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Inner Beauty

An Ohio couple fills their country home with wood and light

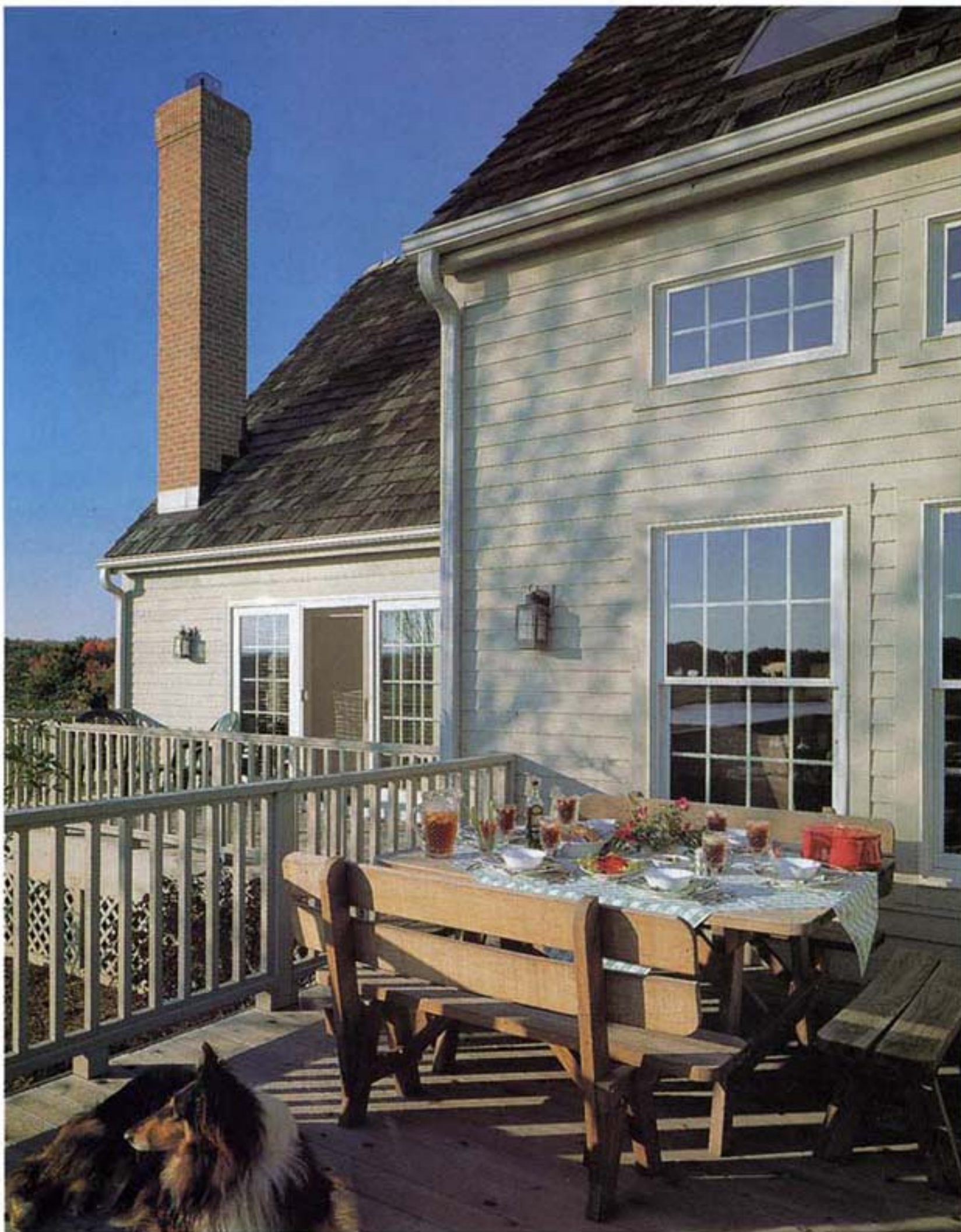
Most people who live in timber-frame homes spend years dreaming and planning before actually beginning construction. For a few, however, all it takes is a chance encounter, a casual conversation and, before they know it, their home is under way. That's the way it happened for Kenneth and Mary Anne, who went from idea to move-in in less than a year.

