

SPECIAL FLOOR PLAN ISSUE

# TIMBER HOMES

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ROOMS



## Dream Home Design

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ADDING ON WITH TIMBERS | TOUR THREE INSPIRING HOMES



# Family Friendly

Building a spacious home on a budget



When Pat Seaman became president and co-owner of Woodhouse, The Timber Frame Company in 2004 he was a timber frame neophyte. He knew they were beautiful of course—his father had built one on New York's Cayuga Lake in 1995, and the rustic elegance of that oak timber frame had served as the backdrop for Pat's wedding to his wife Tracy. But Pat had never lived in a timber frame home himself.

Pat came to Woodhouse as a world-traveling corporate executive looking for a lifestyle change. He had grown up in New York's Finger Lakes region, and longed for a less hectic place to raise his family. Although he had no background in the timber frame business or in construction generally, Pat was eager for the challenges of a new career and the experience of building and living in a new type of home.

Tracy, who enjoyed fixing up old, ranch-style homes, also embraced the change. "The first time I saw a timber

ABOVE: The family's two golden retrievers, Max and Putter, take advantage of the inviting front porch. The home's exterior is low-maintenance HardiPlank siding; shingles in the gables are manufactured to resemble cedar shake. The combination of stone, shake-look shingles and timber gives the home a cottage feel.

RIGHT: Pat and Tracy Seaman with their children, Mikaela, 11, and Connor, 3.



Beside the fireplace on the loft level are two wooden whooping cranes carved by Pat's brother, Jay Seaman. The great room's zero-clearance fireplace is covered in El Dorado stone veneer and features an oak mantel.



LEFT: Oak floors add warmth to the kitchen, with its Shaker-style cherry cabinets from KraftMaid. To the right are stairs designed and installed by Woodhouse with wrought-iron railings handmade by a local craftsman, Travis Altman. BELOW: The Seamans planned their home in the Finger Lakes region for entertaining. A 17-foot-long dining area that opens to the kitchen accommodates the large family dinners that the couple enjoys preparing.



#### Built for a Budget

SmartWood is a line of pre-designed timber framed homes by Woodhouse. Ranging in size from small cabins to larger homes, they are offered in a variety of architectural styles.

"SmartWood was conceived to make timber frames affordable for the average buyer," says Steve Keller, the founder of Woodhouse and a timber framer for almost 30 years. "At Woodhouse, we knew that a lot of our prospective clients were unable to afford a custom timber frame with the quality of a Woodhouse home or other custom designed timber frame. SmartWood addresses that problem."

More than 50 pre-designed SmartWood homes are available. Learn more about them, and see the floor plan for this home, by visiting the Home Tour for the Seamans house at [www.timberhomesillustrated.com](http://www.timberhomesillustrated.com). You can also view this floor plan on page 75.

frame home I was blown away," she says. "I love the diversity, the open floor plans, the way the outside can look any way you want." And while Tracy had admired log homes as a girl, she found timber frames to be "less complicated than log; more elegant and flexible in terms of decorating."

#### Cost Containment

Although Woodhouse primarily builds custom homes with sophisticated timber framing, Pat chose one of the company's pre-designed and budget-friendly SmartWood models to build on his hilltop property overlooking Cayuga Lake. "It was partly a business decision because we wanted to have a SmartWood model closer to our office in Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

And I wanted to go through the process of building this Woodhouse product in order to bring a different skill set to our clients," Pat notes. "But it was also because I loved the simple but lovely framing of these homes, and wanted the chance to build a beautiful place on the lake for my family."

In 2006, Pat took the 3,500-square-foot, three-bedroom MountainView model and modified it by expanding the dining/kitchen area and the covered portion of a back deck, turning the attached garage 90 degrees, and enlarging the second-floor dormers. The home as modified became a new SmartWood model called the LakeView. Pat also finished the home's walkout lower level and built a timber-framed office above the garage, creating nearly 5,000 square feet of

finished space.

The Seamans, who often have dinner guests, find the open layout perfect for entertaining. A 17-foot-long dining area opens to a spacious kitchen with a massive granite-topped island where guests often congregate as Pat cooks everything from Thai to Italian. The great room, with 26-foot ceilings (the home's non-vaulted ceilings measure 8 feet 8 inches) and oversized windows overlooking the lake, is also open to the kitchen. Outside, decking connects the kitchen, dining and great room areas.

