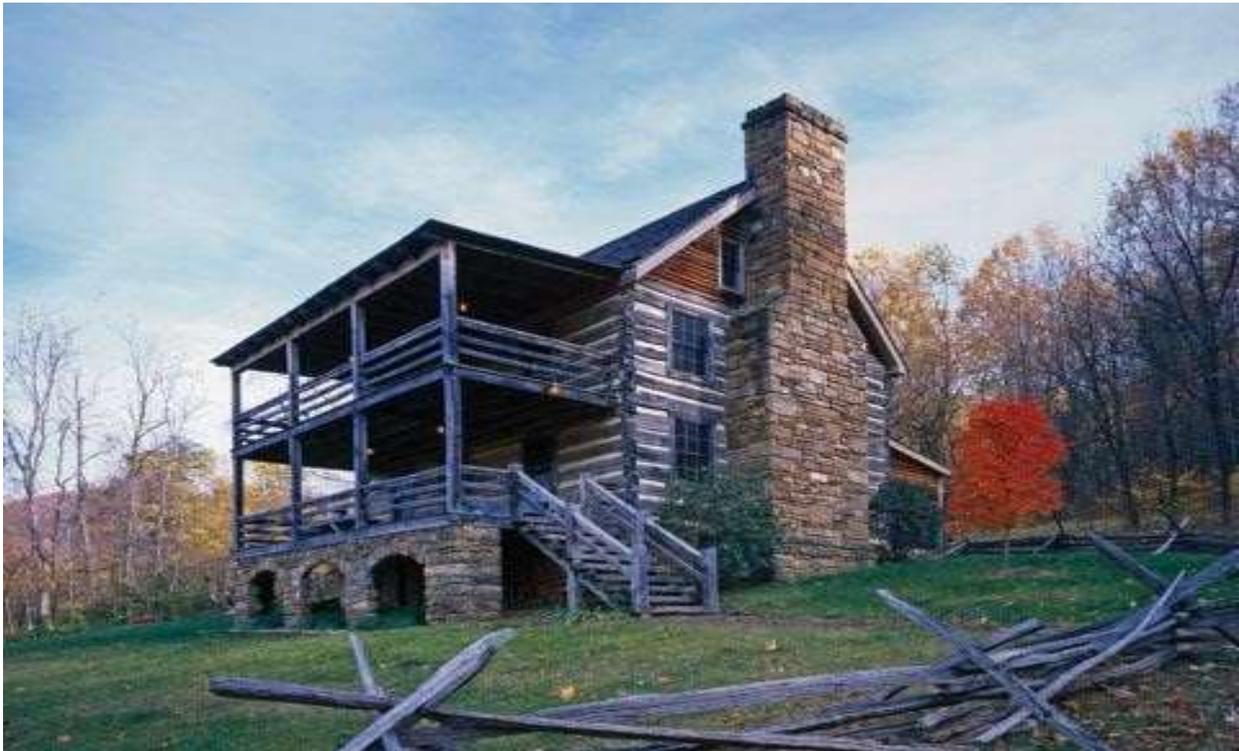


LOG CABIN *homes* MAGAZINE

Forever Classic

Vintage log homes can teach you a lot about creating a legacy home that will outlive today's fads and decorating trends. by Esther & Franklin Schmidt/Log Cabin Homes Magazine



Probably more than any other style of house, a log cabin conjures up a sense of homestead and history, a place in which family can live over decades and generations. Logs, with their organic feeling, exude a sense of a handmade construction and are a huge draw for people who want a long-lasting home.

These days, when people decide to build a log home, either as a primary or secondary residence, it is most likely the feeling of timelessness that draws them and resonates.

Not all log construction is equal. Some log homes look dated five years after they are built, but this can be avoided. For those who want to create an heirloom home, there are some ways to ensure that the house will be as classic 20 years down the road and beyond as it is the day it is completed.

One way to get some ideas for building a classic log home is to visit a historic log museum house, if there is one nearby, or try to find one online with pictures. Look at the details of construction and see which elements let you know that this house is indeed old.

Among the details you will probably find are the classically historic materials used in all aspects of construction. It is unlikely you will see an asphalt shingle roof; more likely it will be wood shingles or metal.

To further translate these elements to your own home, if you can swing the cost, use milled flooring, and if it's repurposed from a historic or vintage house, so much the better. Laminate can be practical, but it doesn't look timeless. Wall-to-wall carpet is comfortable underfoot, but definitely not a material for the ages.



As for windows, six over six double-hung windows afford an historic feeling. All wood, inside and out, can be a maintenance chore with their need for staining every few years, but that's the way the old cabins looked.

Any stone work such as hearths and fireplaces will really look classic if you use whole stone and rock instead of the cultured materials now so often installed to reduce costs of masonry. To be fair, cultured products have improved greatly, but, for the cabin visionary, it's just not the same as the real deal.

Because so many early cabins consisted of just a cooking and sitting area, with a sleeping loft above, to make today's log home kitchens even vaguely reminiscent of early log houses—and have that look that avoids being faddish—is going to present a bit of a challenge. However, it can be accomplished with a careful choice of materials. Right now, nothing is hotter than stainless steel appliances and granite countertops. That wasn't the case 20 years ago, and it well may not be the case 20 years from now. In fact, you're not likely to find any shiny materials in a vintage log home. There are all kinds of other materials from which appliances are fashioned and it would be aesthetically more appropriate to choose one of those instead. Although, you could now install and later switch out

stainless and granite, it will be easier and far less costly to go with more timeless appliances and use wooden or tile countertops right from the get-go.

To add a classic feeling to a new log kitchen, try mixing some antique cupboards with other cabinetry. Glass-fronted upper cabinets also have a slightly historic feel. If you don't go the antique route, to help avoid the matched set look, paint the cabinets a different color than the center island. Or, try replacing that requisite island with a simple farm table.

If you include some sheet-rocked walls within the interior of the house and you want a bit of color, paint the walls, don't wallpaper them. Nothing dates a house like out-of-style wallpaper and you can always repaint. In other areas of the house, try utilizing antique and vintage interior doors. Readily available at architectural remnant stores, they



will add an heirloom feeling and are much more attractive and less expensive than new builder's grade doors from big lot stores.

The bottom line is that this is still a home, and if you have dreams of your children, grandchildren, and beyond enjoying it, it has to be comfortable and livable, for today and in the future. Although most of us want some trendy comforts, try to choose things that are easily removable. It would be better to put the giant flat screen TV on a table, standing as its own console, or set into a closeable cabinet instead of mounting it into and above the fireplace mantle as a permanent fixture.

There is a beautiful balance between traditional and contemporary. With some careful choices, you can have both in a log home built for the ages.

