

By Suzanna Logan | Photography by KCJ Photography

A FRESH START

*One determined couple
transforms their derelict
family farm into a
forever home.*



12

WHY WE *love it*

Not only is the tale of high-school sweethearts building their forever home heart-warming, the hybrid construction style of this home showcases the creative flexibility timber frame construction offers.



A cedar truss at the entrance sets the tone for the home's natural, airy atmosphere. Outside, a large paver patio around the house provides ample space for entertaining and minimizes hands-on landscape maintenance. (With 160 acres of family land to their name, the couple has plenty to keep them busy.)

“We bought the farm!” This tongue-in-cheek announcement from Kathy Bintz comes

with a chuckle. Being married to a retired Air Force pilot, she knows the origins of the phrase are often traced back to aviators describing a final (and fatal) descent. Thankfully, her husband Don is alive and well, and “buying the farm” was far from the end of their story. In fact, purchasing the 160-acre family property was the beginning of a new chapter of their life — albeit one that took two decades to unfold.

The Bintzes purchased the land from Don’s mother in the year 2000 in the hopes of putting down roots in the small Wisconsin town where they had fallen in love as high school sweethearts. It would be the perfect place to build their forever home. Soon after the purchase, Kathy began taking drafting classes at a local community college and became hooked on the look of timber frames. “I designed the house we wanted, and kept the plans for years,” says Kathy. “I knew someday we would build it.” The plans traveled from Michigan to California to Nevada before “someday” came — in the form of Don’s retirement.

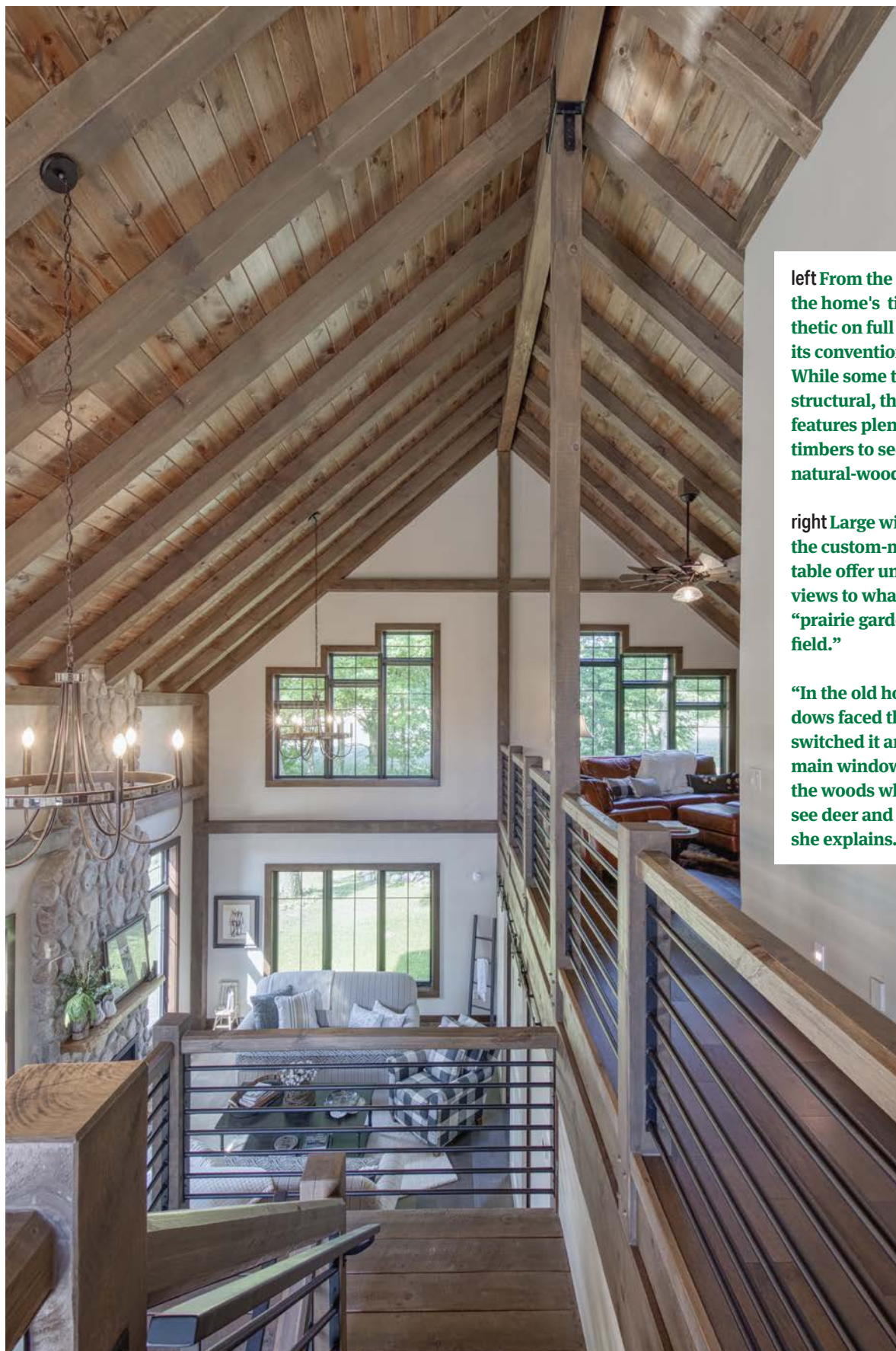
The couple turned their sights to building out the homestead, but there were a few other projects that had to happen before they could realize their dream of building: the barn needed a new foundation, and they had to convert the “pig barn” into a small guest house where they could live during construction. Lastly, they had to take down the old farmhouse that had fallen into disrepair.



