

Country's Best Cabins

all play,
no work

A lakeside cabin that's light
on maintenance but big on style

StoneMill
Log & Timber Homes

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Designed to take advantage of the views of Lake Viking, this home's master bedroom opens up to a private screened-in porch. Lower-level patios, decks and a wall of uninterrupted windows in the main living area also were included to showcase the surrounding landscape.



Ask Shawn Polowniak exactly when he knew that he wanted to one day build a cabin for his family, and he'll confess that, like many cabin owners, it's been a lifelong dream.

"My grandparents built a log cabin when my mom was a child, and I grew up visiting their home every summer," Shawn explains. "When my grandparents passed away a few years back, I promised my mom that I would build a cabin so that our family could continue to enjoy that lifestyle we'd grown to love. But truthfully, I always knew that I'd build my own log cabin one day."

To achieve this dream, Shawn and his wife, Rebecca, planned a weeklong road trip to visit a number of different log-home providers. The last stop: StoneMill Log & Timber Homes in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"We were really anticipating our visit with StoneMill because of their Appalachian-style logs," explains Shawn. "Upon arrival, we quickly realized they

The home features Appalachian-style flat logs with dovetail corners and 4-inch chink joints. The logs are cut up to 40 feet long, a design feature that eliminates leaks in the log system and cuts down on long-term maintenance.

were the right company for us. The entire team was really passionate about our project and wanted to work together to build exactly the kind of second home that we had envisioned."

Custom Creation

That vision was a casual cabin with an open plan, perfect for hosting friends and family at their lakeside property



The wood flooring, showcased in the great room, is reclaimed oak from grain mills located throughout the Midwest. "All of the floor boards average between 100 and 125 years in age," says homeowner Shawn Polowniak. "I love the patina, with the original nail and saw marks. It gives the floors so much character and history."



Shawn hand-picked all the lumber for the cabinetry and built it himself, including the large kitchen island, which is topped with a large open slab of granite. "Kitchens are always a communal space, so we wanted to build an island that people could gather around," he explains. "On the ends of the island, there are shelves for cups and glassware. It's also positioned close to the kitchen table, so the kids can sit and eat at the bar without feeling like they're too far from the action."

in Gallatin, Missouri. It was the home's stunning views of Lake Viking that led the Polowniaks to StoneMill's Elk River II plan, but they knew that they wanted to change the original layout.

"They were looking to take advantage of the property's surrounding landscapes, and the Elk River II, with its uninterrupted wall of windows in the great room, was a great starting point," explains Mathew Sterchi, vice president of sales and marketing at StoneMill. "By positioning the home the right way on the property, the lakeside portion of the plan more than accommodated the views they wanted to capture."

The wall of windows aside, there were elements that the Polowniaks really liked, but there also were things that they really wanted to change, Shawn explains. From a design perspective, Shawn and Rebecca wanted the house to feel very open, given that the cabin was to be a very social place to frequently entertain friends and family. To achieve this feel, they opted for a wide-open kitchen space with a large island that flows into the airy great room and overhead loft, which highlights the vaulted timber-frame roof system. To further boost the home's casual ambience, Shawn and Rebecca located their master bedroom right off the living room — it even shares a see-through fireplace with the main living space — so their guests would feel like they were welcome and connected to the homeowners at all times. This design statement emphasizes that privacy isn't a top priority in this second-home retreat; togetherness is.

The biggest change to the plan, though, was on the entry, the log provider recalls: "Rather than having the staircase situated in the foyer per the original design, they wanted to incorporate a separate bump-out off the entry to accommodate the staircase. By doing this, the foyer became more spa-



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Ply Gem's stone veneer faces the home's dual-sided interior fireplace. ■ When Rebecca's parents dug a pond in their back yard, they had to take out a few trees, so Shawn used one of the root balls to make a unique base for their bathroom sink. "I took a chainsaw, cut out the root ball and stripped the bark," explains Shawn. "After cutting out a channel for the plumbing, it made a great base for the countertop." ■ To create the bench in the front entryway, Shawn salvaged beams from an 1800s rail-car storage facility. The special treatments on the cabin's drywall sections add texture on the flatter surfaces. ■ Even though the kitchen and dining areas are in a separate wing of the house, their accessibility and openness to the living room create a seamless design. ■ Shawn opted for brick-veneer flooring woven together in a running-bond pattern in the kitchen and dining room. ■ The low-maintenance materials used in and around the cabin allow the homeowners to enjoy the outdoor activities provided by its lakefront access.



