

INSPIRATION REPORT

A Timber Framing Magazine

Spring 2023



WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN **A TIMBER FRAME HOME PLAN?**

Soothing Frank Lloyd Wright Style Back Patio Transformation

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The Best Tip to Rise and Seize the Day?

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Who Builds a Straw Bale House?!

pg. 9

Log Cabins are Charming - But You Must Know the Cons!

pg. 9

by
Bert Sarkkinen

PART 1

Figure 1

Just like this image, your home will be built from your wish list. To see a brainstorm list of other timber frame homeowners have chosen, go to arrowtimber.com/wishlist or scan QR.

QR Code: arrowtimber.com/wishlist

Just like this image, your home will be built from your wish list. To see a brainstorm list of other timber frame homeowners have chosen, go to arrowtimber.com/wishlist or scan OR.



features that will collectively define your home, **inspiration can quickly turn into confusion**. However, now that your wheels are turning, we ask you to focus on the big picture in the next section. The Arrow Timber Framing (ATF) decision juggling act starts with significant decisions to help you gain clarity on "What YOU Should Look for in Your Timber Frame Home!"

PART 2

HOW TO "JUGGLE" THE ATF DECISION BALLS

In the past, we have had fun cautioning readers to avoid confusing Arrow Timber Framing (ATF) with the other bigger and better-known behemoth, ATF (Alcohol Tobacco Firearms.) Please humor my extended use of this memorable acronym. Now put on your clown nose and prepare to "juggle" the following home design "balls": **Activities, Tone, and Finance**.



Figure 2
Activities, Tone, and Finance:
The three factors to juggle for
all your building decisions.

As you make your home design and building decisions, you'll "juggle" these "balls" to find balance. The **Activities** "ball" includes flexibility, function, and use, which can also include location if privacy, horse riding, bird watching, living next to water/view, etc., is high on your wish list. Begin by estimating the space required for bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and living rooms. Also, consider accommodations that might be required for entertaining, relaxation, work/study, hobbies/recreation, and storage. As you do this, ideas for

pleasurable, convenient living will come to mind, and you should write these down as they will help with floor plan development.

The **Tone** "ball" refers to how your home looks, feels, and lives - an overall personality if you will. Most people can juggle the **Activities** and **Finance** "balls" reasonably well but struggle to keep the **Tone** "ball" in the air. Why? Sometimes I wonder if it has to do with the conflict between who we are and who we want to become. In other words, our style is an expression of who we are, but most of us aspire to change in some way. So, our thinking and perception of what we want are clouded. Our vocabulary and ability to express homestyle are generally underdeveloped, and we are talking about an ambiguous thing - a tone, a feeling, a certain look. This isn't exactly what you could call a mathematical equation with straightforward input and output.

Some people adopt a style catchphrase like "Modern Craftsman" or "Rustic Farmhouse" to assist in juggling the **Tone** "ball". That is one of the tactics we recommend for homeowners in our book, ["The Art of Hybrid Timber](#)