Immediately upon entering, Kathy's focus on filling the home with elegant wood and plenty of natural light via high, peaked ceilings is apparent.

"I like neutrals, specifically tans and whites together, but I had to throw in a little something wild with the zebra print," says Kathy, referring to the linen sofas flanking the living room fireplace. The paintings in the room have a storied background, too. "We owned another little house and found a box of paintings in the garage," she says. "We tracked down the family member of the gentleman who had painted them, but she wasn't interested in having them. So, we had them matted, and now they fit the house perfectly."





left From the loft, you can see the home's timber-style aesthetic on full display, despite its conventional framing. While some timbers are structural, the hybrid home features plenty of decorative timbers to secure the warm, natural-wood look.

right Large windows flanking the custom-made dining table offer unobstructed views to what Kathy calls the "prairie garden" and "soccer field."

"In the old house, the windows faced the road, but I switched it around so the main windows would look to the woods where you could see deer and other wildlife," she explains.





The kitchen cabinets were painted in the same cream hue as the walls to create a seamless backdrop that doesn't steal attention from the views enveloping the room. The granite countertops, which feature a subtle purple tone, add a hint of color to the otherwise neutral space, and the splurge-worthy La Cornue appliances marry superior function with eye-catching design.





A bed and a pair of rugs set askew in the upstairs guest bedroom add an unexpected twist to the space. "I just love angles, so you'll see a lot of areas in the home where I designed things that way," says Kathy.

The spacious loft, outfitted with a cozy leather sofa set and plenty of throw pillows and blankets, was one of the key features in the plans Kathy drew up decades ago. With sight lines to the outdoors and the living area below, the loft is an ideal spot to sit back, relax and enjoy the views.



Finally, it was time to put their long-held plans into motion. The couple kept their business local and their budget in mind, choosing Wisconsin Log Homes to build their plans into a hybrid timber-style home. The original plan Kathy had drawn up all those years prior needed very few changes. “Kathy’s main goal was to keep the floor plan simple and comfortable,” says Jason LeQuia, Home Consultant at Wisconsin Log Homes. “We worked through the original plan

and made some slight adjustments to make the home more functional.” The overall layout remained unchanged and includes a loft overlooking open, shared living areas, two bedrooms and windows at every turn.

Throughout the two floors, wood accents keep the timber aesthetic front and center, although the couple opted for conventional framing. “Although the home is constructed in mostly a standard, conventional manner, there are timbers and beams that provide key

structural components in the framing of the home,” explains Jason. “When designing the home, this was figured in along with decorative timbers to complete the whole manifestation of the timber frame.”

Getting the “full look of a timber frame,” as Kathy calls it was key to her original vision: a bright and airy home with high ceilings and interiors filled with natural light and neutral tones grounded by wood elements, including a bold cedar timber truss at the

below In the primary bathroom, new and old come together in perfect harmony. Across from a vintage tub, the contemporary vanity features open shelving and square sinks that get their modern edge from a concrete finish.



left The owners' suite features plenty of can't-miss architectural details, including a tongue-and-groove ceiling, a sliding barn door and windmill-style fan.

