

Warm-toned western hemlock siding is featured on the garage and first floor of the home. The mix of vertical and horizontal lines between the structures, along with cedar shingles on the second floor, creates added interest.

BY DIAN PARKER  
PHOTOS BY JOHN W. HESSON

# IT TAKES A VILLAGE

COLLABORATION BRINGS  
A VISION TO LIFE



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The lakeside guest cabin was thoughtfully designed using timber harvested directly from the property and is where the homeowners lived while the main house was being built.



Creating a dream house can either be a wonderful experience or one that is filled with problems from start to finish. To ensure that the process of building a house stays positive, the homeowners have to hire a top-notch design company as well as an expert construction company. In addition, it helps when the homeowners are flexible and hands-on. A forever home in the Sunapee region of New Hampshire was a dream-filled project from beginning to end.

A former Boston-area couple bought 30 wooded acres fronting a small lake in 2016, looking to build a home to blend into the natural setting. Their vision was a timber-frame house nestled in the woods with glimpses of sunlight glittering off the lake through the trees. After the house site was cleared, a 1,274-square-foot cabin was built to accommodate the couple while the main house was being built.

### Assembling a Dream Team

“Our goal was to create a total environment that was consistent with our love of nature,” the couple says. “And our top priority for selecting a builder and contractors was local, local, local.” Because the homeowners were relocating from the Boston area to the community permanently, they wanted local crafts- and tradespeople who would be their neighbors to be involved in the building of their cabin and house. They found Jay Tucker, president of Old Hampshire Designs in New London, and Dan Benedict of Benedict Brothers Construction in Bradford. “We can’t speak highly enough about their professionalism, knowledge, care, respect, and business experience,” say the homeowners.



Original sketch by Jim Driesch of the new mountain-lake style Timberpeg home.

Surrounded by the warm Douglas fir timber frame, a custom-designed turned wood and steel chandelier hangs from the cathedral ceiling in the great room.







The great room is perfectly suited for gatherings of family and friends. **Right:** Inspired by the homeowner's belief that "nothing in nature is perfectly straight," the twig balusters were a collaborative effort by Dan Benedict of Benedict Brothers Construction and Dave Little of Winnepesaukee Forge.



Designing the house and cabin was a collaboration with Jim Driesch of Timberpeg, Jay Tucker and his son Sam, who was learning CAD software at school, and the homeowners. Together they developed a set of plans required for the building permit. The cabin was built entirely of wood harvested from the property—red and white pine and oak. The trees were milled by WrightWay Custom Sawmilling in Newbury and finished by Kiln Works, LLC in North Haverhill. The resulting wood was used for the interior floors, walls, and ceiling, as well as for the exterior porch railings and posts.

Rick Flint was the project manager on both the cabin and house projects. Planning and timing each element of building the 5,000-square-foot main house was important. The site work began with blasting, which took about four weeks, and installing the septic system. The concrete foundation was poured and allowed to set in three weeks, along with finishing the driveway grading and underground utilities.

## The House Takes Shape

Framing the house took three to four months, after which the wiring and plumbing were installed before the walls and ceiling were closed in. This was when the work was first reviewed by the building inspector. The complete installation of heating, electrical, insulation, cabinetry, and finish work took seven months.

Building the cabin began in June 2017, and the husband and wife moved in nine months later. The building of the house took 13 months, beginning in September 2018. The couple moved into the main house in December 2019 just in time to celebrate Christmas with their large extended family. The homeowners say, "We had a discussion with Jay about whether we would be in the house by Christmas. Jay said no problem and the family booked plane tickets. A couple of months later, meeting that goal didn't look promising because the oak flooring was late to arrive. But three days before Christmas, Jay's crew took away their tools, cleaned from top to bottom, and started moving in our furniture. They put up our 12-foot Christmas tree and even strung the lights. We were able to enjoy our first Christmas in the house. We love these guys!"

## Creating the Perfect Space

The homeowners came with a design in hand but were looking for suggestions. Jim Driesch and the Tuckers proposed flipping the layout by moving the kitchen and main living spaces closer to the garage/mudroom entry side of the home. "In the original design, they would have had to walk down a long hallway, past bedrooms and bathrooms, and through the great room to enter the kitchen on the opposite end of the house," says Jim. The new layout allows easy access to the kitchen, making tasks like unloading groceries easier. It also creates a private, quieter area for the bedrooms and bathrooms.

Custom designed by Crown Point Cabinetry, the kitchen features an antique copper apron-front sink and granite countertops.

Opposite: The loft/office features a custom-crafted maple desk by Rick Wright of WrightWay Custom Sawmilling.



**It takes a village to build a house. It takes many minds in collaboration to bring a vision to fruition.**



The first floor is 2,160 square feet. The Douglas fir, timber-framed house features a great room, a living area that opens into the dining room, and kitchen with a 24-foot cathedral ceiling. “Eighty percent of homeowners prefer an open concept,” Jay says. “This great room layout creates easy flow, especially for parties of 50 to 100 people, and a big family with a dog.” The expansive room has a gas fireplace with stonework created by Ron and Josh Dunlop of Stonehenge Masonry & Stove in Tilton. The large, custom-designed kitchen was by Crown Point Cabinetry in Claremont, with granite countertops by Shaker Hill.

Winding up from the great room is a staircase graced with “twig” balusters of wrought iron, inspired by one of the homeowners. The other half of the couple says, “My husband believes that ‘nothing in nature is perfectly straight,’ so he envisioned the balusters to be slightly curvy. This challenged one of the finish carpenters who is definitely a plumb-and-straight kind of guy (as most carpenters ought to be). Dan Benedict was the mastermind of the gorgeous twig-work railings we have in both the cabin and the house.”

The downstairs area has three bedrooms and a full bathroom. The upstairs loft serves as an office and has a view down to the great room.

The 17x17-foot master bedroom has the feeling of being outside, with sliding glass doors that open out onto a balcony where a hammock swings in the breeze. The bedroom also has a stone gas fireplace and a full bath. The total area of the second floor is 1,680 square feet.

All the fixtures were chosen by the new homeowners, including the custom-designed turned wood and steel chandelier that hangs from the high cathedral ceiling. The collaboration for the wrought-iron railings and the large lighting fixture called “Branches” over the dining table was with Dave Little from Winnepesaukee Forge in Meredith and Peter Bloch from WoodGlow in New London.

It takes a village to build a house. It takes many minds in collaboration to bring a vision to fruition. It takes experience, expertise, and leadership from many craftsmen to make a willing team. **TW**

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#### Local Contractors and Contributors

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(603) 848-6503  
benedictbrothersconstruction.com

**Crown Point Cabinetry**  
462 River Road  
Claremont, NH  
(800) 999-4994  
crown-point.com

**Kiln Works, LLC**  
588 Airport Road  
North Haverhill, NH  
(603) 787-6430  
kilnworks.synthasite.com

**Shaker Hill Granite**  
17 Granite Place  
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**Stonehenge Masonry & Stove**  
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**Winnepesaukee Forge**  
5 Winona Road  
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