When the couple moved back to rural Ohio after years of being away, they initially talked about eventually building a conventional home. Over the years, as Kenneth ran his business, he met various contractors and told them of his plans. One of them was Matt Benes, who had done some construction work for Kenneth's company through another contractor. Matt also happened to be the owner of Chagrin Post and Beam in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, and a local rep for Timberpeg, which is headquartered in Claremont, New Hampshire.

Kenneth says he and Mary Anne had considered a timber-frame home, "but we thought that timber-frame construction would be too expensive." The couple proceeded with their plans for a conventional home until the estimate came back. "It was much higher than we expected," Kenneth says. "I called Matt up and said, 'What can you do for me?'"



A barn, a picket fence and a pond, all visible from different vantage points in the home, add considerably to the farm-like flavor.



A deck on the exterior of the home offers Kenneth and Mary Anne wonderful views of an old family farm next door. Materials on the exterior include Western red cedar shakes on the roof and clear, vertical grain red cedar clapboard siding.

Matt invited the couple to visit a home that he had built locally. They liked what they saw and discussed with Matt building a

Timberpeg home of their own. When Matt showed them a reasonable estimate, Kenneth and Mary Anne decided they would live in a timber frame.

The couple already owned 10 acres in a rural subdivision. "We bought two lots next to each other in order to keep our view open," Kenneth says.

Matt made sure he sited the home so that the main

living areas, such as the kitchen, screened-in porch, great room and master suite all faced the magnificent vistas down the valley. "The views

are awesome and the sunsets unbelievable," Matt says. "It truly looks like [Montana] Big Sky Country in Ohio."

Since the home is located in a bucolic setting—it abuts an old family farm—Matt designed it in an updated, farmhouse style. The exterior is reminiscent of a large dairy barn that has been added on to over the years. Matt even built a small barn out back that can be



The entryway offers the first taste of the home's many down-on-the-farm charms, starting with the braided oval rug and hand-painted furnishings.

The Danish brick fireplace, its mantel decorated with a carving of acorns and oak leaves, is the focal point of the great room, reaching up toward the top of the 26-foot-high roof. Skylights and transom windows in the great room extend the view beyond the room's conventional set of windows and bring additional light into the space.





The casual comfort of Kenneth and Mary Anne's home is due in part to the soft earth-tone hues the couple chose for their furnishings and fabrics. Combined with the interior's whitewashed finish, every room throughout the home is decorated in a soft, relaxed style.

seen from the kitchen window. "My wife always said that one of her desires was to sleep in a barn," Kenneth says with a chuckle. "And it really does look like a barn."

To achieve that barn-like feel inside, Timberpeg constructed the frame using Eastern white pine, which is characterized by many small to medium-size knots and checks (cracks that occur naturally as the timbers dry). The style in which the timbers were cut—very straight and unadorned, as those in a real barn would be—as well as the vertical pine paneling on the walls and the uncut pegs, add to the visual impression that this is a barn.

To give the home a contemporary, soft feel, Matt lightly whitewashed (or pickled) all the frame members, as well as all the tongue-and-groove pine paneling on the walls and all the decking on the ceilings. It was a look Kenneth and Mary Anne first saw and fell in love with in

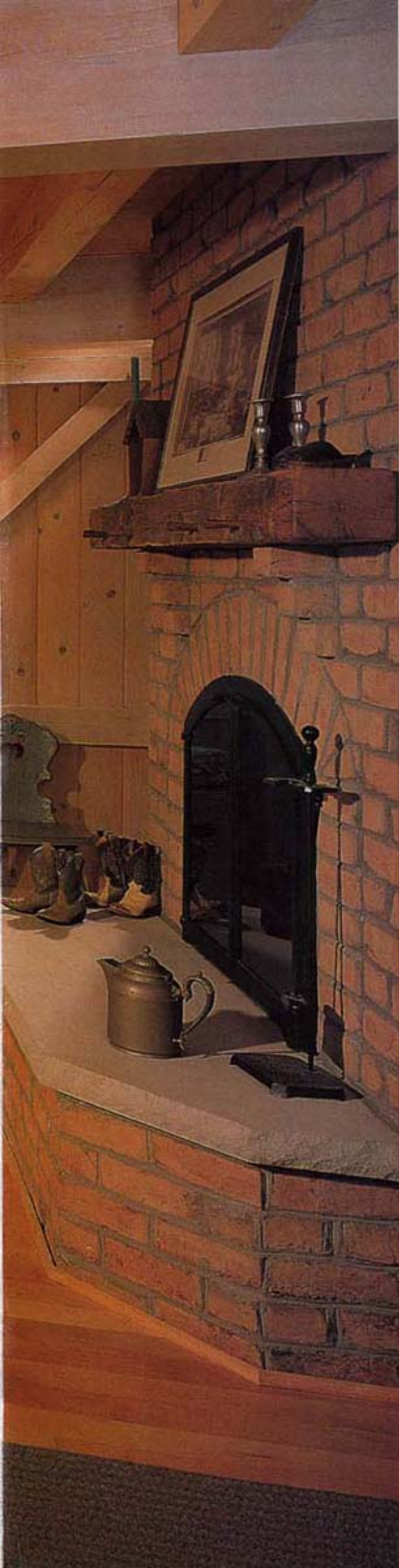
Matt's own timber-frame home. When all of these elements were combined, they gave the interior just the right mix the couple was looking for. "We wanted something very

