

# Meet the Hennigans

What happens when a family takes the plunge and builds their own lakeside log home? Thanks to a well-kept journal—and a homeowner’s willingness to share—over the next three issues, we’ll follow JoAnn and Shawn Hennigan’s journey from design to finish and get the inside scoop on exactly what goes on during the log homebuilding process.

**TASK AT HAND:** Find the perfect lot and design our new log home!

**TIMEFRAME:** Winter-Summer 2005

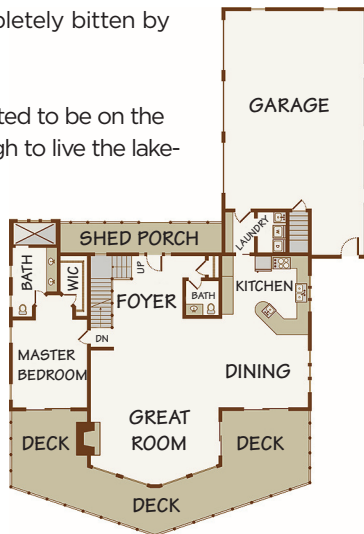
A few years ago, friends of ours bought a 19th-century log cabin. Sure, it needed a little—okay, a lot—of work, but it turned out really beautifully. I fell so in love with the place that I started scouring log home magazines. Soon, my husband Shawn and I were looking for property of our own. We were completely bitten by the log home bug.

**OUR FIRST CRITERIA:** We wanted to be on the water or at least close enough to live the lakeside lifestyle. Being from the Green Bay, Wisconsin, area, we’d heard about Door County, a charming community that’s only an hour’s drive from our house. It was perfect. We just had to find the right lot.

Easier said than done.

We searched throughout Door County for well over a year, but we couldn’t find that “just right” spot. That is until we got a little help. Turns out, one of Shawn’s coworkers was looking in the same area. He found a beautiful piece of property, but it wasn’t exactly what he wanted, so we gladly took it off his hands. It’s on the “quiet side” of the peninsula, only a few hundred yards from Lake Michigan. Plus, Clark Lake, an inland body of water, is literally in our back yard.

**NOW COMES THE FUN PART:** Designing the house. The first company we visited was Wisconsin Log Homes. After meeting with a member of the sales staff, we did a little bit of research on our own, all the while sketching starter plans for our future home. When we headed back to WLH we were introduced to Stephanie Gauthier, the company’s talented in-house designer.



JoAnn and Shawn Hennigan and family

As we discussed ideas for the plan, we began with the shape and dimensions of the lot. The property is heavily wooded, so one of our challenges was to design a house that wouldn’t require clearing too many trees so we could retain the woody feel and privacy that we desired. We wound up combining three of WLH’s stock plans to create a design that’s compact and simple but has a three-car garage. We have a big family (four young kids and our Goldendoodle puppy), so designing a home that best suits our needs, now and in the future, was really important to us.

**WE STARTED WITH THE MAIN FLOOR OF THE CABIN.** Our first essential was to have open living areas, with the foyer, dining room, great room and kitchen seamlessly flowing from space to space, so we’d have a great place for entertaining or just hanging out. Also, we wanted a first-floor master bedroom for later in life, when we’ll want (and probably need) to only live in the main floor. We opted for a great room with a beautiful prow window that will let in so much light, we’ll need to wear sunglasses in the house! We also wanted the quintessential log home

feature—a loft—but with a twist; it had to have its own bar area. We didn’t want to go crazy with square footage (the house is roughly 3,200 square feet), so we included only two bedrooms upstairs instead of giving each kid his or her own room. We did, however, opt for two separate baths in hopes of keeping bathroom brawls to a minimum! The final design was everything we imagined and so much more. —JoAnn

For JoAnn’s design tips, log onto [www.loghomedesignmag.com](http://www.loghomedesignmag.com). To learn more about the Hennigans’ log home construction process, check out the October 2007 issue of **Log Home Design**.

# Building the Dream

With their plans in place, the Hennigans' log home got underway—but not without a few last-minute considerations.

**TASK AT HAND:** Building and landscaping our new log home.

**TIMEFRAME:** October 2005–April 2006

Once we cleared the minimal amount of land my husband, Shawn, and I needed for our new log home, we were ready to start building. Our home was to sit on a massive sheet of bedrock, which meant that to build a full in-ground basement, we'd need to blast that rock out—not a task (or expense) we were ready to take on. Instead, we opted to build atop a poured-concrete 4-foot-high crawl-space, which meant we'd need a significant amount of clean fill around the foundation, since we didn't want it to look like our house was sticking 4 feet out of the ground.

With the foundation down, our general contractor, Dennis Gaestel, and his team got started. It turned out that a good chunk of the project was going to occur during the winter,

but our framers got to work quickly and the crew was under cover for the majority of the most brutal months. Even with the bone-chilling cold and messy weather that goes hand in hand with Wisconsin winters, Dennis was able to keep things on track.

Because our primary residence is 65 miles away from where our log home was being built, we were able to stop in and check out their progress almost every weekend. Although we had no idea how many crew members were there every day, we *do* know there were a number of occasions when we showed up to find, to our delight, multiple subcontractors working simultaneously.

We also had a little family help from my cousin, Eric Hubbard, who came all the way from Tucson, Arizona. He designed and built our powder room vanity from knotty-alders and mesquite. Topped off with the copper vessel sink, the finished product really has the rustic look that we were striving to create throughout the house.

