

*A couple builds a forever home, with
some divine help along the way.*

Living on a Prayer

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The home's walk-out lower level will eventually be finished out as additional living space. For now, it makes quick work of reaching the property's fire pit, hammock and memory garden.



left There are plenty of perches to take in the sights from the home's spacious open-air decks and porches.

right and below The loft, which serves as a home office, offers glimpses of Lake Winnepesaukee and clear views of Gunstock Ski Mountain. Swapping traditional wood spindles along the loft railing for metal sheep fencing served two purposes, according to Lee: "It completely opens up the loft, making it feel more open and airy, and it also pulls out the gray tones from the kitchen cabinetry and the fire-place stone."



Most custom home projects begin the same way: with a wish list and a budget. Aligning wants and needs with the bottom line is usually where the rub comes in; more often than not, something has to give.

There are those rare occasions when the stars not only align, but priorities and pocketbooks do, too. Such was the case with Bob and Lee Kennedy's New Hampshire log home. Before purchasing a lot or vetting a log home company, the couple created a list with 20 must-haves for their forever home. They also set a budget and narrowed their sights on the New England area.

Fast-forward three years: "We got everything on the list," shares Lee. "That absolutely blows us away." And for the kicker: The couple came within \$1,000 of the original budget. But the Kennedys will be the first to tell you that it wasn't all their own doing. "We are a faith-based family and know we had some help," says Bob.

Take, for example, the fact that the couple decided to lock in a kit from Coventry Log Homes in the beginning of 2020 despite not having a property in place. "The Hillside model had everything we wanted," shares Bob, including an open-concept layout, a primary suite on the main level and a dedicated office space in the loft. Though unbe-

knownst to anyone at the time, their unusual (and typically ill-advised) decision to purchase the kit first meant they secured pre-pandemic pricing and avoided the impending sky-rocketing cost of materials. "There was clearly a plan in the process for us," says Bob.

Over the next year, the Kennedys came close to purchasing a couple of lots bordering the one they now own but were stopped in their tracks. "We kept praying for about a year to find a lot," Lee shares. Then, during an overnight visit to the area, they happened to meet a local real estate agent who insisted she had the perfect property for them. A five-acre parcel with winter water views and year-round sight lines to a

local ski range. Turns out, it was a lot they had come across a year earlier and decided against. “The first time around, we didn’t have all the right information, but this time, we knew it was the one,” shares Lee.

Still, they had one concern: Coming from a close-knit neighborhood in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Lee was worried about the solitude that five acres in the mountains with no nearby neighbors would bring. Then, word came from their agent that the neighboring 10-acre lot had sold. “That was my final answer before signing on the dotted line,” shares Lee. Since then, the Kennedys and their neighbors have become fast friends, regularly sharing dinners, hikes and snowshoeing adventures. “You can’t tell me that wasn’t divine intervention,” says Lee.

Soon after their serendipitous property search, the Kennedys broke ground. To be close to the action during construction, they relocated to an RV at a nearby campground, a move that would afford them daily check-ins. During one such site visit, Lee recognized a missed opportunity to add windows to the home’s rear wall, which would open up the loft to water and mountain views. “It was one of only two change orders in the entire project,” shares Bob proudly.

Having a plan and sticking (mostly) to it kept the Kennedys’ project tethered to their budget, but there were a few major cost-saving change-ups that saved the day. They were able to swap a traditional masonry fireplace for an insert with a stone facade, bringing the cost down from \$45,000 to \$17,000 without sacrificing aesthetic or ambiance. In



An old beam removed from the local campground was modified to serve as the home’s fireplace mantel. “It adds to the memories for us, since we had stayed at that campground while building the home,” shares Bob.



above Coated in a soft gray-green (a custom color called “At Ease Soldier” from Sherwin-Williams), the cabinetry makes a statement in the open-concept kitchen. To keep as much wood on display as possible, the couple skipped the backsplash and opted for a waterproof polyurethane finish to the exposed-log walls above the countertops. Leathered granite, an apron-front sink and oil-rubbed bronze pendant lights complete the charming farmhouse look.

addition, a decision to run electricity to the house down the 400-foot driveway via telephone poles, rather than burying the cables underground as originally planned, knocked the bill down from \$18,000 to \$650.

While the couple is convinced much of their building journey included divine design, Richard Titorenko of Coventry Log Homes says Bob deserves at least a little of the credit. “He had his

mind made up that he was going to give Lee what she wanted, and in the end, they were at the very top of their budget but got everything they hoped for,” says Richard. “It was a true testament of love.”

Though move-in day was nearly two years ago, the couple is still in awe of the forever home they’ve dubbed “God’s Blessing.” “We have to pinch ourselves,” says Lee. “We are so blessed.”

HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE
2,100

BEDROOMS 3
BATHS 2.5

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above Kiln-dried, eastern white pine logs, stained a warm honeyed hue, suit the home’s woody surroundings. “It looks like it belongs here,” says Lee.

top A coat closet wasn’t in the plan, so wood pegs to the right of the front door provide a place for Bob, Lee and their guests to hang their jackets. The dining room table pays homage to the couple’s former residence in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, while the hutch is a family heirloom from Lee’s mother.

LEE AND BOB'S
special spaces



1



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3



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1 Wicker sofas and swivel chairs, a raised bar, a dining set and rocker all make their invitation for the Kennedys to linger over mountain views. "One of our favorite things is to sit and listen to the loons on the lake," says Lee. "The sunsets are spectacular." 2 A laid-back mix of furnishings brings warmth to the primary bedroom, while plenty of windows usher in light. An armchair with a coordinating ottoman creates extra resting space. 3 A soaker tub (and separate shower) were on the couple's must-have list from the start. The white tub, gray cabinetry and light-toned granite countertops keep the primary bathroom feeling fresh. 4 A pair of twin beds in one of the home's two guest rooms accommodate the couple's grandchildren during visits. 5 Squeezing a powder room and combined mudroom and laundry space into a nook off the kitchen required some careful planning to keep the plumbing in code. "Richard called and said, 'You're going to love me. I cut off 3 feet of the powder room and moved the wall 3 inches into the kitchen,'" says Lee. A pocket door and stackable washer/dryer unit are space-savvy additions.



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