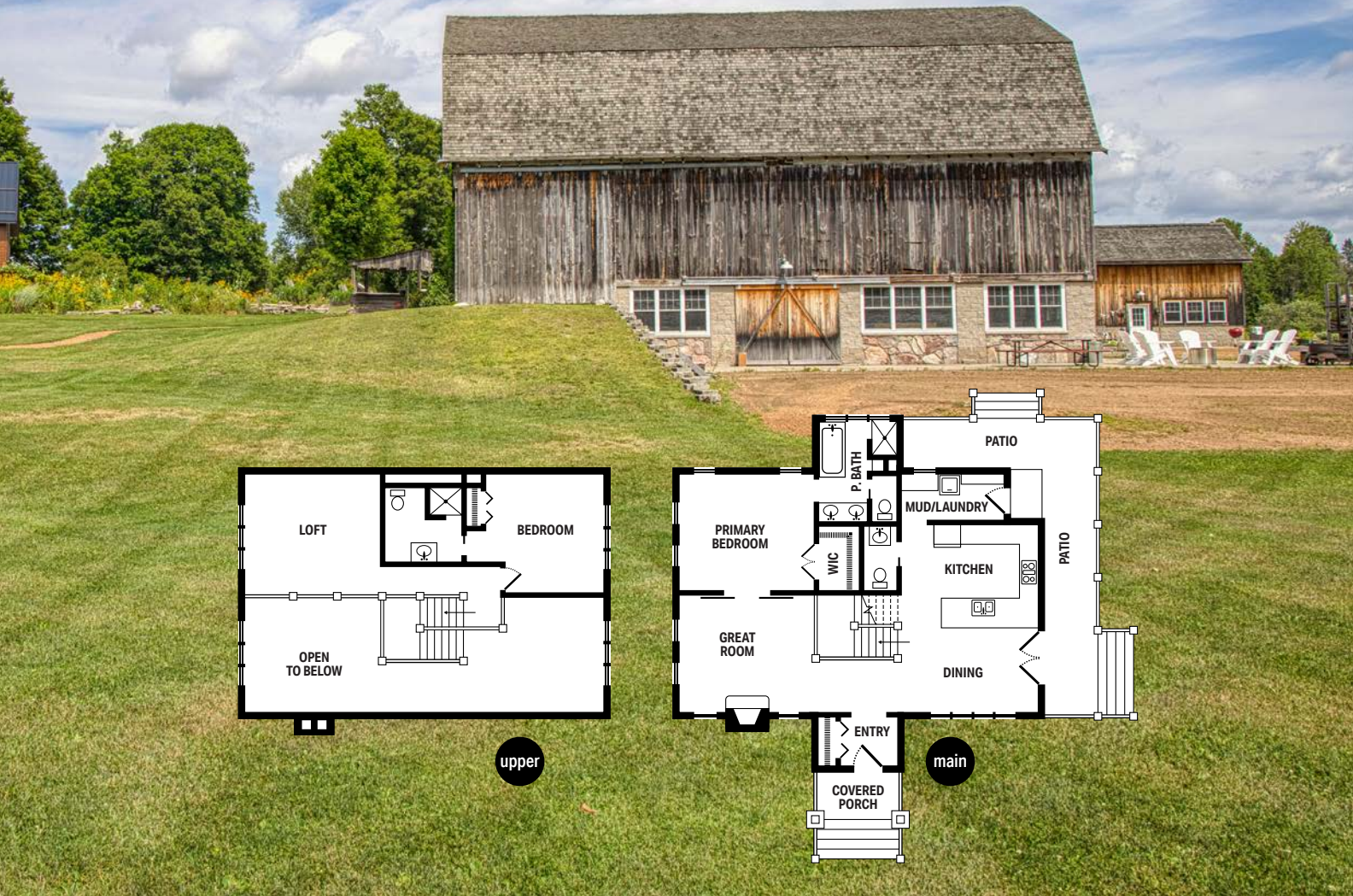
HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE
1,882

BEDROOMS 2 BATHS 2 FULL, 1 HALF

DESIGNER/BUILDER
WISCONSIN LOG HOMES
wisconsinloghomes.com

The original dairy barn, updated with a new foundation, has become a popular wedding venue for friends and family. “Our daughter started the tradition for the first wedding, and now we have had about ten weddings here in the past couple of years,” says Kathy.



entrance, an open-tread staircase and a timber-style roof system. “I wanted a clean, open look that was still inviting,” says Kathy. Stretches of drywall painted cream get a boost of texture from a faux finish, and hand-crafted features bring warmth to the interiors, including a custom cedar mantel and

a live-edge cherry dining table crafted from trees felled from their land.

While the interiors feel fresh, the home’s exterior hearkens back to the old house that rested in the same spot for over 100 years — but with a twist. Engineered-wood shakes that Kathy says “blend into the vernacular,”

a fieldstone veneer chimney and a standing-seam metal roof perfectly suit the setting and ensure the new house will stand strong for another hundred years. “We are blessed that we were able to buy the family farm,” says Kathy. “We hope it continues for generations to come.”