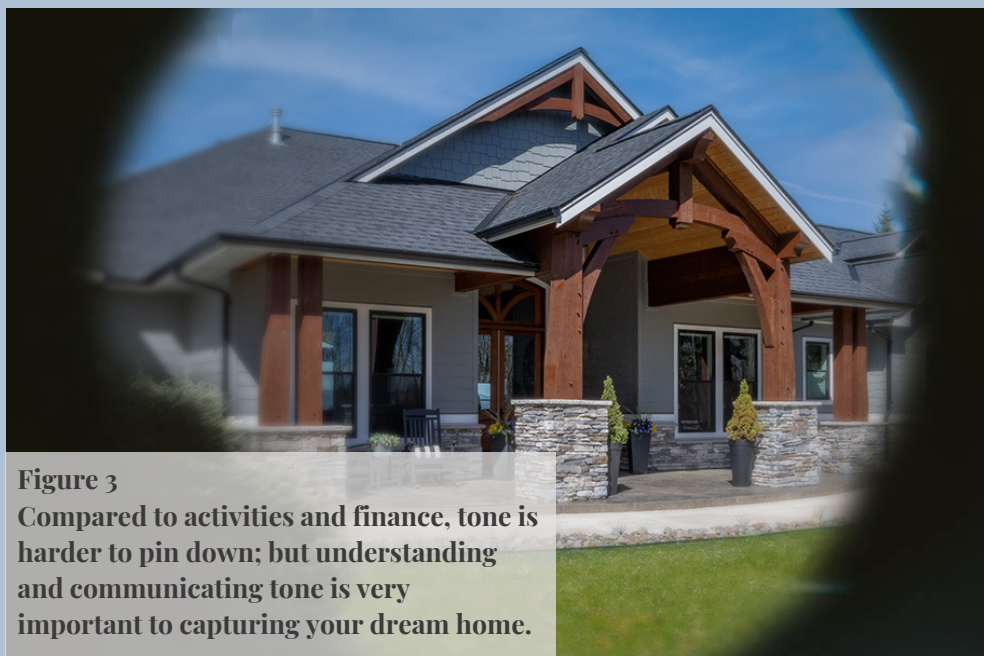


Figure 3
Compared to activities and finance, tone is harder to pin down; but understanding and communicating tone is very important to capturing your dream home.

Framing." (Chapters 1-5 are dedicated to helping homeowners establish the **Tone** and Vision for their project.) Another tip from the book is to create a Decision Compass. You can do this by distilling your goal description - what you are trying to accomplish - down to 4-7 words. Just for the record, **Tone** is more than just style. It also includes attitude and how we go about things - our strategy, tactics, and who we choose to hire have far-reaching implications.

Tone is soft and squishy, and it is hard to know if one is making a mistake or not! Therefore, it should not be surprising that this ball receives so little attention and is hard to juggle. The best quick-start advice I could give someone to juggle the **Tone** "ball" would be to write down five words that describe the feeling and/or look they want to capture. Next, write down why this is important to them. Then describe five characteristics of people they would like on their team. None of the descriptive words above should have anything to do with

Figure 5
This biggest driver affecting project budget is overall square footage of the home.



money or budget because that is our next "ball" to juggle!

Finances are self-explanatory, but it is important to remember that everyone has constraints. If not actual financial restraints, then emotional spending limits. To obtain a sense of this, chat with local builders and realtors about square-foot building cost ranges. Then, extrapolate your projected cost per square foot by the amount of room you need to accommodate **Activities** in your house. Of course, the statistics are sloppy at this stage, but you've begun to define what YOU should seek for in a Timber Frame Home Plan.

PART 3

THE DECISION JUGGLING NEVER STOPS!

But don't take off your clown nose yet! You still have design work, hiring decisions, and the actual building. You will juggle these "balls", from A to Z, for all your choices. Even a small decision for a storage room light fixture gets a quick juggle before it is final. It will not have a lot of emphasis on **Tone** and style. As long as it gives enough light, there is little reason to consider allocating extra money toward the fixture. A light in the foyer or a decorated bedroom is a different story.

Another example is space allocation for a dining room or flex space to serve and eat with guests. More area requires more investment. Thought is put into both **Tone** and **Activity** with this decision. Simply creating a big space to seat people for an event you host every year or so is problematic. In addition to swelling the building budget, the area

