



# going green with your log home dream

BY DENNIS ANDERSON

When constructing a log home in today's marketplace, we are faced with making hard choices with regard to the size and scope of the home we would like to build and trying to implement cutting-edge green technologies. As a log home distributor and general contractor, I often find myself challenged being green and competitive at the same time. No matter what type of home my clients have in mind, it is often my job to break the news that "going green" is traditionally not cheap...but not always.

Log homes are the epitome of sustainability. They are renewable, biodegradable, recyclable, energy efficient and beautiful. What would you say if I told you we could offset the price of higher quality upgrades (such as in-floor radiant heat, sprayed foam ceiling insulation), by simply choosing an alternative log species for your

walls? Let me explain. As Coloradans, we are dealing with a serious pine beetle infestation killing older growth lodgepole pine forests throughout our state. As a homebuilder, I am attempting to turn this ecological challenge into a new breath of life for the sustainable log home market.

One common misconception that I run into with my clients regarding beetle-kill lumber is that the beetles stay in the logs or that the beetles hurt the structural quality of the trees. The truth is that as long as the tree is promptly harvested, its structural integrity remains intact. Once the bark is removed, all signs of the beetle are eradicated, leaving a spectacular log with a signature blue streak that gives real character to the grain.

When using dry standing dead local logs, we are also greatly reducing the amount of fuels used in processing and transportation. From an economic standpoint, my clients save approximately 50% on a locally harvested log package versus purchasing their logs out of state or out of the country. Another advantage that I have found in using beetle-kill timber is that it has created job growth in economically challenged areas of our state.

Again, no matter which type of log home

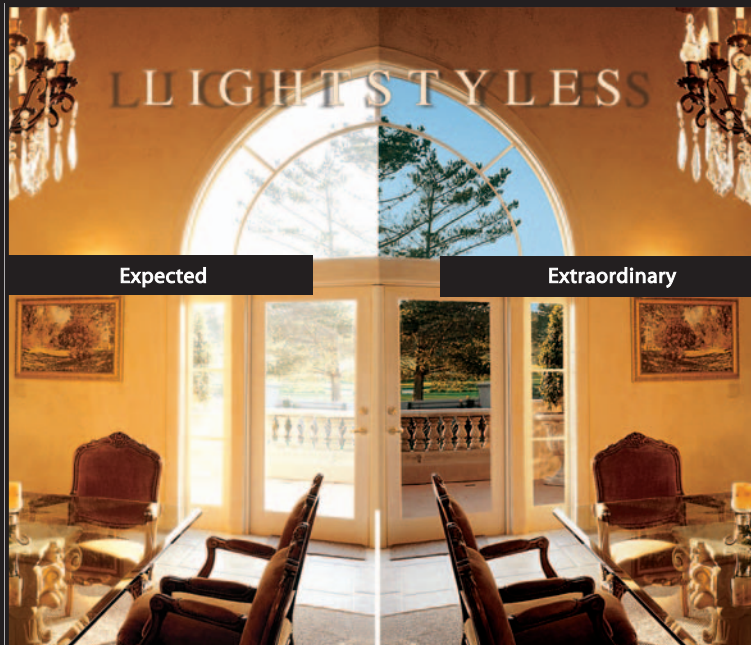
you build, the bottom line is that 90% of the opportunities for building a green home come in the first 10% of your project's design phase. Keeping this in mind, it is important to avoid structural over-design and optimize the orientation of your home to maximize passive solar potential. You can also take full advantage of green designs emphasizing open layouts, natural light and renewable energy systems.

In conclusion, if the bottom line is your top priority, carefully consider the option of using local logs. Although some log packages will come with additional materials such as windows, roofing and cabinets, etc., it is usually cheaper to purchase these items locally. You will benefit with lower prices, better selections and a higher quality product.



As the client, your most important goal is to be informed. As a general contractor, it is my job to help you pick products that meet your green building needs and budget and offer a good rate of return for your investment. By working together, we can make your log home dream a reality. Let's create a beautiful heirloom that will stand the test of time. If not now, when?

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