One of the most exciting parts for us was getting to watch the log walls go up. The folks at Wisconsin Log Homes use half-log walls in their construction, so they began with a 2-by-6-inch insulated wall and then applied hand-peeled logs that had been split in half. We chose 10-inch saddle-notch spruce logs for the exterior and 10-inch pine logs for the interior walls. Besides being energy efficient, we found that the half-log walls were ideal for installing our wiring, plumbing and HVAC ductwork in the walls, which is something we were concerned about before deciding to build a log home.

With the home constructed, our thoughts turned to the landscape design. We knew we'd entertain a lot, so one of our main goals was to extend our living space outdoors, making the area between our home and the lake flow seamlessly.

JoAnn's first entry appeared in our September 2007 issue. To see the Hennigans' finished log home, check out the November 2007 issue of **Log Home Design**.



October 2005



February 2006

We chose natural-stone retainer walls (made from 6-inch-thick limestone) for both the north and south ends of the lot. This gives the back of the property a tiered look, tying in the back deck with the walkout steps. We used Uni-Lock Brussels block pavers to create unique walkways

watching your ideas evolve from a passing thought to a completed project. The home has turned out to be much more than we anticipated, and Shawn and I continue to marvel at the craftsmanship that goes into building a log home.

—JoAnn

around the back of the home and to support a 48-inch GE Monogram cooktop range, perfect for our outdoor kitchen. And, to add a cozy seating area, we included several large steps to create another tier big enough to house a large fire pit.

We loved being able to watch the construction process every step of the way. From pouring the foundation to seeing the logs go up to adding the finishing touches inside, we've had a great time visiting the site and taking lots of pictures. It's really amazing



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# The Big Finish

With the end in sight, the Hennigans finish off their log home and settle in to enjoy their new lakeside retreat.

**TASK AT HAND:** Finish and furnish our log home before moving in.

**TIMEFRAME:** Spring 2006

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CASEY JANCZAK



Spring 2006



**WARM WELCOME.** A favorite gathering spot for the Hennigan clan, the spacious great room features a beautiful prow window and comfortable seating for up to 11 people. The soaring two-story hearth is made from Eldorado Cultured Stone, which complements the honey-hued walls.



**LET IT GLOW.** A pair of whitetail-antler chandeliers light the 10-foot-long dining table made from reclaimed teak. Arts-and-Crafts-style pendant lights cast a warm glow over the large kitchen island.

With the construction behind us, it was time to finish off our log house and turn it into a real home. I got together with Stephanie Gauthier, the Wisconsin Log Homes in-house interior designer, to talk about the type of ambiance I wanted to create—a warm log home with a Western ranch feel. Before we got started, I gathered pictures and photos that I'd clipped from magazines and collected swatches of flooring, fabric and paint. With the help of these tools, Stephanie immediately understood my vision. She was a great resource for decorating ideas, as well as for locating unique pieces to include in our home.

We decided early on that we wanted to use solid-surface flooring on the whole first level, so we chose a distressed, hand-scraped maple for the great room, dining room and master bedroom. For a sleeker look, we went with 16-by-16-inch slate tile for the remaining areas, using California Gold in the common areas and Mongolian Springs in the master bath. In the kids' bedrooms and bonus room,

we opted for carpet, since that space doubles as a play area.

When it came time to pick out furniture, we had sofas and chairs custom upholstered in a Southwestern fabric. The colors and design added that kick of personality we were looking for—perfect for our informal space. We even bought a really cool double-sided leather sofa that creates separate television-viewing and conversation areas. All of our bedrooms have log beds and dressers, along with warm color schemes and cowboy accents.

Our most unique piece is definitely the 10-foot-long dining table, made from reclaimed teak. Stephanie suggested lighting our dining area with two whitetail-antler chandeliers, crafted by Green Bay artist Jim Johnson. They add a warm glow to the room.

We're so happy with how everything turned out. Some of our favorite parts of the house include the Western-style rails on our front porch and back deck, the massive



*The master bedroom*

logs used in the prow window and the stone fireplace, topped off with a handmade mantel, made by David Janczak from Wisconsin Log Homes. We ended up with the rugged, Wild West feel we wanted, with a little bit of woody lodge mixed in. Plus, the house is casual enough for our family,

Log onto  
[www.loghomedesignmag.com](http://www.loghomedesignmag.com)  
 for more photos of the  
 Hennigans' finished home.

but still cleans up quite elegantly.

Now that it's built, it's time to start enjoying our log home. We designed this cabin to be more of a retreat than our primary residence, and our location is ideal for year-round activities, from kayaking along the shoreline or through the caves at Cave Point Park to exploring the trails of the surrounding forests to watching the northern lights from our hot tub.

When we're asked what we love most about our new log home, our answer is always the same: the feeling we get when we walk in the door. It's such a special place where we can go as a family and spend quality time together. We intend to share it with family and friends for years to come, and we look forward to making many sweet memories there.

—JoAnn



*The master bathroom*

**RAISE THE BAR.** Shawn picked out a custom-made pool table for the loft area. The space also boasts a wrought-iron pub table, bar and wine cooler.

**HOUSE OF STYLE.** All of the bedrooms feature log furniture and a warm color scheme. Each child was given a Pendleton comforter during the family's first weekend in their new log home.