

# It Starts with a Plan

Researching packages and floor plans leads this Oregon couple down the path to log-home ownership.



Susan and Richard McElroy were attracted to the home's design because of the bump-outs and how such features translated into the interior. The living room is a perfect example, with its many angles, 13- to 22-foot ceilings and the elegant mix of conventional finish work and wood. The river rock-encased wood-burning fireplace also provides ambience and crackling warmth.

With gift-wrapped plans in hand, Richard McElroy surprised his wife, Susan, at a WPA lodge on Mount Hood with the reality that they could afford to build a log home. Both of them had grown up around log homes, cabins and lodges; camping and being in the wilderness meant warm family coziness, and they wanted to inject that into their own lives.

The dramatic, rough-sawn timber entry, secured with river rock pillars, welcomes friends and family to the McElroys' dream home. The home was customized for the homeowners to give them exactly what they wanted, including three distinct living spaces with lots of windows close to the floor for that "almost outside" feeling.





After living in a small farmhouse for a number of years, Richard started looking online for possibilities. He was drawn to International Homes of Cedar (IHC), which has a unique process for its engineered timbers: First, they are kiln-dried, then laminated in a glue-laminated (glu-lam) beam press to prevent shrinkage and cracking. This allows the company to use second-growth inland western red cedar trees from Idaho and Montana, rather than old-growth coastal cedar trees. The logs are connected with a tongue-and-groove system and a patented interlocking corner system. Richard ordered the company's catalog, wrapped it in a pretty package, and the rest is history.

Once the McElroys realized they could build a log home, they started to research. They subscribed to magazines, went to log-home shows and looked at many model homes. IHC customers open their homes to prospective buyers, so Susan and Richard got to see a lived-in home and visit with the owners firsthand.

"We started keeping folders for fireplaces, kitchen looks, windows and things we liked and might incorporate into our home," says Susan. "We had specific pictures, so it was easy for the contractor to tell what we wanted."

Although the plans catalog from IHC provided the financial reality of a log home, the McElroys wanted a different design and began to search for plans, finally settling on a set of stock plans from an architect in Bend, Oregon. They bought the rights to the plan and took it to IHC, who modified the plan to fit its system and started working with the McElroys to customize their home just the way they wanted it.

"One thing that Richard and Susan did that was key in the process was to allow enough time for plan-

**The McElroys enjoyed implementing the many window designs (top) they found in their research. Many have gentle curves at the top. IHC supplied all the extra-wide trim for the radius windows so it could be scribed in the field instead of being pieced together. The foyer walls were not extended all the way to the ceiling to provide a greater sense of open space between the foyer, kitchen and living room. The gray tones used in the entry illustrate Susan's use of gradient gray hues throughout the home, supplying neutral color without overloading the interior with wood-toned browns. "I grabbed tiles, door handles, the master comforter and a piece of cedar and, with two armloads, went into the paint store to go over paint chips," Susan recalls. "We like the gray because three different shades can turn into a dozen different tones."**

**A large window seat (bottom) overlooks the front of the home and provides enjoyable connectivity to the outdoors and abundant natural light. The rough-sawn timber frame and rock pillars help establish the dramatic entry.**



The kitchen (above) was designed to be the social center of the McElroys' home. "Everyone gravitates toward the kitchen to hang out with the cook," says Richard. The kitchen looks out into both the dining room and living room. "No matter where you are you can see what is going on. You can see all the native maples and cedars, as well as the seasonal creek." The space features ripped white oak cabinets and black-flecked granite countertops, as well as Kohler faucets, a Sharp microwave, a KitchenAid dishwasher, an Amana refrigerator and a Jenn-Air Stove.

The dining room (left) flows smoothly in conjunction with the kitchen and the great room. A base color palette of gray hues ensures decorative continuity as well. Natural light, courtesy of glass-paned double French doors encased by sidelights and a transom, floods the space. Such doors also further connect the room with the outdoors by providing direct access to the back deck.

ning," says Rodney Robertson, president of IHC. "It's much easier and more economical to make changes on paper than in wood. They did a very good job of that."

Richard and Susan planned to make their home a full-time residence, as well as a gathering place for family and friends. Every design consideration was made with its functionality in mind, including three distinct features: The open floor plan allows for easy entertaining; multiple bump-outs provide privacy and quiet spots; and windows

falling only 18 inches off the floor better connect the home to the outdoors. The couple also put a lot of thought into the kitchen, which was designed to be a central gathering spot with views in all directions.

