

Homes

HOME OF THE WEEK

Rustic, but contemporary

Reclaimed wood used throughout English couple's retirement home

BY LIZ SIMMONS
For the County News



Liz Simmons/For the County News



John and Bea Perkins enlisted New Energy Works Timberframers of Farmington to build their retirement home along Route 39 between Geneseo and Avon. The home is a combination of traditional and contemporary styles supported by a study framework of large timber beams. Throughout the house is reclaimed wood. Even the furniture, at left, is from recycled materials.

GENESEO — I would describe the style of John and Bea Perkins' home as rustic-contemporary. This may be an oxymoron, but somehow it works.

You can find modern furniture accented with brushed chrome under the same roof as rustic barn wood salvaged from a century-old barn at their home on Avon Road.

The fascinating blend of old and new owes its inspiration in part to timber frame building, a cutting-edge method of building that aims to be sustainable by superior energy-efficiency and the use of reclaimed wood.

One of the landmarks of timber framing is the magnificent, exposed wood trusses and beams.

Their home was built by New Energy Works, who provided full-service custom design and construction, including the supply of recycled wood flooring, cabinetry, and even a dining room table made at their shop in Farmington.

Choosing to build a timber frame home does not lock you into any one style of design. Marketing Manager Jennifer Young of New Energy Works describes the method and style of construction as very flexible, adding that the non-weight-bearing walls allow for an open floor plan or a later change in floor plan.

"The current trend seems to be contemporary," says Tad Garbacik of New Energy Works. "But we follow the clients' intent."

The warm, comforting feeling of wood grains is contrasted with sharp lines and modern textures throughout the Perkins home.

This contrast is even more obvious in the home's exterior. Though it appears from the road to be a traditional colonial, rural home; the view of the home from the backyard is vastly different, with reclaimed, unpainted barn wood as siding.

"It works for us," says John of the contemporary-rustic look. "It may not for

everyone."

The Perkins moved here from England after the home's construction, where they owned an old cottage.

Purchasing a one-acre plot of land to build on would have cost approximately \$500,000, says John.

The couple attempted to convert a carriage house into a home in England, but after battling with city council for two years they gave up.

Already frequent visitors of our area and ardent fans of the Genesee Valley Fox Hunt, the couple instead purchased land here, where building regulations are not quite so stringent.

A year after construction of the home in 2008, they

added a large garage that was framed and sided with wood from a dilapidated barn in Cuylerville.

According to site supervisor Tad Garbacik the old barn, estimated to have been built in the 1700's, was framed mostly with white oak, which is quite resistant to rot.

The 30-inch wide panels on the barn were also very useful for siding the Perkins' "new" garage. Ironically, John and Bea had discovered shortly after moving here that John was distantly related to the owners of the barn, who share the same last name.

Pioneer Millworks, sister company of New Energy Works, seeks old barns, deconstructs them, and refinishes the wood for use as flooring, cabinetry, paneling, siding, etc.

This company was created out of a need at New Energy Works for reclaimed wood to use in their timber frame homes.

"If you can think of it, our woodworking shop can make it, from virtually any species of wood," explains Tad Garbacik, site supervisor at New Energy Works.

The wood flooring in their home includes hickory, birch, and plank flooring made from several different species and left rough for a rustic feel.

Besides the flooring in the Perkins home, the front door, cabinets, shelving, dining room table and chairs also came from recycled wood.

Even though it is a used product, reclaimed wood is not cheaper than purchasing new.

There are many reasons for this, says Jennifer Young.

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In addition to the value of recycling a product that otherwise would be left to rot or discarded, reclaimed wood is

also known to be more stable, with a tighter grain, than new wood because it has been drying for many, many years.

The cost must include the labor and equipment necessary to turn barn wood into a repurposed, quality product.

It also makes available "antique" hard-to-find woods like chestnut and elm.

When New Energy Works doesn't use reclaimed wood from old warehouses or barns for the frame, they use wood from sustainable forests (Forest Stewardship

Council certified), as they did in the Perkins home.

The construction method in timber framing includes a "tight envelope" around an insulated panel, allowing no gap in the thermal barrier, explains Young.

"However gusty it is outside, you never get any drafts in here," Bea says of their new home. Surrounded by open fields, they are certainly susceptible to wind.

See more photos of the Perkins' timberframe house this weekend at TheLCN.com. If you know an interesting home you'd like to see featured by the Livingston County News, call us at 243-0296 or email community@livingstonnews.com.

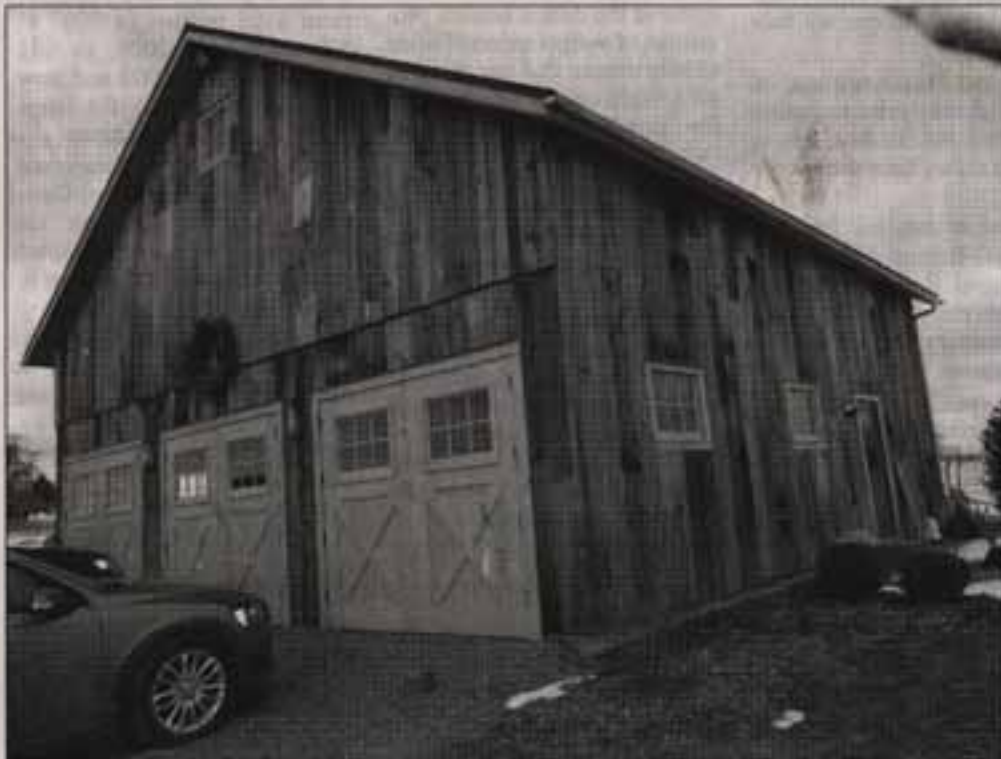


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The Perkins' garage is built from a salvaged 1700s barn from Cuylerville.