



The home near Oregon's Mount Hood is built of hand-hewn Douglas fir logs, 12 to 18 inches thick. The oversized attached garage is conveniently situated at a right angle to the main home and offers extra storage space. Manufactured stone applied to the foundation grounds the home in a natural setting.

# SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

A STORYBOOK HOME HIGHLIGHTS AN OREGON COUPLE'S RETIREMENT DREAM



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When Robert and Kay Baker began contemplating retirement, they decided it would be best to relocate to a new area while they still had at least five years of employment ahead of them to make meeting people there easier. Then they had to find the right location. “Robert had been on a bike ride down the Washington and Oregon coastline and had fallen in love with the area,” Kay recalls. “We were looking for an adventure, and Oregon seemed the right place for the next chapter of our lives.”

Kay accepted a position as superintendent of schools in Salem, Oregon, and the Bakers headed west. Once they settled in, they occasionally spoke of finding a weekend vacation home where Kay could escape the pressures of her job. “I knew Robert was interested in log homes, but I didn’t realize how serious he was,” she says. “We had been driving toward Mount Hood and saw a log-home-for-sale sign and decided to check it out.”

During their tour, Kay drifted to the porch and sat in the swing. As Robert watched her, he knew this was the ideal weekend retreat for her to unwind. “Sitting on that porch swing and hearing the sounds of the river, I had the experience of listening to my inner self. I was so relaxed,” Kay says. “We spent the next four years at our log home retreat on the very peaceful Zigzag River.”

As Kay began planning her own retirement, the Bakers knew that as much as they loved their log home, it wouldn’t be suitable as a permanent place for their remaining years. They began looking for land with river frontage and found a 1-acre lot on the Sandy River.



After researching log-home companies, the Bakers selected Treehouse Log Homes because they liked dealing with a Northwest company. Then they hired KLM Construction as their general contractor because it had experience building for Treehouse Log Homes.

To plan the home, they took ideas compiled from log-home magazines to Treehouse’s design team. Their primary considerations were a main-level master bedroom suite and space for their four children to visit with their families but not a lot of rooms that would have to be closed off when not in use.

The 1,700-square-foot main level opens into a foyer leading to the living room, dining room



**ABOVE:** Monark stationary glass windows are set between the hand-hewn Douglas fir logs for a marvelous view of the Sandy River and surrounding forest. Doug Sturgeon crafted the hickory entertainment center to match the kitchen cabinets, giving a sense of continuity in the spaces that make up the great room.

**LEFT:** The forked character log in the entry foyer goes by the name “schoolmarm tree”—a label that thrills Kay, who spent 37 years as an educator. The open staircase features Douglas fir half-log treads and braided runners. The pew is from the church that Kay’s parents attended.



Robert and Kay designed the kitchen with a special place to hang “Buford”—a metal, salmon-shaped pot rack forged by Michael Plowman of Colton Forge in Colton, Oregon. No. 3-grade hickory flooring in varied widths and staggered lengths contributes to the character of the main level, while the No. 1-grade select hickory cabinets add elegance. Part of the homeowners’ birdhouse collection perches atop the upper cabinets.



and kitchen. A pantry and full bath are situated between the kitchen and the extended two-car garage. A bonus room over the garage provides additional storage capacity. To the right of the great room is the master bedroom suite; to the left is what Kay calls the multipurpose room, complete with a Murphy bed, computer, sewing machine and table for her projects.

The 300-square foot open loft is furnished with a bed, Robert’s desk, a television and a long-armed quilting machine. This level also includes a separate bath and two large storage closets. On the lower level, the 7-foot crawl space opens by a side door to the river-facing back lawn and

houses a wine cellar and the mechanical systems.

Kay and Robert took an eclectic approach to decorating. Although they brought some furniture with them, they purchased mostly new pieces with the goal of creating a residence that was comfortable and homey but not, Kay notes, “too loggy.” She began making new quilts to add a personal touch. The couple also incorporated their birdhouse collection, which inspired them to name their new home “Baker’s Bird House.”

