

Hills of Peace



Amid the rolling hills of rural eastern Canada, a Toronto couple builds a peaceful hideaway that offers a welcome respite from city life.

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THIS PAGE: With the fireplace burning in the background and the snow falling softly outside, the Zarets' living room is the perfect cozy escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Eventually, the couple plans to retire to this home.

OPPOSITE: With a large collection of outdoor gear (ATVs, snowmobiles, fishing poles) at their disposal, the Zarets and their guests often spend the days outdoors—but their 3,200-square-foot timber home is an ideal sanctuary to return to after a day of wintertime frolicking.





It was a chilly Canadian November day when Mark and Simmy Zaret sat in awe, watching as their timber home's frame went up on a carefully selected section of their 46-acre slice of countryside in Priceville, Ontario. "It was like watching an old barn raising," recalls Simmy, a schoolteacher who, with her musician and investor husband, Mark, uses the timber home as a frequent vacation getaway. "The workers were walking on the beams like tightropes, and like a house of cards, all four corners had to be in place before it came together as a solid structure. It was amazing to watch."

Seeing firsthand the birth of what, by the summer of 2004, would become a 3,200-square-foot home located about two hours northwest of their primary residence in Toronto created a solid bond between the Zarets and their timber structure. Having looked at both log and timber options, a visit to a friend's home cemented the Zarets' decision to go with the latter. (Both their timber frame company, PineRidge Timberframe, and contractor,

Lawrence Anderson of Prospect Homes, were referred by their friends, too.)

"We loved the rustic look and natural elements," says Mark. "When you walk in, you know you're not anywhere near the city. It's a real hideaway that brings a feeling of relaxation and retreat."

Using a custom Eastern white pine frame and panel package, Lawrence constructed the house with standard frame detailing, curved knee braces and chamfers, and a natural oil finish. PineRidge president Mike Mader says the biggest design challenge for the company's in-house architect was coming up with a floorplan that would maximize the home's view.

"It took some creativity because the front of the home faces a hill, and to the rear, there's a drop in elevation, with a trout pond and river view," he says. "We wound up doing a high-elevation layout with a walkout basement." Once the design was complete, the rest of the construction process was smooth sailing: Utility hookups and other infrastructure were straightforward, and the Canadian

ABOVE: In the kitchen, modern appliances blend with rustic timbers to create a look that showcases the best of the city and the country.

OPPOSITE: The combination of Eastern white pine walls and salvaged barn-wood flooring makes for a warm welcome at the entrance to Mark and Simmy Zaret's timber home.

winter—which is known to leave 3 feet of snow on the ground—never managed to hold up the 8-month-long building process.

Decorated by Simmy, the home's interior features a granite fireplace, reclaimed brickwork, natural maple cabinets, white wicker furniture and flooring made from recycled barn



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

An ample dining table allows Simmy to play hostess to frequent houseguests. "My absolute favorite thing in the world," she says, "is when we're sitting at our dining room table surrounded by friends."

While their home was under construction, the Zarets had the words "Our Pleasure" carved into a beam as a way to express their exuberance over their timber home, as well as let guests know their company is appreciated and enjoyed.

The soothing whites and creams of the walls and soaking tub in the couple's master bathroom provide a delightful contrast with rich-colored cabinetry and flooring.

White wicker furniture and a jug full of flowers lend a breezy air to the sunroom—even in the dead of winter.

The window seat in the master bedroom is the perfect vantage point for taking in the amazing views of the Zarets' 46-acre property.



boards. “They look like they’re 150 years old,” Mark says of the floorboards. “It creates a rich feel.” To add a unique touch to the great room, the Zarets had 18 “lucky” pennies in-laid in the fireplace masonry. “When we have guests—especially children—they spend their first 20 minutes in the home looking for those pennies,” says Simmy, who purchased many of the home’s furnishings from a local antique dealer. “We wanted it to have the feeling of an old, rustic cabin.”

Located on the banks of the Saugeen River, the Zarets’ home serves as the perfect weekend retreat for its owners, their two teenage sons and countless friends, who are all too happy to escape the confines of the city to take in the pleasures of the stocked pond, rolling hills and spring flowers that surround the home. “Living in a city home with 8-foot ceilings can make anyone claustrophobic,” says Simmy, “and it makes all of us appreciate the openness and country feel of our timber home.” ■

Home Details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 3,200

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:

Lawrence Anderson,
Prospect Homes

TIMBER PRODUCER:

PineRidge Timberframe



UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL

*Lower level not shown

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