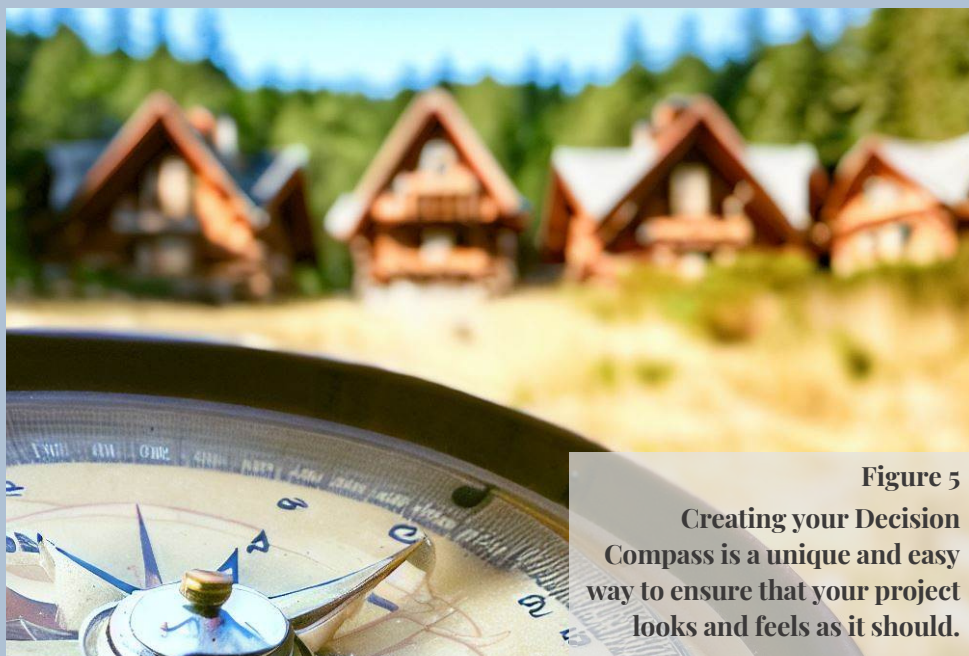


Figure 5
Creating your Decision Compass is a unique and easy way to ensure that your project looks and feels as it should.

could easily end up out of sorts with the flow and feel of your home. Especially if your **Tone** slants homey and cozy such as the Craftsman home style. The juggling of **Activities**, **Tone**, and **Finances** with your design will help guide your decisions for your home plan.

Zooming out even further, the location you choose to build on has big implications for your juggling act. Larger property in a

convenient, desirable location will have a lower initial investment but has higher costs with the road, well, and power supply. A remote location also offers a markedly different lifestyle (**Activities**) than a subdivision lot. Both have their advantages. Speaking of city dwelling, your homestyle will and should be influenced by your neighbors, as you are a community member. Location affects **Activities**, **Tone**, and **Finances**.

With these examples, I'm probably not telling you anything you don't already know. But now that you have a clown nose and juggling hands, you also have another way to **think** about how you **think**. Which ATF "balls" have historically dominated your "juggling" act when you make decisions? Some people give the **Finance** (budget) "ball" more weight. Others have a design-driven approach, giving either **Tone** or **Activities** more importance. While the past is no guarantee of your future behavior, it is a good predictor!

Hopefully, you have gained insight into your thinking...

Actually, I hope you have gained more than insight. I hope you can define what YOU should look for in a timber frame home plan! Failing at that, I hope you see a pathway forward to describe your home plan on your terms, without undue focus on SHOULD and "keeping up with the Joneses." With the lengthy wish list above and any items you add to it, keep tabs on where your motivation comes from. Use social proof as inspiration. Don't let it become a taskmaster; it will be a big help as you begin your home design "juggling act," finding balance with **Activities**, **Tone**, and **Finance**. After all, it is YOUR home and should be built for YOU!