To the left of the dining area is a garage connector that houses laundry and mud rooms, a pantry, Tracy's office and entry to the garage and Pat's office above it. The couple's master bedroom suite is on the opposite

wing of the main level. Stairs lead from the great room to the second level, which has a bridge loft, bathroom and two bedrooms for the couple's children, Mikaela, 11, and Connor, 3. A walkout lower level includes a guest suite, home theater, exercise area, billiard room and wine cellar. "We love to eat, play pool and have a glass of wine," Tracy says, laughing.

#### Smart Choices

Like all SmartWood homes, the Seamans' place has timber framing of kiln-dried Southern yellow pine. "The pine is similar in engineering characteristics to Douglas fir, but at about half the cost," Pat notes. "It's also a fast-growth tree so it's ecologically smart." The home has a simple common-rafter system frame rather

Sage green walls are a perfect backdrop for the warm Southern yellow pine timbers of the great room. In the far left is a decorative, antique wood screen that Pat bought when he lived in China. The couple chose Craftsman-style grills for the windows to add flair without interrupting the lake views.



LEFT: Pat's timber-framed office, which the couple added above the garage, is actually Tracy's favorite room. "The wood is just beautiful," she says. "The pitch of the roof, the wood! It would be a great TV room!"  
BELOW: Natural light floods the walkout lower level. The billiard room, often a gathering place during family get-togethers, also features a fireplace. An adjacent wine cellar stores the Seamans' favorite vintages.



than elaborate trusses; ceilings are lined with tongue-and-groove Eastern white pine. "The focus is to keep in budget, to get into a timber home for a lot less money," Pat points out. The home has industry-standard design and materials, including structural insulated panels (SIPs) for the exterior walls, and features mortise-and-tenon joinery in the framing.

As a homeowner building for the first time, Pat says he "has learned a few things." One is that

a standard-size dormer leaves little useable space. By increasing the dormer size in his home, Pat let in more natural light and created floor space large enough to accommodate furniture or built-ins. Another is that it's important to look beyond the electrical schematic that comes standard with models such as the SmartWood. "The models meet code but they are probably the minimum you would want," Pat says. "In our master bathroom we have

WEB EXTRA:  
Look for floor plans for this home on  
page 75. You can also download the plans  
and view bonus photos of this home at  
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ABOVE: Pat chose mahogany decking despite the need to give it a regular power wash and re-oiling. He notes that low-maintenance composite decking is more expensive and he prefers the look of natural wood.  
RIGHT: The home's deck overlooks the lake. "My dad calls our house the tree fort because of its spectacular views," Pat notes.



RIGHT: The pine timbers in the first-floor master bedroom were treated with a birch-white stain, offering an attractive contrast to the warm taupe walls.

BELOW RIGHT: This second-floor bedroom is daughter Mikaela's space. By enlarging the room's dormers from the original design, Pat was able to bring more natural light into the room and increase the amount of usable floor space.

BELOW: Granite tops the cherry cabinets by KraftMaid in Pat and Tracy's master bath. The couple chose travertine for the flooring.



double vanities but only one outlet for Tracy and me to share. Homeowners should go through each room with an electrician while changes are still possible to be sure the lighting and outlets will meet their family's personal needs." Pat also learned how to creatively place ductwork, always a consideration in a timber frame.

The ceiling of a traditional timber frame's first level is also the floor of the second level, leading to the potential for noise to travel easily between the levels. But with padding and thick, wall-to-wall carpeting, Pat has found this not to be an issue. In fact, despite its generous size, the Seaman home is quite cozy. White oak floors not only hold up well beneath the wheels of Connor's tricycle, but also add warmth against the home's autumnal paint colors." I knew the wood would create a warm and cozy feel," Tracy notes. Pat agrees:

"The house fits my family's personality—food, wine, family get-togethers. It's great for an Old World, Tuscan style of living."

The home's quality and good looks belie its budget-friendly roots. "The quality of the wood is pretty incredible," Pat maintains, noting the "virtually clear" grain of the great room's timbers. Tracy says she made no compromises in the basics of her house, and raves about the dramatic timberwork where four valley rafters converge in the peak of the loft. "You can see it from the foyer looking up into the loft. It's a geometric wood design that is just beautiful. We will live in a timber frame for the rest of our lives."

#### Resources

Woodhouse, The Timber Frame Company,  
(800) 227-4311, [www.timberframe1.com](http://www.timberframe1.com)