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A Wisconsin couple  
puts a lot of thought  
and soul into a log home  
on northern waters.

# LAKE HOME to PERFECTION

**A custom-made wooden arch truss echoes the shape of the round-top windows and adds architectural interest to the lake side of this beautiful home in the upper Midwest.**

Imagine building a home on the water, with a spectacular view of a scenic lake. Add in a floorplan that can accommodate friends and family coming together, as well as flexibility to plan for the future.

This was the dream of Bill and Sharon Fish when they built a log home on a lot surrounded by oak trees on the shores of Crescent Lake in northern Wisconsin.

Built by Tomahawk Log and Country Homes, the 1,912-square-foot log home was custom designed by the couple and built two years ago. The floorplan features an open style to allow an easy flow when friends and family come to visit.

BY DEBRA ZEIGLER-SUND  
PHOTOS BY ROGER WADE  
STYLING BY DEBRA GRAHL









**A combination of rounded logs and painted walls as well as wall-to-wall carpeting create a restful atmosphere in the master bedroom. Bill made the Mission-style bed himself.**

**W**e had talked about something different [for a vacation home]," Sharon says. The family's primary residence is a traditional two-story house with cedar siding, located about an hour away from the 615-acre lake. With retirement on their minds, Sharon and Bill were looking forward to moving permanently to the lakefront.

"We had a vacation home on Crescent Lake for 18 years," Bill explains. But up the road a bit there was another and better lot with an old cottage on it, which the couple had tried to purchase for a number of years. The lot was larger than their then-current vacation spot and offered more privacy.

Finally in 1999, the couple was able to purchase the lot. Bill and Sharon began looking for a log home company.


"Tomahawk was right there," Sharon says. "It's a local company."

The couple examined a number of homes that Tomahawk had constructed. "Every home we saw, we liked," says Sharon. "We talked to the owners, too."

The Fishes worked up a floorplan by themselves. It featured central rooms open to one another. "They brought in a pencil sketch of what they wanted," remembers Ron Volz of Tomahawk Log and Country Homes. Among people who want a log home, this is not at all unusual.

Included in Sharon and Bill's ideas for the home was the flexibility of using half-logs on the exterior. This allowed for the look of log in some areas of the home's interior and not in others.



A photograph of a rustic log cabin interior. The room features a high, vaulted ceiling made of light-colored wood planks and large, dark wooden beams. On the right wall, a large stone fireplace with a wooden mantel is the focal point; a fire is burning in the hearth. To the left, a large multi-paned window looks out onto a snowy landscape. In the foreground, a wooden dining table is set with a bottle of wine, glasses, and plates. A striped sofa with a red throw blanket is positioned in front of the fireplace. A wooden cabinet stands between the window and the fireplace.

The dining and living areas, which share a cathedral ceiling and window wall, blend into each other while a cultured stone fireplace serves as the focal point.





**The kitchen provides ample room for friends and family even during mealtime. The cabinets were custom made from hickory by Clement Cabinetry of Wausaw, Wisconsin. The whole makes for a light and breezy social, work and eating area of the home.**

Ron redrew the design into a set of workable blueprints, conforming to county requirements for the size of a home on a 125-by-450-foot lot. Construction began after the existing cottage on the lot was demolished in the fall of 2000. Bill and Sharon also contracted to put in a new well and new septic system. Bill says that local officials were helpful in getting the necessary permits and the process wasn't a lot of trouble.





put the home together.

The home is made with what Tomahawk calls its “Energy Log” construction system. This consists of conventionally framed 2-by-6 stud walls, fully insulated between the studs. On the exterior is then fastened 1-inch-thick, foil-faced, rigid insulation panels. Over this are attached half-logs, which expand to full diameter where they join to form the interlocking corners. The couple chose windows by Pella. Covering it all is a truss roof topped with 40-year shingles.

In choosing an open-style floorplan, Bill and Sharon were thinking of the several couples they spend time with while at their vacation home. The kitchen features a rounded bar that can seat at least five people. There’s also

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plenty of room on the “working” side of the kitchen to visit with guests while preparing a meal.

“Everyone hangs around the kitchen,” says Sharon. “We have a good group of friends we socialize with. We wanted it all open.”

The kitchen area flows into a dining area that in turn is adjacent to the living room. Along the lake side is a wall of windows and glass doors that allows the natural beauty of the lake and surrounding oak trees to become part of the home’s décor. “We wanted a lot of glass toward the lake, which we were able to accomplish,” Bill says.

The arrangement of windows included several arched ones that reach to the uppermost part of the dining and living area’s cathedral ceiling. Through the glass doors, easy access is gained to a deck that overlooks the lake. Another feature of the house is a custom-made outside wooden arch truss. It is on the lake side, follows the outline of the round top windows and adds a special architectural detail to the home. “When looking through magazines, I saw that type of arch and thought it was so different,” says Sharon.