On behalf of the ATF Team,



Bert Sarkkinen

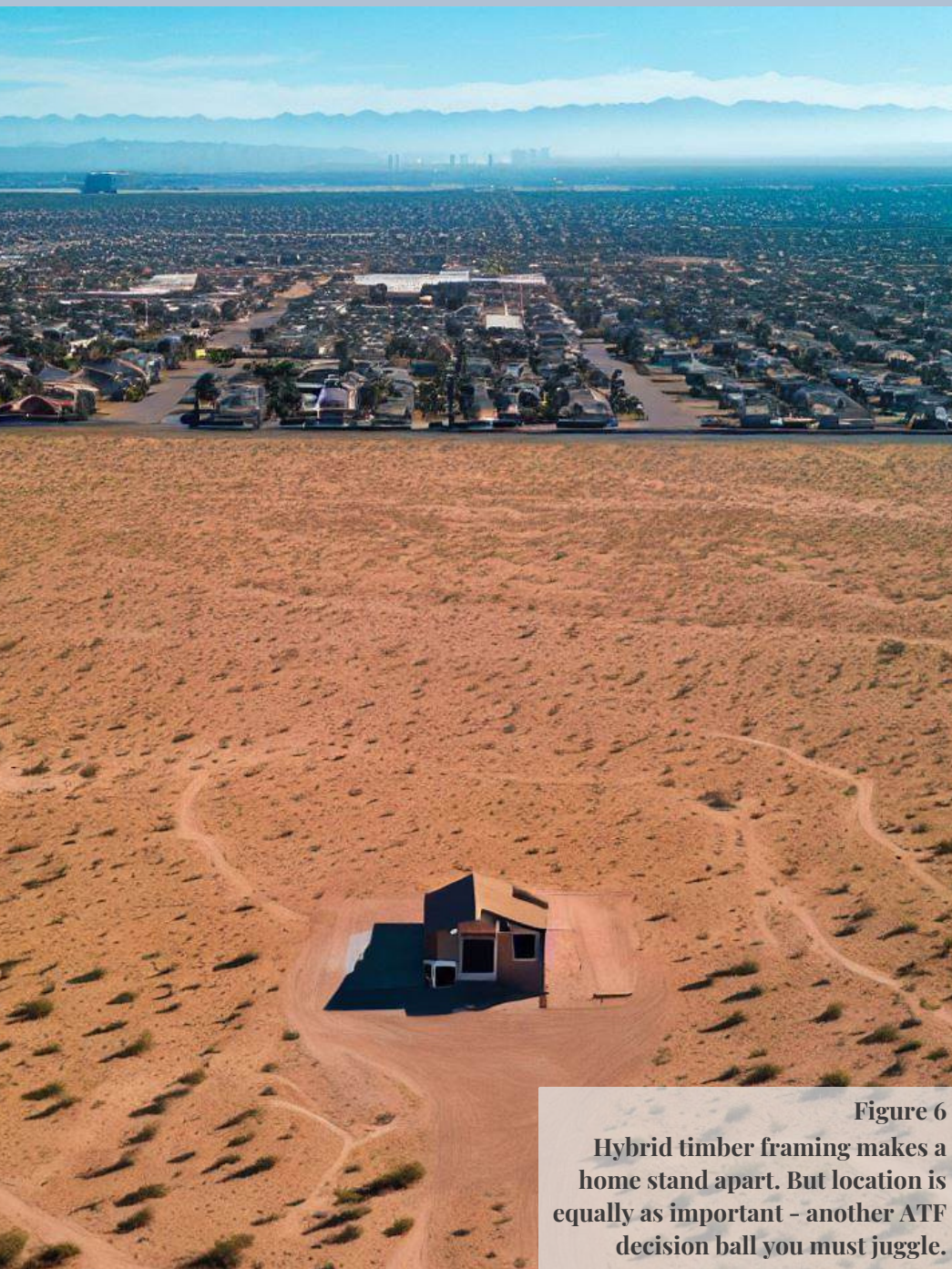


Figure 6
Hybrid timber framing makes a home stand apart. But location is equally as important - another ATF decision ball you must juggle.



MODERN CRAFTSMAN PATIO EXTENSION

The term "Craftsman" is a bit overused these days. Many mistakenly refer to a traditional style home simply showcasing roof eave "trusses," or other eave detailing as a Craftsman home.

But it takes more than cosmetic eave details to make a Craftsman home style. For starters, the roof should have a lower slope. Roof overhangs are deep and pronounced. The massing and profile should have a lower horizontal feel. Curves and arches should be used sparingly, if at all. You want simple, quality planning and craftsmanship bundled into a cozy package.

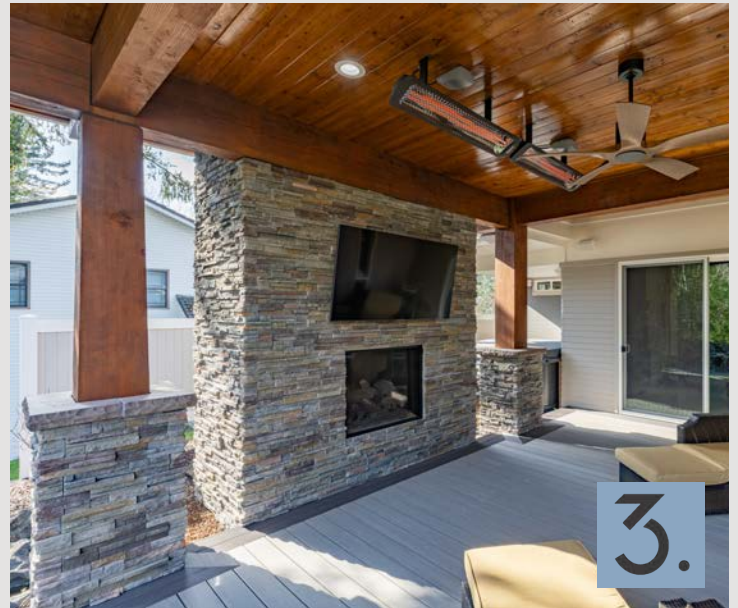
This is precisely what Dave and Holly did with their home, but they added a modern twist. They also had a design problem. Their covered patio space was limited. So, when they started thinking about expanding their covered patio, it was natural that they connected with us because they liked the work we had done for their friends.

