

Country's Best

Log Homes

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bed & bath
spectacular!

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to make over your master suite

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- 10 overlooked **cabin considerations**
- cheap and easy decorating tips

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NEW cabin contest! see p. 19

Can't build right now? Convert your home to a log home

For some readers, the dream log home is very close: They've lined up financing, are awaiting delivery of a kit, or have broken ground on construction.

For others, the dream is a little further away. A weakened economy with falling existing home prices, a credit crunch, potential income instability, and high land prices has caused some to postpone their plans until it becomes more practical to build.

The log lifestyle doesn't have to be dependent on a new home, however. With today's innovations, a huge variety of material options are available. Log siding, log accents and veneered siding can give you the log look at a fraction of the cost.

You will have to compromise on authenticity, and for purists, just knowing that it is not a real log home is an issue. It's like wearing cubic zirconium earrings. For some this is an affordable alternative.

I'm not trying to promote log siding instead of a real log home. Siding is a possible choice for people who may be

years away from affording a log home or for those who like their current home or site and want to keep the log home dream alive. Your dream home shouldn't have to die when the next best thing may be a more affordable and attainable compromise.

In the last 30+ years, log siding, veneer logs, laminated logs, cement logs, and even vinyl log siding have made their way into the marketplace and the industry is continuing to improve their product and pricing.

For example, a basic three-bedroom ranch can cost \$12,000-\$16,000 to cover in 2x6-inch red cedar log siding, according to Modulog Solid Cedar Siding Company of Portland, Oregon. This is due to the fact the log itself is just 25% of a full log (and the company can get four "sides" from one log) and is lighter to transport, cutting down on shipping costs.

"In our business, we have seen an increase in sales where our product is used more for remodeling than in new construction," says Ron Berge, president of Modulog. "About 75% of our

Building Block
 Imitation log siding sources
Modulog: www.modulog.com, 800-537-8606
E-log: www.e-log siding.com, 877-913-5647



sales are for remodelers and 25% is new construction. Of that 75%, about 40% is used on manufactured housing."

Berge says their niche is for people who like the affordability of the siding, particularly during the remodeling phase. "We find that many of our customers are past that time in their lives where they want to build a new home, but still want the look of log," he says. "They may be putting in new windows and are looking at siding and are excited to find our product."

Modulog is an applied cedar siding shaped to look like a half-log. The log ends are even milled to look like a real log when creating the corner notching. This is a huge improvement over products offered during the late 1990s, when older or cheaper log sidings didn't have this detail and can be spotted as a tacky



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MODULOG

Modulog offers a complete how-to handbook for the step-by-step log siding process. Made of insect-resistant cedar, Modulog features the butt-and-pass corner style for an authentic log home look.

Lightweight and energy efficient, E-Logs (all photos on this page) are made with a styrofoam core covered with a hardwood laminate for a real log look. E-log is currently developing a saddle-notch corner to further enhance the authentic log look. The siding can also be used on the interior to bring the rustic look into a living room, bedroom, specialty room, or den.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF E-LOG



BEFORE

AFTER

“fake” log home a mile away.

“We also see many commercial projects,” adds Berge, “where businesses want a rustic motif and can easily apply our product to the exterior of their business and draw lots of attention. It even can be applied to mobile home.”

“Here in the northwest section of Michigan, buildable lake and vacation lots are scarce,” says Don Neill, director of marketing at E-log, a wood veneer company from Charlevoix, Michigan. “In order to obtain a great location, you may have to purchase an existing home and remodel to your tastes.”

The E-log is a lightweight EPF foam product cut into a half log shape, applied to a tongue-and-groove backing, and covered with a thick veneer hardwood laminate. Not only does it provide an R-10 insulation value, it’s a great sound absorber and helps keep the home comfortable and quiet.

And if being eco-friendly is a priority for you, there is nothing greener than recycling an older home and making it more energy efficient. “The E-log is easier to maintain than real logs,” says Neill. “We clear-coat prime the wood veneer at the factory with Perma-Chink products and then finish the stain on site. The lack of settling, cracking and warping keeps maintenance costs to a minimum.”

The difference in cost is dramatic, but cannot be easily compared in dollars and cents. Each area of the country, each species of wood, the size of siding or log and added materials needed to complete the job all must be compared properly and must be done on an individual basis.

Ronda Mollica is associate editor for *Country's Best Log Homes, Custom Wood Homes, and Cozy Cabins*. She is a former realtor in her home state of Wisconsin.



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