Since retiring, Robert volunteers with the National Forest Service and devotes time to



**RIGHT:** The extended roof overhang on the river side allows the Bakers to walk under cover from the conversation deck to the entertainment deck. Pre-engineered panels give the roof an R-value of 41.9. The homeowners opted to re-forest their property with native trees, shrubs and ferns.



**LEFT:** When not in use, the dining table leaves slide out of sight on either end of the table—an ideal feature in a home with minimal storage. Lodgepole pine staircase railings cross the front of the loft.

landscaping the property. He repositioned many of the large ferns that had been moved during excavation and added trees and shrubs.

When Robert and Kay began this journey, they were looking for adventure. As a designated wild and scenic river, the Sandy has provided them with more excitement than they anticipated. During the three years they have owned the property, the river has changed course several times—often resulting in the water coming very close to their home. “We are committed to being river friendly but property protective,” Robert says. “To achieve this goal, we have hired an engineer to help us reinforce the natural log jams upstream and construct stone veins on our property. These veins are built of stacked boulders that will absorb the power of the river and push that power back into the middle, thereby protecting the bank from erosion.”

Although the Sandy has flooded many times since the area became developed, Robert and Kay are undaunted in their pursuit of a peaceful lifestyle at their new home. The Zigzag





**ABOVE:** Kay and Robert purchased the blue pine side table at a log-home show. They carried the blue-pine theme to the mantel on the wood-burning fireplace, featuring manufactured Rogue River stone with six real rocks from the Sandy River. The andirons were forged by Michael Plowman.

**OPPOSITE:** Guests at "Baker's Bird House" can sit on the front porch and shed their boots at an antique school desk Kay rescued from her grandparents' barn. The Douglas fir truss and extended rafter beams preview the home's hand-hewn log construction. Forest green vinyl-clad Lindal true-light divided windows match the standing-seam metal roof.

Mountains on the road side and Humpback Mountain on the river side contribute to an almost idyllic climate. At 1,500 feet elevation, their property is right at the snow line. "In the summer, the temperature varies between 40 and 72 degrees," Robert notes. "In the winter, we usually have two or three heavy snows that occur around the Christmas season. This just adds to the ambience and serenity."

While the Bakers rely on their wood-burning fireplace to provide most of the heat for the





To see more photos and a floor plan of this home, visit [www.loghomesnetwork.com/SentimentalJourney](http://www.loghomesnetwork.com/SentimentalJourney)

**LEFT:** The cedar patio table and chairs were a present to Kay from Robert on their first Mother's Day in their new home. Robert loves to sit on the entertainment deck and savor the sights and sounds of the nearby Sandy River.

**BELOW:** Robert designed and constructed the wall storage unit using 4-inch diameter perforated drainpipe in 11-inch lengths. Their electrician made the holder for the magnum wine bottle with the bottom cutout to allow for an electrical socket to light the wine cellar. Pine tongue-and-groove ceiling and concrete walls help maintain the necessary constant temperature for wine storage.

blown across the roads.”

This strong sense of community makes the Bakers glad they decided to get to know people before retiring to their new home. They feel fortunate to have remained active and involved and agree their new life has been more of an adventure than they reckoned. And their log home has made the journey even more rewarding. **LHI**



great room and the loft, they installed electric heat for the master bedroom and multipurpose room. Since it is not uncommon to lose power for several days during storms, they installed a gas generator for backup. “These storms are great for building camaraderie among the neighbors,” Kay says. “Because only seven of the 23 homeowners in our development are permanent residents, many of the homes don’t have an emergency generator. Thus, those without power gravitate to our house, where we put on a pot of soup. We delight in retelling stories of how neighbors band together to fix the potholes on our one-lane logging road that provides us access from the main highway and team up to clear the trees that have

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