The functionality of the house isn't confined to the interiors. When Richard and Susan cleared the property to build, they cut down many old hardwood maple trees themselves and sent the larger ones to a mill in Salem, Oregon, to be made into flooring. They sent more trees than they would need to

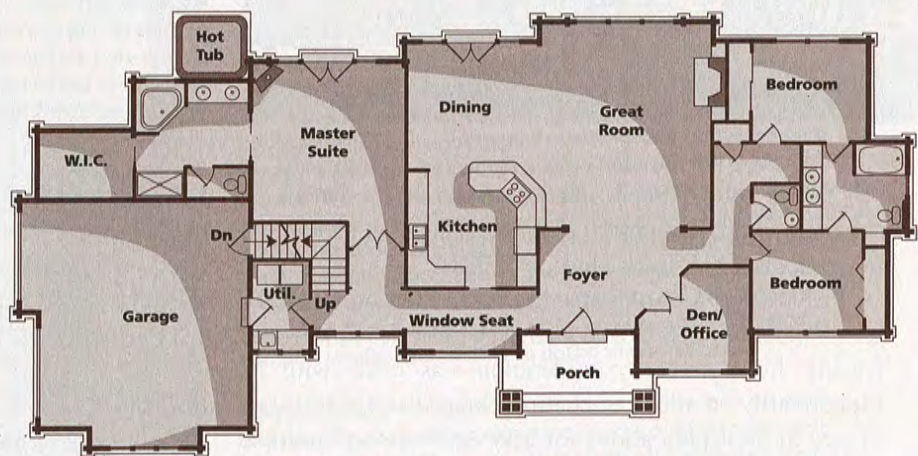


## ROOM IN FOCUS

**I**n the IHC catalog, the McElroys found a gorgeous bathroom encased in wood. They took inspiration from that image and utilized the beautiful white cedar exterior walls of their home for their master bath. The sinks are against one of two exterior walls in the room, while the other walls are drywalled. The bathroom's placement lets in fabulous morning and afternoon light, and captures a view out onto the seasonal creek that runs through the property. Other features include an extra-large walk-in closet and shower, and double sliding pocket doors leading to the master bedroom to open up the space even more.



Upper Level



Main Level



The Trex deck (above) is enjoyed year-round from the dining room and the master suite.

The master suite (left) has double French doors that open to the deck, where a hot tub sits in a private bump-out. The master suite was placed on the opposite side of the home from the other two main-level bedrooms to maximize privacy.

barter a trade with the mill for the extra wood in exchange for milling the timbers for their floor.

The McElroys are thrilled with their log home. Through the process, the couple

realized they had very similar tastes and expectations and found building a new home to be an enjoyable process. Susan associates each season with the predominant colors that appear outside the home's many windows: Winter is very blue, a reflection of the cold winter sky; spring is soft green; and fall is golden. Each season has its own beauty, which Richard most enjoys by sitting in the window seat with a fire crackling and watching the first light break over the woods. "We are thankful to be here," he says.

## RESOURCES

**Square footage:** 3,352

**Bedrooms:** 4

**Bathrooms:** 3.5

**Log species:** western red cedar

**Architect:** Designs for Living, Bend, OR (541-767-8138; designsforliving.net)

**Bathroom tilework:** Cactus Marble & Tile LLC (503-706-7047)

**Builder/general contractor:** Olson and Jones Construction, Portland, OR (503-244-7467)

**Cabinetry:** Anderson Custom Cabinets, Aloha, OR (503-422-9900)

**Countertops:** Quality Home Building Supply, Portland, OR (503-233-8918)

**Decking:** Trex, Winchester, VA (800-289-8739; trex.com)

**Doors:** Simpson Door, McCleary, WA (800-746-7766; simpsondoor.com)

**Fireplace:** Fireplace Xtordinaire, Mukilteo, WA (425-609-2500)

**Hardware:** Weslock, Tulsa, OK (800-575-2658; weslock.com)

**Hearth:** Natural river rock — Clackamas River

**Log provider; stairs:** International Homes of Cedar, Woodinville, WA (360-668-5562; ihoc.com). *Circle 043 on the Reader Service Card between pages 64-65 for more information.*

**Mantels:** Maupin Mill Works

**Masonry:** Mark Wheeler Masonry (503-709-9651)

**Roofing:** Bliss Roofing Inc., Clackamas, OR (503-653-0100; blissroofing.com)

**Sealants:** 3M, St. Paul, MN (888-364-3577; solutions.3m.com)

**Stain:** Sikkens (866-745-5367; nam.sikkens.com)

**Windows:** Milgard Windows and Doors, Tacoma, WA (800-645-4273; milgard.com)