



Homeowners Terry and Andrea Sharp



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT TURNBULL

BUILDER READY

Customizable timber frame package is perfect for DIY cottage

For Terry and Andrea Sharp, building a new cottage wasn't just an opportunity to own an escape on the water, it was an opportunity to build their future home by hand.

"We considered renovating, but the more we looked at it, the more we realized we needed to tear down," says Terry. "Any renovation would have been major."

As an engineer from a family of builders, Terry is no stranger to building. In fact, thinking back, he says he's been building since he was seven years old. But when it came to building their cottage, Terry and Andrea opted to select a building package that they could use to construct their lakeside home -- one that they could tweak to suit their property and lifestyle.

"Normerica was the perfect choice," says Terry. He and Andrea were looking for a design that would blend in with their granite rock and rich forest landscape. "We started looking around for cedar log homes, but the cedar was too much. We loved the combination of wood and drywall, and the details in the post and beam joinery."

The pair started with one of Normerica's basic building

plans then worked with the design team to tweak the layout to suit their needs. While their wish-list was short, the pair did have a few must-haves: they want space for their own office areas -- Andrea's in the loft, and Terry's at a small desk in the great room. They also wanted one room for guests and space for another pull-out bed.

"That's all we needed," says Terry. "We wanted it to be relatively small, easy to maintain and functional as a full-time home."

Part of the team

While their chosen building package came with a design, Normerica's team invited Terry and Andrea to view the plan and request any tweaks they wanted to make to their future home. While Terry and Andrea were thrilled to see Normerica's signature great room and Muskoka room intact, they were grateful for the opportunity to make small changes to personalize the design of their home.

"They were so accommodating," says Andrea.

"And so skilled," added Terry, who pointed out their ability to balance the pitch and scale -- something that is critically to the proportions of the build. "As an engineer, I couldn't help but notice their eye for making everything from the roof pitch to the window size look and feel exactly as we wanted. Nothing was missed."

Even though their cottage's footprint wasn't large, the design gave it an air of spaciousness.

"It's airy, making it feel bigger than it is," says Andrea. "Not too much wood. Just enough to feel warm."

Once the designs were drawn, Terry hired subcontractors to build the foundation, and prepared himself and his brothers to start the build.

Built with precision

While Terry wouldn't consider himself to be a novice builder, they welcomed the help Normerica provided.

"They gave us a site foreman to work with, who showed

"Their building package was perfect for us, and the result was awesome."

us how everything goes together," says Terry.

Normerica's site foreman led the team through each part of the build, from laying studs to assembling the mortis and tenon joints.

"Never had I built a house that way," says Terry. "But it went really well, and the building went up pretty quickly."

But the ease of building with Normerica also came from their precise delivery schedules: something that originally

made Terry nervous as he worked to coordinate subcontractors, plumbers, roofers and other trades.

"But Normerica was bang-on with their schedules... right down to the hour. That's important, especially when you're renting a crane by the hour, or only have one day to get a busy trade in to finish a job."

While Terry opted to build on his own, he realizes that approach doesn't work for everyone.

"I'd highly recommend working with Normerica, and leaning on their expertise," says Terry.

Since moving in, Terry and Andrea's timber frame home has been used for family gatherings, dinner parties, and the setting for their son's

wedding, which was held on their dock.

"It was an awesome backdrop," says Andrea. "Our new home was the perfect venue."

As both builder and homeowner, Terry is happy he and Andrea

made the choice they did to work with Normerica.

"Their building package was perfect for us, and the result was awesome. We're very happy." **DS**

BY SHELANNE AUGUSTINE



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