

Legacies Are Created By Timber Frame Builder

BY WENDY PAGE

Annemarie Mitchell Roseberger loves creating something that will be handed down from generation to generation. Her company, Legacy Timber Frames, Inc., based in Stillwater, builds homes using timber framing, an ancient and unique type of post-and-beam construction.

In a timber-frame building, the horizontal and vertical timber supports are fastened together by intricate joinery and sturdy pegs, without the need for nails or other metal reinforcements. This wooden "skeleton" bears the entire structural load, so neither the exterior enclosure system nor the interior room partitions assist in supporting the roof or carrying weight. Structures built this way are designed to last hundreds of years.

"It's not only an aesthetic," explained Roseberger, president and CEO of Timber Frames. "That's the structure. The timber is what holds the house up."

Timber framing is one of the oldest forms of construction. It was around before hammers and nails, and to this day, no nails are used. It is all pegs. With this construction, it isn't necessary to have inside walls, though for obvious privacy issues, most people erect walls around bedrooms and bathrooms. There are also walls to hide the mechanics, such as electricity.

Legacy Timber Frames offers a wide range of services and creative options. Though they focus primarily on residential structures, the designs lend themselves to cathedral ceilings, open plans, and innovative arrangements of interior space. Unlike log houses, traditional timber frames expose their wood to the inside only, and not to the punishing elements of wind and weather. Timber frames are low-maintenance, and energy-efficient.

Legacy Timber provides custom in-house design and full plans for the entire home, stamped by a certified New York state structural engineer. There are many different woods used in timber framing, so pricing may vary.

Once the frame's design is finalized, Legacy Timber creates shop drawings detailing each individual timber to be cut. All of their draw-pin joinery is precise and structurally engineered. The frames are hand-crafted on-site in the company's shop, near the design office.

"Everything we do is custom," Roseberger said. With timber framing, "there's such flexible space, that down the road, you can move the walls around without major renovation."

The uniqueness of each design is part of what attracted Roseberger to the craft of timber framing. After studying interior design at college and working for a design firm, Roseberger, originally from Niskayuna, returned to the area and accepted a position with a timber frame company many years ago.

"I fell in love with it. I absolutely adored it. I have an engineering brain, too, and this really fits with it," she said.



Annemarie Roseberger builds high-end timber frame homes.

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Roseberger met her partner, Dan, while coordinating the construction of a frame she had designed. "Dan had the field experience, the muscle part of it, and I knew the joinery and the design," she said.

Together the two decided to create their own design, manufacturing and construction company.

Trying to decide on the company name in the early stages of planning 21 years ago, Roseberger, Dan and others came up with the tag line first: "Why build a house ... when you can create a Legacy?"™. Thus, in 1988, Legacy Timber frames was born.

"I'm a learn-a-holic," Roseberger confessed. "Every year, I try to do something new and different, to push the envelope a little more. Every day is different; every project is different. Every day is a whole lot of fun."

As much as she loves timber framing, Roseberger believes "the clientele are the best people in the world. Because it is still somewhat of a unique form of construction, we end up with people who are invested in having a really cool house."

As a way to expand not only her business but the industry as well, Roseberger gives seminars on timber frames to architects for continuing education credits, "so they are more comfortable designing for it," she stated.

"We're in a growth stage," she noted. She's looking towards expanding as timber framing becomes more popular, since "more architects and more people are aware of it. As the market share increases, we're growing with it. It's becoming much more mainstream."

Legacy Timber Frames is located at 691 County Road 70 in Stillwater. They can be reached at 279-9108 or by visiting www.legacytimberframes.com. □