contemporary and very rustic," Kenneth says. "We are halfway between that with this home."

Like all Timberpeg homes, the frame was constructed using traditional timber-frame methods, such as mortise-and-tenon joinery secured with hardwood pegs to hold the frame together. The couple ordered the company's complete building package, which includes (along with the frame) the home's exterior enclosure system (including siding and trim), roofing materials and doors, as well as Andersen brand windows and skylights.

Instead of raising the frame one bent at a time, Timberpeg's crew raised it one timber at a time. "This is referred to as piece-on-piece by timber framers,"





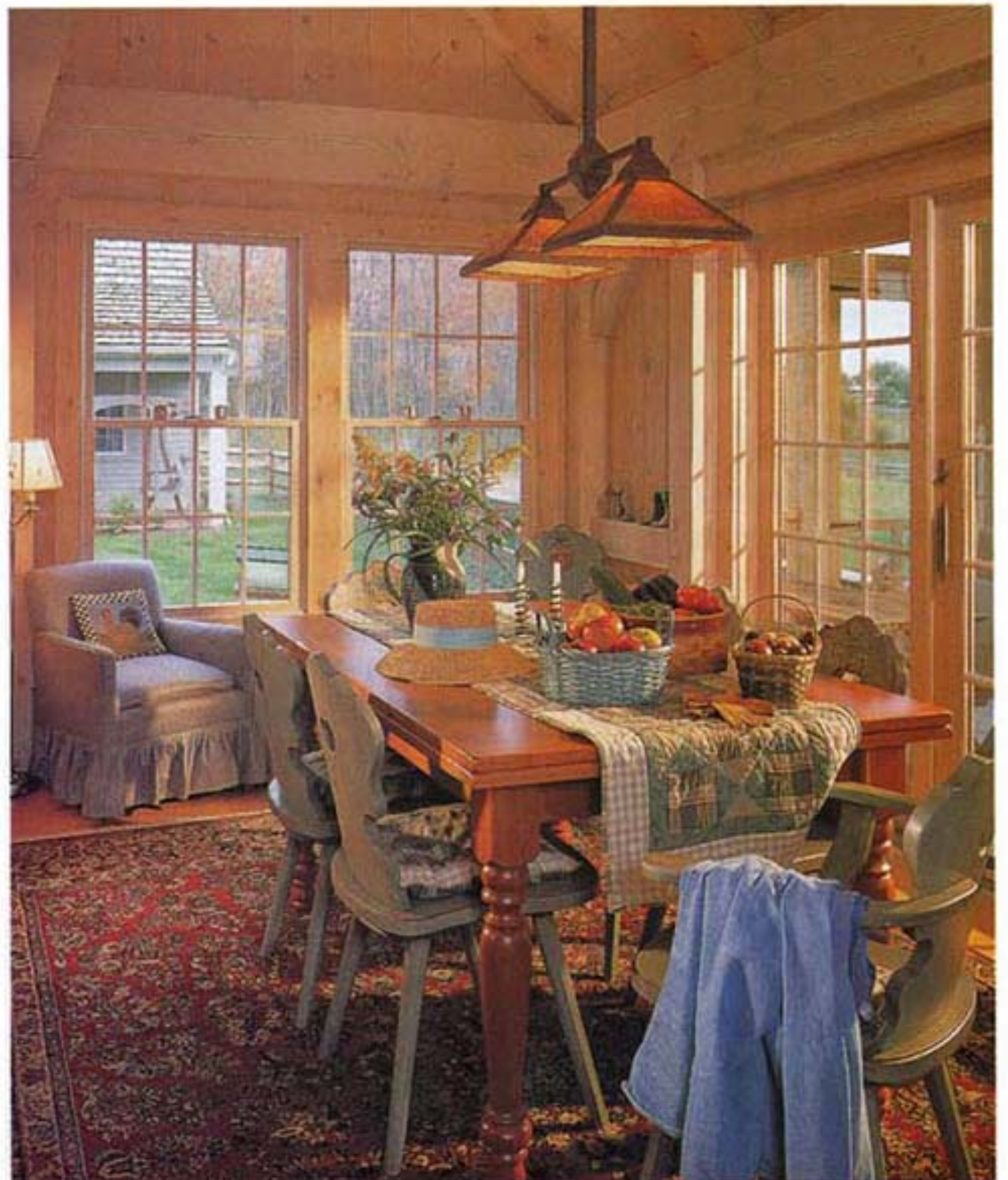
Timberpeg's regional manager Donald Downs says, noting this method enables even large homes to be raised without the need of a crane, thus saving considerable expense. "And," he adds, "it also can be invaluable in wooded or remote building sites where it would be difficult to get a crane in without irreparable damage to the site."