Two bedrooms, one for guests and one for the kids, flank the upper level of the home, with an open loft in between. To add visual interest to the guest bedroom, as well as texture to the logs, the Polowniaks incorporated barn siding on the walls.

Located directly off the great room and open kitchen area, the cabin's master bedroom was intentionally positioned close to the home's main gathering spaces to create a casual, welcoming atmosphere in the home.



cious and more of an entry focal point with exposed beams overhead, which set the tone for the rest of the house. The staircase bump-out was also designed to provide added curb appeal in the front of their home."

Low-Maintenance Living

Like the floor plan, the Polowniaks also had strong opinions about how they wanted their second home to live in the years to come.

"Because the house is sometimes unattended for weeks at a time, we needed it to be really easy to shut down and reopen," explains Shawn.

To do that, Shawn worked with Ply Gem, a building products manufacturer, to finish out the home with low-maintenance materials.

The aluminum-clad wood windows require virtually no maintenance and are finished in a dark bronze shade to match the logs. On the gable ends and dormers, the Polowniaks opted for shake vinyl siding, which will never have to be painted, stained or maintained. A light, sturdy stone veneer was also used for all the columns, supports and skirts around the house. Shawn also went so far as to put leaf-relief gutters on the home so they wouldn't get clogged

and require cleaning. Even the logs, which are cut at an angle to allow water to shed away from the wall and weather beautifully, fit into the Polowniaks' low-maintenance requirements.

As Shawn explains, mixing the rustic logs with efficient, low-maintenance elements really made for an easy home that encourages rest and relaxation — not upkeep. "We joke that we killed ourselves building this home, and we'll probably never build another one again," he says with a laugh. "This cabin is truly our passion, and I hope it's our house for the rest of our lives, but now we want to just enjoy it."



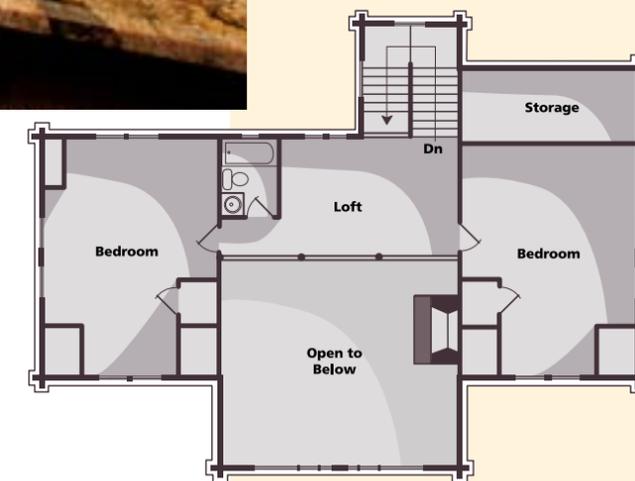
RESOURCES

- Square footage:** 2,530
- Bathrooms:** 3
- Bedrooms:** 2.5
- Builder/general contractor:** Pride Built Homes (913-207-6191; pridebuilt.homeskc.com)
- Cabinets:** walnut (built by homeowner)
- Chinking; sealants; stain:** Sashco (800-767-5656; sashco.com/log)
- Countertops:** reclaimed oak barn beams (built by homeowner)
- Designer; log provider:** StoneMill Log & Timber Homes (800-438-8274; stonemill.com)
- Doors; siding; stone veneer; windows:** Ply Gem (888-975-9436; plygem.com)
- Flooring:** brick veneer; reclaimed oak
- Front doors:** reclaimed oak barnwood (built by homeowner)
- Knobs/hardware:** Lowe's (800-445-6937; lowes.com)
- Landscape rock work:** Stonescapes (816-244-6043)
- Mantels:** reclaimed walnut barn beams (built by homeowner)
- Masonry installation:** Elite Exteriors (913-661-7113; eliteexteriorskc.com)
- Roofing:** Tamko – 50-year rustic hickory (800-641-4691; tamko.com)

Shawn made all the cabin's countertops from reclaimed oak beams salvaged from old barns. The countertops are 4 inches thick, and were planed and refinished before installation.



Main Level



Upper Level