The biggest challenges were getting a timber patio extension designed to fit the modern Craftsman style, dealing with the structural considerations, and ensuring the roof profile flowed seamlessly with the established architecture. Comparing the Before & After pictures (scan QR above to see more pics and the Before & After video), the end design is an obvious solution. But getting there took a lot of failed ideas, believe you me!

Regarding the timber design, care was taken to avoid overdoing things with too much heavy timber. They were also placed strategically to address gravity loading and visual flow with the different ceiling and eave heights. The tapered posts and the simple beam end detailing were vital to achieve this. The wood ceiling could have had a semi-transparent grey or white stain to be more consistent with the modern portion of their homestyle, but the wood-stained ceiling gives the patio more warmth and connects with the outdoors. All in all, Dave and Holly orchestrated a great experience and end product with their choices. We are grateful to have been one of their choices!



2.



3.



4.



6.



5.

CAPTIONS CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE

1. OVERVIEW OF THE NEW PATIO NESTLED IN NEAR THE WATER FEATURE AND PUTTING GREEN 2. END BEAM CUT MIMICS ARTS & CRAFTS STYLE OF STACKED BEAM EFFECT 3. THE FIREPLACE CREATES A FOCAL POINT AS WELL AS ADDS PRIVACY 4. THE ORIGINAL 4' ALCOVE CAN BE SEEN ON THE LEFT - WHAT AN UPGRADE! 5. THE NEW VIEW FROM THE MASTER BEDROOM ACCESS TO THE PATIO 6. AMPLE AMENITIES AND FLEXIBILITY OF OUTDOOR LIVING THAT WORKS FOR ANY SEASON

Getting to Know

LUCAS HOLMGREN

Lucas has been part of the ATF team for quite a while. As he mentions below, he has experienced some challenging times. I'm tickled pink with how he persevered and maintained his relationship with us. Without his help and influence, we could not deliver high-quality video content to our YouTube subscribers. Also, I really enjoy working with Lucas implementing continual improvements to make our website more and more user-friendly. I've noticed how the respect, stability, and appreciation between Lucas and the ATF team definitely go both ways. Keep it up, Lucas!



What would you like people to know about your past?

I've had a past with a lot of challenges and difficulties, yet also with some amazing moments as well. I've played music professionally on the side since I was 14 and am active as an outdoor writer and fishing podcaster. I have two amazing kids and they are my inspiration and favorite source of joy!

Where is a place you would like to visit?

I'd like to visit the upper BC Skeena River area of Canada to fish for trophy steelhead and see the gorgeous landscape. Its pristine environment produces the most beautiful fish in the world!

How do you like to spend your free time?

I enjoy fishing, of course, especially with my kids. They're fascinated with learning about the species, and I am too. Recording and performing music is essential in my life. Creativity is very fulfilling, which makes my job at Arrow especially enjoyable. Spending time outside, especially by a river, really helps my well-being!

What would have to happen in the next 3 years to make you feel like you are moving forward?

I would like to develop my SEO skills and create better videos as time goes on. Arrow is a great place to be creative, so I want to use my skills to represent the beautiful work we do.

HAPPINESS IS...

Have you ever experienced awakening well-rested but staying in bed because you were reluctant to face the day? Me too! Sometimes a crucial decision must be made. Sometimes things must be done where I feel like an impostor. At other times, it is simply a buildup of many minor hassles which must be dealt with. Whatever the cause, it doesn't feel like winning.

Contrast this to a time in your youth when you sprang out of bed in the wee hours of the morning to take part in an exciting event. But this contrast may be unfair. As children, worries and concerns were like pebbles that seemed to disappear compared to the ever-present boulders we can carry around as "responsible" adults.

Question: "What would you have to change in your life to capture that youthful energy to spring out of... well, for those of us a bit older, let's just try starting the day with a vigorous shuffle!



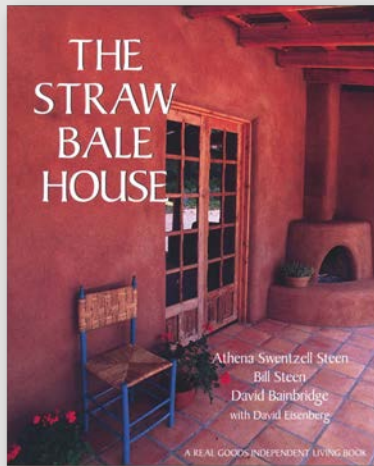
...AN ENERGETIC RISE AND SHINE

Memory Lane

I remember being amazed at our first-born son's efficiency. He timed his arrival perfectly. His labor started gently Saturday morning so I was able to get a full day's work in, framing on our new house before the labor pain really started to get serious around supper time. He was born early Sunday morning, a beautiful healthy baby! Did he know his timing utilized the Sabbath rest day, optimizing his father's production on his future home? I like to think so 😊 Thanks, Sven!



