HOME OF THE WEEK

# Home of the Week: Custom log cabin offers space and character

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GRAFTON, ONT.
PUBLISHED 4 HOURS AGO

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RE/MAX ALL-STARS BENCZIK TEAM REALTY

**The listing:** 206 Boomerang Rd., Grafton, Ont.

**Asking Price:** $1.8-million

**Taxes:** $7783.72 (2021)

**Lot Size:** 1.47 Acres

**Agent:** Leslie Benczik, Re/Max All-Stars Benczik Team Realty

## The backstory

The story of 206 Boomerang Rd. begins in a fallow field in 2015 with a couple looking at a stack of hand-hewn timber from an 1850s-era log cabin.

“It was just a shell, just the logs, in the middle of a field with grass up to your knees,” Cindy Lynam said. “You know when you just have that feeling? ‘I can see this.’”

She couldn’t quite imagine what they would build – but Ms. Lynam and her husband, Joe, were shopping around, looking for something different after having moved up the property ladder over the years with new houses. They had been looking for options for a country home, but these logs didn’t come with any land to put them on. They bought them anyway.

“We had the cabin and then we had to go find land. We were on a mad search, we couldn’t afford to buy lake-front – but we thought if we can’t do that, we gotta do a cabin in the woods,” she said.

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They found around an acre and a half in Grafton, Ont., which had to be cleared and had no well, septic service or even a driveway. Still, the couple, who had never built their own home before bought it, applied for a building permit in 2016.

They brought in Mel Shakespeare of Tradition Home, who specializes in stone and timber building using colonial-era techniques. The basement was dug out. They then agreed on a basic shape for the house and began planning how to best use the hemlock logs.

In the end, the logs are used to form the structure almost everywhere on the main level, including on interior walls – and only on the second floor do you start to see logs only extend half-way up the walls. In fact, so much wood was used that they actually bought two cabins worth of hand-hewn logs originally cut and used in Pembroke, Ont., and then had to go and find a third cabin to do some finishing touches in the bathrooms.

“Everything had to be done custom, the only drywall is in the foyer and the kitchen,” Ms. Lynam said.

The result is a huge house – finished in 2018 but with projects that continued almost until listing day – that is almost 3,500 square feet on the upper levels. If the unfinished basement and porch areas are included, it hits 5,500 square feet. And with the grey logs everywhere you look, the house appears contemporary in its cleanliness, but its materials – some of these logs are 18 inches or more thick – are ageless.

“My neighbour said ‘My gosh, you can smell the wood, it smells like history,’” Ms. Lynam said. “I don’t smell anything, but the woodsmoke [from the two fireplaces] does permeate the wood.”

## The house today

Over the front porch (which has a separate entrance and seating area to the right) and inside the house, it opens up to a central hall with the stairs running to the second level. The walls are the same hemlock as the exterior, while the floor and ceiling are wide-plank pine. Meanwhile, the floor is stained reddish and distressed, and the ceiling is aging to the same colour as the walls.

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The hall ends in a small foyer off of which is the laundry room, a three-piece bathroom, a bedroom on the right and an exit to the screened in porch off the back. According to listing agent Leslie Benczik, the house is in an area that allows for bed and breakfast zoning, and this main floor layout might help with that conversion.

To the right of the central hall is a large family room with a stone-faced fireplace and a bar in the corner, locating next to another entrance to that screened in porch which wraps around that corner of the house in an L-shape.

To the left of the central hall, accessible from a doorway behind the stairwell, is a great room and kitchen – a combination living-dining and kitchen space roughly 30 feet by 26 feet. Another massive stone-faced fireplace with hemlock beam mantle dominates the left side of the room and the ceiling beams run perpendicular to the kitchen, which takes up the whole side wall of the space. In another area, massive counter space is separated from the living-dining space by a long island that holds the Thermador range. Here, the ceiling is raised slightly into a tray clad in pine. But while the dimensions are grand, the wood draws the walls in closer – so instead of feeling like some mega-cottages in the mountains, it harkens to a croft that's been passed down through the ages.

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Upstairs, there are two bedrooms and some transitional spaces in the form of hallways and small foyers. The smaller of the two bedrooms has its own ensuite bath and his-and-hers closets. In the bath, instead of wall tiles, the couple boxed in the walk-in shower with glass and let the ancient timber shine through. And instead of pre-fab vanities, they used antique bureaus with sinks retrofitted in.

A long hallway separates the large primary bedroom from the stairwell. At the end of it is a four-piece bath with a smaller standalone shower, which makes room for a claw-foot tub and another antique vanity.

## The best feature

“Spring, summer and fall, it’s the screened porch,” Ms. Lynam said. “I like being outside, hearing the birds and the squirrels.”

And with an outdoor pizza oven and a barbecue kitchen on a patio seating area, the couple has also taken to hosting friends and neighbours in the backyard for pizza parties. Continuing the food theme, the second favourite space is the kitchen.

For the Lynam’s, it’s not a country home, it’s their everyday home. But despite the love of the project with a year or so to go until retirement, Ms. Lynam said they are looking for something a little smaller. Meanwhile, the log cabin is for those want something a little bigger, a little more country and with a lot more character than one can typically find.