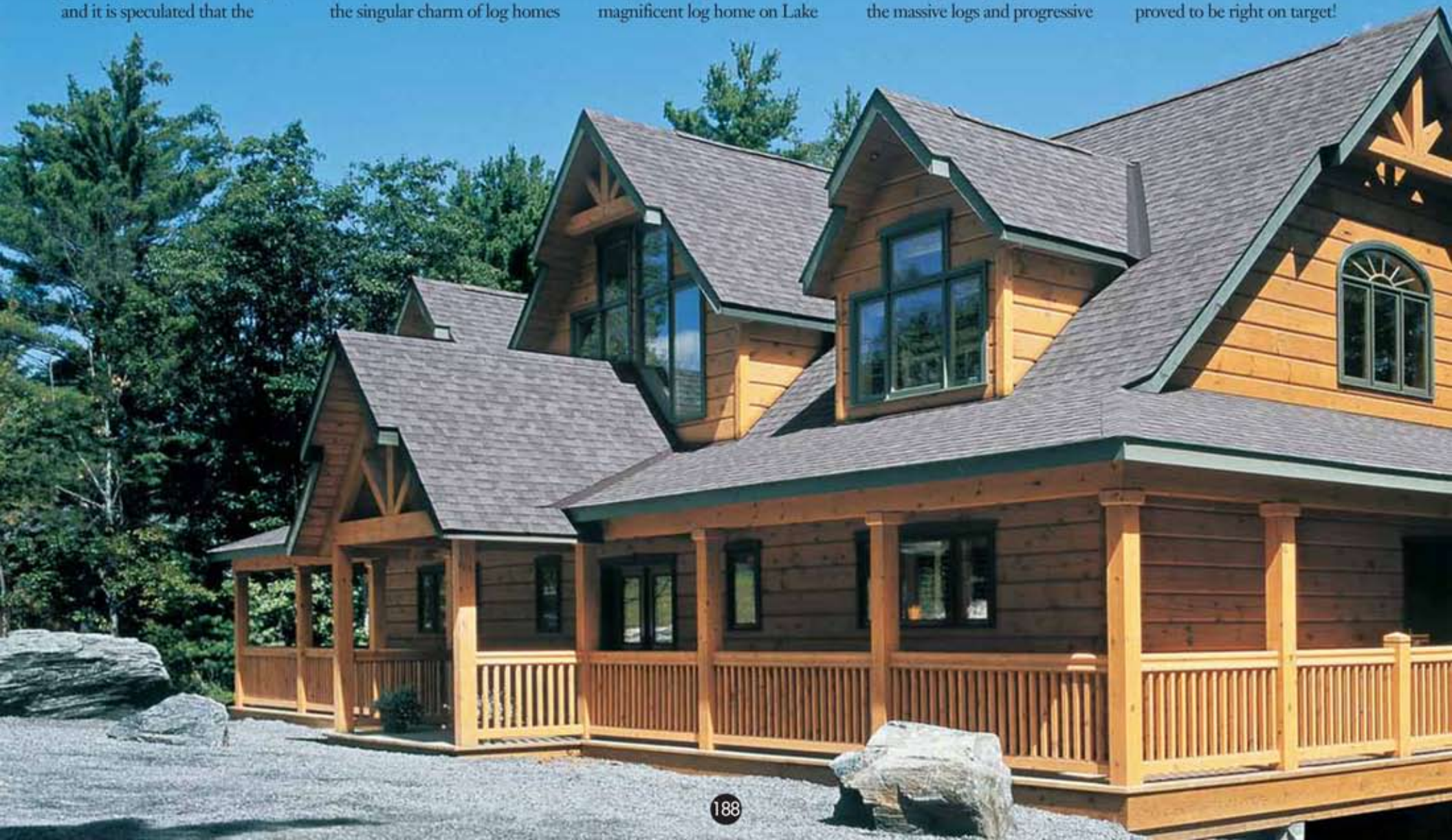
FOR THE LOVE OF WOOD
One such fan is Michael McLay, the proud occupant of a magnificent log home on Lake

Muskoka. His hectic work environment made him crave "a different speed", something in harmony with the earthy features of Muskoka. His wife Brenda explains further: "Our home is a natural extension of the elements that drew us to this area: its water, rocks, and trees." Always entranced by the textures and scents of wood, Michael enjoys restoring antique wooden boats, so perhaps his choice of a log home was predictable.

While on business in Colorado, he attended a log home trade show. He was especially impressed with the massive logs and progressive

patented technology of one particular exhibitor. "I asked them if they ever built in Ontario," he recalls, "and I couldn't believe my luck when it turned out that they were from Muskoka."

CHOOSING THE COMPANY
Michael and Brenda did their homework before making their selection. They perused books and magazines, researched other suppliers, learned the facts about log-home living, and then selected True North Log Homes, based on the firm's quality, reputation, service, and style. Michael's instincts at the Colorado show proved to be right on target!





Images supplied by True North Log Homes



With the help of True North's team, they customized their design, including a specially engineered circular staircase; and the personal service and technical support continued throughout the building process. Michael is thrilled with the unique king post system, a patented innovation exclusive to True North, which provides a focal point that is both structurally and aesthetically pleasing.

PROGRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

Back in the early days, the settlers hand-hewed the logs, filled the gaps, and re-chinked regularly because of wood shrinkage. Techniques have changed radically! True North actually takes advantage of the logs' natural shrinkage to make their homes airtight, and it is the only manufacturer on the planet that warrants their log system with a 25-Year "Zero" Air Infiltration Warranty. This patented system works in tandem with nature, tightening the log structure with the passing years. Each wall is produced with computer-generated precision, and door and window openings are custom cut. There are no nails, screws, or bolts: the joinery system uses a

spring-loaded compression process with a one-piece thru-bolt inserted into holes drilled at the factory. The spring exerts pressure on the wall system; and, with the torque applied to the spring, it is the only self-

adjusting, self-tightening "Log-Lock" thru-bolt system in the world.

A FAMILY'S PASSION

True North was started in 1986 by Rob Wrightman and his father Ron. In 1996, Ron retired and Rob assumed full control of the family business. In recent years Rob's oldest son Kyle joined the company as well.

"My grandfather invented this style of log home, so I am extremely proud to be given the opportunity to join the family business," Kyle says. The company has transcended its roots to become a global operation. Its patented systems are recognized internationally, and True North Homes can be found throughout North America, as well as in Great Britain, Ireland, Europe, Mexico,

"Our home is a natural extension of the elements that drew us to this area: its water, rocks, and trees."



True North client / home owner, Michael McLay, checks out the controls at the True North manufacturing facility.

Korea, Japan, and the Bahamas. Along with the patents, True North's reputation lies with its fine customer service. At the showplace, knowledgeable staff members will discuss custom design, explain engineering techniques, and answer any questions or concerns.

Naturally, the Wrightmans enjoy the pleasures of living in a log home, revelling in its peace and comfort. With a winning combination of traditional warmth, creative design, and technologically progressive engineering, True North Log Homes have introduced this time-honoured lifestyle, enhanced with modern conveniences and luxury, to countless clients world-wide. No longer just a simple cabin or cottage, a log home can be as contemporary – or as rustic – as its owner desires. As Michael McLay insists, "Log homes are not a thing of the past: they belong to the future!". **DS**



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