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Leading the luxury log-home movement

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Bringing concrete to the forefront

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Brian Moore Log & Timber Homes

By Frederick Jerant

Founded in 1979, Brian Moore Log & Timber Homes (BMLH) builds handcrafted log, post-and-beam, timber-frame, and dovetail log homes. The Abbotsford, British Columbia-based company uses

1. Post-and-Beam Log Home
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hand-cut logs from Douglas fir and western red cedar trees harvested along the coast of the province.

The international company's business is split almost proportionately amongst Canada, the European Union, Japan, and the United States. For local projects, BMLH provides the entire construction crew; for its international work, a supervisor oversees indigenous crews.

BMLH employs about 15 people, and completes approximately 20 homes per year. In 2010, the company became the first handcrafted-log-home builder in North America to receive Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. In addition to being responsibly managed and harvested, FSC-certified timber is the only wood recognized by LEED guidelines.

1

Post-and-Beam Log Home

Whistler, BC

Started:
2005

Completed:
2008

Size:
5,000 square feet

Building Type:
Residential

Located just a few minutes away from a 2010 Winter Olympics venue, this post-and-beam family home combines solidity and airiness. Typically, the post-and-beam building method is a lifestyle choice. "People often choose it because they want to live in a log home, but don't want to be surrounded by a lot of heavy wood," says Aaron Moore, a co-owner of BMLH.

This home definitely reflects that desire. The structure provides a strong and natural look while permitting the use of large windows that offer a 360-degree view of the picturesque Whistler Valley. The home

also features large entertainment spaces, smaller lounge areas, and a separated bedroom level.

Equipped with 6 bedrooms, seating for 16 in the dining room, and 600 square feet of decking, the home provides ample opportunity to host for family and guests alike.

The project was a cooperative effort, as BMLH teamed up with Michael Cox, MAIBC, of Vancouver-based Gateway Architecture Inc.; interior designer Mae Suffron of The Creative DesignWorks Inc., also of Vancouver; and the client.

An unusual feature of the home is its dramatic end-to-end skylight. The visual strength of the heavy logs that frame it helps reinforce the sense of space. The same is true of the rest of the house. "Because you can see the massive posts from inside and outside," Moore says, "you get a real sense of the home's solidity."

Although much of the house reflects the traditional post-and-beam style, the size of the logs—18 inches in diameter—is atypical. The choice, however, is appropriate for the home's size and location. Another unusual approach is the utilization of timber-frame joinery. A rare move in the business, the technique has

become a BMLH hallmark.

"Post-and-beam construction can look very rustic," Moore says, "but the refined joinery complements the sophisticated building and finishing materials used inside the house."

The home escapes further norms of the log-home style by implementing stone and shingles. And a considerable amount of concrete is used in both the main floor and for a functioning

elevator shaft. The heart of the home, though, is a main-ridge beam three feet in diameter. The beam is affixed to the living-room fireplace, which is fitted with structural steel reinforcements. Moore is quite pleased with the outcome. "The home could have been built with engineered wood products hidden by drywall," he says, "but then you'd be looking at a completely different home."



Photo: Max Thornhill.

2

Dovetail Log Home

Ramsau, Austria

Started:
2009

Completed:
In progress

Size:
2,000 square feet

Building Type:
Residential

“Dovetailing” refers to a specific approach to joining logs and timbers at wall intersections. It’s a technique often seen in the construction of old settler’s

cabins, but this dovetail log home is hardly crude and rustic. The elegant structure is located in Ramsau am Dachstein, a well-known ski resort in the Austrian Alps.

Designed by Ramsau-based firm DaRon, the structure aims to be as energy efficient as possible and to use an abundance of natural materials. Its 16-inch-thick exterior cedar walls, with a minimum U-value of just 0.25, exemplify the attainment of both goals.

Architectural features include a great room, a lofted space, a meditation room, radiant in-floor heating, and cathedral ceilings with exposed rafters. The basement apartment features a “kachelofen,” a special

ceramic-tiled wood stove. “These have been used in Europe for thousands of years,” Moore says. “They emit a wonderful, low-intensity heat.”

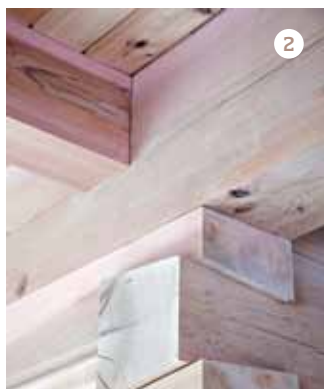
A distinguishing feature of the Dovetail Log Home is that it lacks settling jacks. “As logs dry, the walls will undergo a certain amount of settling,” Moore says. “Typically, adjustable jacks on the vertical posts enable the

customer to compensate for the settling. However, the process can take years, and the customer must regularly inspect and adjust the jacks.”

To avoid the hassle caused BMLH’s staff developed an innovative system that eliminates the need for jacks. “There’s no maintenance, and the home’s appearance improves, too,” Moore says.



2



2



2

Photos: Gavin Lyons.

3



3

Timber Frame Home

Abbotsford, BC

Started:
2009

Completed:
In progress

Size:
8,200 square feet

Building Type:
Residential

This timber-frame home, designed by Wilson Designs of Abbotsford, British Columbia, represents a hybrid approach to timber-frame homes. The house utilizes standard framing techniques to support the house. The visible timbers are more or less decorative features, although a few perform some load-bearing functions.

“The timbers were strategically placed where they’ll be most visible,” Moore says. “For example, they’re in the entryway, kitchen, master bedroom, the great room, and the deck. It gives you the beauty and luxury of living in a timber-frame home but with a lower investment.”

The home is being built with select structural free-of-heart Douglas fir timbers. The process requires special techniques. BMLH used radio frequency drying on the interior side of the timbers to avoid cracks, gapping, and other stresses (the exterior sides are less at risk because of the greater humidity outside).

A unique feature of the timber-frame trusses is the use of steel for the bottom cord. “Usually, cords are made of a timber beam, but we built a steel rod and added a functioning turnbuckle to tighten the truss,” Moore says. “We powder-coated it to add texture, and a rustic appeal.”