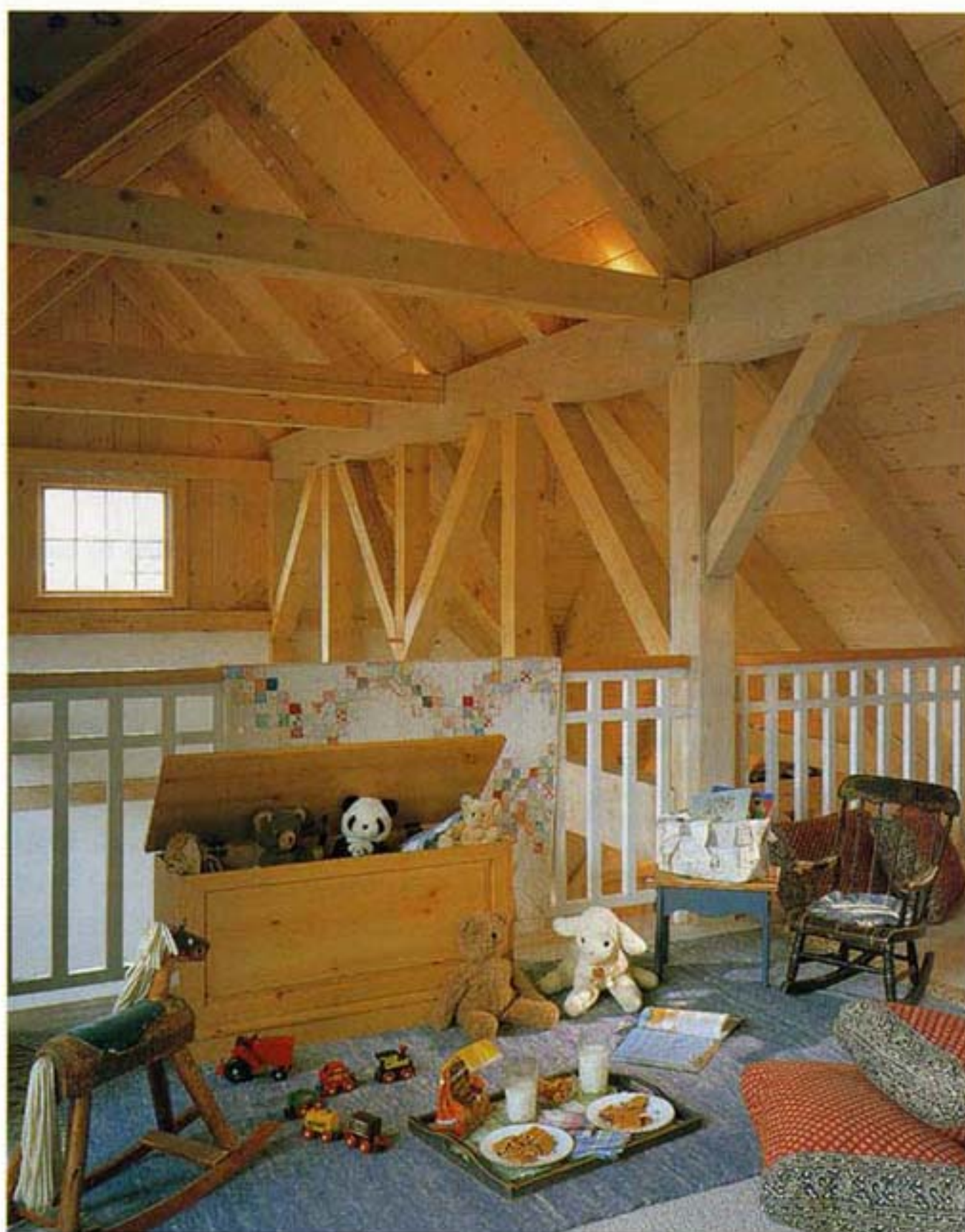
Once the frame was up, it was enclosed using Timberpeg's Wrap-and-Strap system. "The frame is wrapped from the inside out with successive layers of tongue-and-groove pine paneling, insulation, furring strips and, finally, siding and roofing," Donald explains. "This system is similar to structural insulated panel enclosure systems in that the house receives a continuous, unbroken envelope of rigid insulation."

