

## Five Reasons Solid Wood Homes Make Sense

Here are five reasons why a full log home is a smart decision and not just a pretty face.

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Photo: Mark Sorenson / Home: Estemerwalt Log Homes

Unique, warm, cozy ... all of these words describe log homes and those built of solid wood. While these attributes are desirable, the best news is this type of construction can appeal to your head and not just your heart.

## 1. Thermal Mass

A material's ability to absorb, retain and release heat energy over an extended period of time is its thermal mass, and a **solid log wall offers more thermal mass capabilities** than other building components do. The **National Association of Home Builders** (NAHB) calls this the “natural property in the logs that helps keep inside temperatures of a home comfortable in all seasons.” So, while the R-value of an individual timber may not score as high as a piece of high-density insulation, like a structural insulated panel, its ability to store and disseminate heat is something no manmade insulation has. And, as part of a wall system, the thermal mass of a log gets stronger.

## 2. Energy Efficiency

Log homes that have been built with proper sealing methods and are well maintained from year to year can be **highly energy efficient**, resulting in lower heating and cooling costs. Beefing up insulation in the roof structure compounds the effect even more. So despite false rumors you may have heard that suggest log homes “leak like a sieve,” they can be built so tightly they meet the **Department of Energy's “Energy Star”** standards, according to the NAHB.

## 3. Sustainability

If you're interested in building “green,” solid logs (especially those that are handcrafted) are a minimally processed building material. Sourcing your home's logs locally results in an even softer carbon footprint by decreasing the energy required to transport the logs to your site.

Wood is a naturally renewable material, too, and while some anti-log home activists will tell you that log home producers are decimating the forests, nothing could be further from the truth. Most log home producers practice reforestation or take their stock from managed stands of trees, while others harvest standing-dead timbers (those that have been killed by fire, disease or insects) as these trees have a negative effect on the overall health of the forest.

Want to kick your sustainability efforts up a notch? Look for **environmentally friendly stains and finishes** and choose salvaged wood for your home's floors and trimwork.

## 4. Fire Resistance

Safety in a house fire depends on the ability of the home's structure to stand long enough for evacuation; so, slowing the spread of the flames is essential.

Compared to a stud-framed wall with interior cavities filled with artificial materials that can quickly add fuel to the fire, a solid log wall burns slowly. Add wood posts, beams and rafters to a log home and the results are even better. **A report from the Log & Timber Homes Council of the NAHB states:** "Combined with the selection of beam and deck second floor and roof options often incorporated into log buildings, log structures are a top choice for endurance and integrity in a fire."

## 5. Durability

With log buildings lasting for hundreds of years in varying climates throughout the world, it's clear that well-built, solid-log structures stand the test of time. Of course, when designing your log home, you should always follow local building codes designed to protect your family and prevent damage from natural disasters in your area.

While each of these reasons alone makes choosing a solid wood home a logical choice, it's the undeniable natural beauty that comes in conjunction with these smart stats that makes log home living simply irresistible.