Ron says the truss was custom built in Canada. “It was a pretty unique feature,” the company representative says of the decorative and functional piece.

On the main floor, the couple decided that bedrooms were to be located on either side of the house, with the kitchen and living spaces in the middle. Sharon explains that the arrangement offered more privacy and quiet for the occupants. There are also two and a half baths on the main floor as well as a laundry and storage area.

After those preliminaries, the couple stood back and watched their log home take shape. “We didn’t do a lot of the construction, but we were there a lot,” says Bill.

Besides manufacturing the home, Tomahawk also erected the structure with a six-member crew. Interior work was subcontracted to other companies. “Things went really smoothly,” Bill remembers, “and they don’t usually.” Bill also cited the excellent work of the crew that





**ABOVE: The wall of glass created by windows and glass doors makes the view of Crescent Lake part of the décor.**  
**OPPOSITE: Surrounded by trees and overlooking the lake, the Fishes' log home is situated to take maximum advantage of its location.**

The lower level, or basement, features another bedroom and bathroom that were added after the home was built. A family room also is in the works for the lower level.

"When we get it done, it will double the square footage of the house," says Bill.

The added space will allow the couple's two grown children to visit with their future families. "We're planning ahead," says Sharon with a bit of a chuckle.

**T**he lower level also includes a recreation room with a kitchenette, a full bathroom and room for a pool table. Swimmers and boaters also have a place to dry off and change when coming in from the lake. A two-car garage is attached to the house on the side facing away from the lake.

The house is heated with natural gas and forced air. Aug-

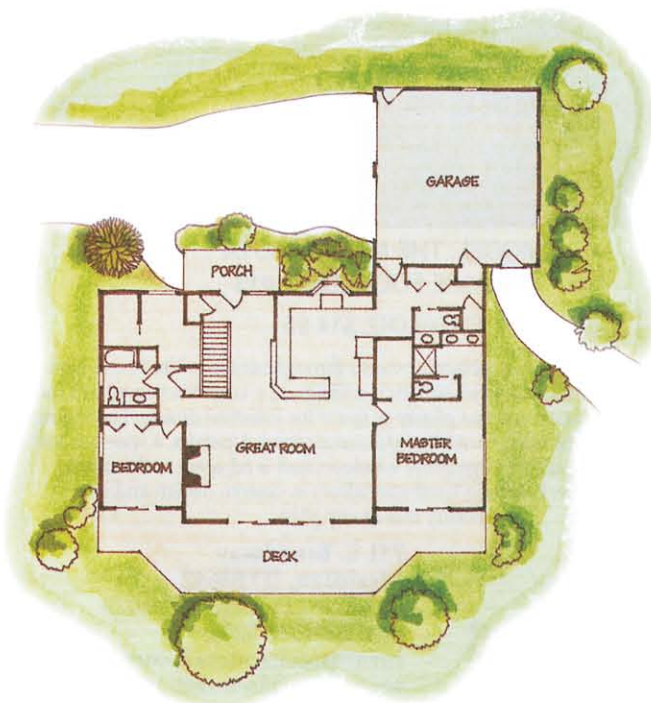
menting the heating system and adding to the gregarious aura of the home is an impressive fireplace, constructed of cultured, or faux, stone in the living room.

Bill and Sharon decided to use half-logs outside so they could have more decorating options inside. Says Bill, "By using 2-by-6 framed walls we could cover the interior surfaces with anything we liked—log, paneling or drywall—and in any place we liked."

Indeed, the result was most satisfactory. Rounded logs are in the dining and living area, while the kitchen is a combination of pine wainscoting and painted drywall. The master bedroom features a combination of pine logs and painted and decorated walls. Most of the house is carpeted, with the exception of the kitchen and foyer, where there's ash flooring.

Bill and Sharon are very pleased with their log home, where they spend as many weekends and vacations as pos-





sible. During the winter, the family enjoys snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. In the summer, there's boating, swimming and fishing.

"When the kids come home, they want to go there," says Sharon. "When they get married, they want to get married there."

For anyone planning on building a log house or any house, Bill advises potential owners to look at "lots of floorplans. That's the biggest part."

The couple chose log because of the aura it exudes. In this case, it also made the perfect background for Bill's many wood projects, such as the Mission-style bed he made for the master bedroom and the outside furniture for the lakeside deck.

Bill and Sharon are looking forward to many years living in their dream home by the lake and spending time with their friends and family.

"When we're there, it's most relaxing," says Bill. 🍂

**LOG HOME MANUFACTURER AND BUILDER:**  
**Tomahawk Log and Country Homes, Tomahawk,**  
**Wisconsin.**