Left: A large raised fireplace, which also services the great room, is the heart of the kitchen. Hickory cabinets, a large maple butcher-block slab and a lowered ceiling give this room an air of countrified casualness.

Below: Surrounded on two sides by walls of windows, the dining room shares the home's quaint pastoral views. Only a few steps from the kitchen it faces, the dining room makes get-togethers with the couple's extensive family very convenient.

The home took 10 months to complete from initial design to turnkey. When the couple opened the door to their home for the first time in November 1996, they found themselves in possession of a 4,000-square-foot home with a finished basement, two stories and a third-floor loft, which looks down onto the great room below. "You could actually drop down to the first





Left: The third-floor loft provides a close-up of the home's common-rafter roof system. Common rafter roofs allow the tongue-and-groove pine roof decking to run horizontally, creating a pleasing appearance and contrasting nicely with the vertical boards covering the walls.

Below: Oversized Danish-style bricks were used to construct the masonry fireplace in the master bedroom. Kenneth and Mary Anne converted it from wood to gas to make it more convenient to use on a daily basis.



floor from the railing in the loft, if you were so inclined," Kenneth says.

The home boasts many special features, including a media room-library, a mud room off the garage, huge walk-in closets and tongue-and-groove maple flooring, but one of Kenneth and Anne's favorite rooms is the kitchen. One reason is because Matt designed it with their family in mind. "Kenneth and Mary Anne have a large family with lots of grandkids," Matt says. "So I designed the kitchen to handle their many family gatherings."

A large raised masonry fireplace, made from hand-packed, oversized Danish bricks, is the kitchen's focal point and acts as a divider between it and the great room, which it also services. Besides the fireplace, the other noteworthy amenity in the kitchen is the 4-by-12-foot-long, butcher-block breakfast bar and food-prep counter. "That's one of my favorite features of the home," Kenneth says. "It's one large maple slab. It took six or seven guys just to lift it in place. It was really something to see."

When the couple's grandchildren visit, they make a beeline for either the basement or the third-floor loft. "The basement is really for the kids," Kenneth says, noting it is outfitted with a television that is "hooked up to the world," a pingpong table, lots of games and plenty of room for running around. The loft is a special hideaway, especially for the couple's twin grandsons. "All the kids love sleeping up there," Kenneth notes. "The higher they could go, they go."

Kenneth, Mary Anne, their grandchildren and their close circle of family and friends aren't the only ones who love their timber-frame home. What started out as an effort to build an affordable custom home has spread like wildfire through the small community. While four of their neighbors watched Kenneth and Mary Anne's frame being raised timber by timber, they, too, caught the building bug. Now Kenneth and Mary Anne are surrounded by a quartet of timber-framed homes. "Their next-door neighbors, along with two across the street,

now live in new Timberpeg homes," Matt says.

The neighbors, as well as Matt, who ended up building three of the four homes, are surely grateful that Kenneth and Mary Anne decided to call their sleepy little community home. No one is more delighted, however, than the couple themselves. In next to no time, they built a beautiful home in the perfect location. "We lived in the area in the early 1970s, almost in sight of the house we live in now," Kenneth says, noting that their new place represents the perfect homecoming. **THI**