GOOD READS



The Straw Bale House

By Athena Swentzell Steen, Bill Steen, and David Bainbridge



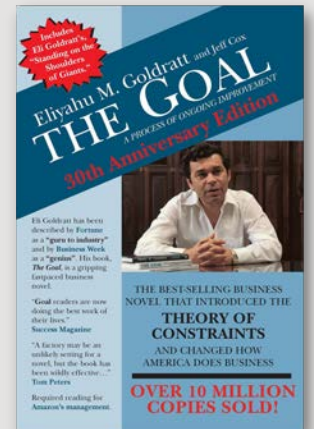
WHAAAT?! Who builds a strawbale house? This is essential wisdom learned at an early age from the Three Little Pigs, right? But folklore is not right 100% of the time. This book demonstrates the possibilities and limitations of straw bale or construction while addressing common concerns such as fire, rot, and instability. (FYI- Laboratory testing shows strong resistance to huffing and puffing.) Years ago, I worked on the bones of a straw bale home. I liked the deep window wells and the imperfect organic nature of the stucco walls. If you are a curious, hands-on individual who likes trying new things, this book is for you.



The Goal

By Eliyahu M. Goldratt

I consider a book a success if I can point to one takeaway that has improved my life. Many books do not make the cut. This book teaches the theory of constraints in a story format. You get to follow and learn with Alex Rogo as he discovers and applies the theory of constraints working as the manager of a production plant. It also helps him as a Cub Scout leader and in his role as a husband. For me, it helped me transition away from focusing on local efficiencies and use my time to identify and fix process bottlenecks. Bottlenecks can also be thought of as the weakest chain link in the process of what you are trying to achieve.



FREE Timber Frame Seminar

The Problem With Log Cabins: Before You Buy - Consider This

Something about log cabins speaks to the rugged individualist American spirit. As does timber framing to a lesser degree. Log home buyers and timber home buyers have a lot in common.

- Both will shell out a lot of coin and/or time to get their desired home.
- Both are generally building their forever home.
- Both are attracted to the warm rustic feel of wood.

There are pros and cons to both choices. We appreciate and respect log cabins for what they are. But as timber framers, we have an obvious bias. You would be surprised at how many people who started with the dream of building a log cabin home walked through our door. WHY? That is one of the main points you will get from this seminar. You will also get ideas for incorporating logs and other organic elements into your timber design to capture some rustic, close-to-nature feel. And as always, you will get refreshments, a shop tour, and a chance to ask any specific questions you may have!

WHEN
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arrowtimber.com or
Call (833) 212-0202

THE ARROW TIMBER PHILOSOPHY

People want things which reflect their personality.

People want an enjoyable process with a mutual exchange.

People want teamwork, transparency, and creative solutions.

I experience this over and over in the course of a year, not only when clients view albums or 3-D models in my office, but especially so immediately after the completion of their timber structure. **Appreciative head nods and slow smiles have almost become a trademark!** I fell in love with the timber framing craft in 2002 and I still feel just as privileged and enthused. Many, many, personalized structures have been created since then. In fact, my **passion, artistry, and repertoire of creative solutions** have all grown dramatically... I sometimes wonder if it is simply something to do with rising to challenges and building upon success. You probably agree that exposed beams provide geometric beauty and resonate deep within our psyche... The style brings to mind **durability, longevity, safety, laughter, smiles, and home to many warm feelings.**



THE QUESTION

What is the best way for you to acquire your personalized timber living?

Not too much, not too little. Not too high, not too low. Just the right mix of timber presence and style... How to find that sweet spot which you can enjoy for years and pass on to your heirs. It's really about enriching the lives of those around you and sharing your unique personality and viewpoints with them. **How do you intend to achieve this? How will you determine a good fit with service providers?**

Seek out and choose, therefore, things that will evoke head nods and slow smiles. Things which resonate with your personality. Things that do not grow old or boring with the passage of time. You will not regret it.

To your goals, momentum, and happiness

Bert Sarkkinen, Owner

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