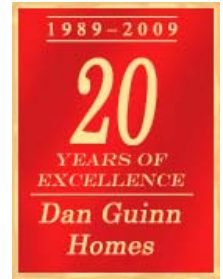


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HOUSE WISE

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Dan Guinn Homes, 11063 Piankatank Dr. Gloucester, VA 23061 757-438-8624
www.danguinhomes.com info@danguinhomes.com 804-695-2578



Wood Free Log Homes?

By Elizabeth Guinn

I was driving through a town near me recently and was deeply saddened when I saw that a favorite furniture store, made entirely from logs, was losing yet one more of their buildings to rot and insects. I have watched them over the years as they have been fighting this losing battle. First they tried cutting off the surfaces of the logs and replacing them, I don't even want to know what that cost! Then they finally gave up and put a faux wood log surface over one of their buildings. This past week I noticed that they were putting the faux finish on yet another building. There is nothing more pleasing to the eye than the warm finish of a log home. Who hasn't wanted one at some point in their life? However, the havoc that termites, rot and mold wreak on a log home is anything but pretty, not to mention the yearly maintenance to keep the finish up which is also labor

Yes, this is concrete!

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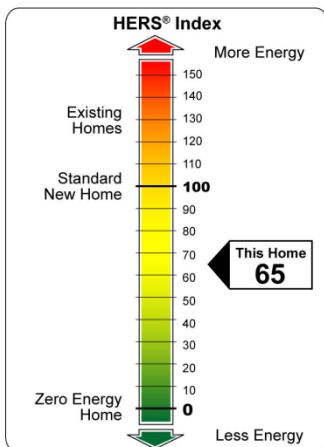
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Dan's Desk

By Dan Guinn

I guess you have been wondering just what I have been doing with my new toy this past month, my Thermal Imaging camera. I have been scanning and photographing all sorts of houses, ones that I have built and ones that I didn't. Finding leaks where the normal eye cannot see. It has been a very interesting and eye opening month to how well our houses perform. I have probably learned more about sealing up a house in the last month than I ever have before. Not all of that learning has come from playing with the Imager

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intensive and incredibly expensive to repair.

The forever innovative American spirit couldn't allow such a beloved American icon like the log cabin to become extinct because of the perils of real wood construction. It was inevitable that someone would finally come up with a viable substitute. That entrepreneur would be EverLog Systems. These guys manufacture a concrete composite log system that looks exactly like the real deal. The forms that the concrete logs are poured in was made from real logs so the concrete logs come complete with cracks, knots and even grain patterns on the ends that stick out on the corners! A wide variety of log shapes are available from D shaped to hand hewn and everything in between. They also have a wide selection of natural wood colors to choose from. Each of the logs is reinforced with steel and comes with a flat surface on the inside to allow for many easy finishing options.

Why would you want concrete logs anyway? Well let's start with fireproof. You can get a 20 to 30% reduction on your home owner's insurance for using a building product that is completely fireproof. This also makes it wonderful for commercial work. The wall actually achieves a 3 hour fire rating and meets all the International Building Codes as well as hurricane and seismic requirements.

You also get the wood look without any of the wood problems. Just let a carpenter bee try to drill into one of these logs. Let's just say he won't try twice. Termites are also thwarted. And concrete is impervious to rot and mold.

We have built a timber framed house. Just nothing compares to the look of those large beams. The one complaint the owner had 5 years after the installation was that the beams had shrunk and cracked and twisted a little over time. All problems that the providers of the timber warned us about and we were expecting. It's just part of owning a house made of natural timbers. Now you can own an EverLog home with the look of real natural timbers and never have it shrink, twist or crack. All of the benefits, none of the problems.

The timbers are actually poured concrete wall panels that fit into a foundation made of Arxx insulated concrete walls. We have also used the Arxx wall systems and absolutely love the air tight heavily insulated system. The panels are fit in place and locked together with steel. The floor beams are hung right off of the concrete wall system. The color and coating is put on and if you ordered the package with chinking, then the chinking is put in place. They can pour beautiful beams and other details that you are used to seeing in a typical log home.

Now let's talk energy efficiency! You knew I wouldn't even



Elizabeth Guinn
 Publisher
 Editor in Chief
 GC, Inc.

Subscription Services
info@danguinnhomes.com
 757-438-8624

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though.

This past month I decided to go back to school. I packed up my calculator and my laptop and went away to attend Home Energy Raters School. This gives me the ability to rate homes for the purpose of helping homeowners qualify for energy improvement and energy efficiency mortgage loans as well as qualify for energy star status on new homes. We also are able now to evaluate your home systems efficiency, estimate your energy savings, and help you determine your best options for upgrades. With today's economy who doesn't want to maximize the savings on money that is spent for energy saving upgrades. You may want to determine if an air sealing job was done correctly and how effective was it? Think you can heat and cool the air outside your house? You may be trying to do just that with your HVAC system. Trust me there isn't a big enough system short of nuclear that could accomplish that. I don't think that I would like the glow outside my window either. By using building science methods and technology we will be able to determine where the leaks in your house are and how to address them.

With special equipment we will be able to accurately measure the amount of air infiltration that your house has and compute the amount of fresh air ventilation you need. We also can test if your duct system is leaking and determine the effects of that leakage on your house. With that test information we can help you determine the most economical improvements that can maximize your energy savings. Taking it a step further we evaluate your systems efficiency and can determine from that data how much you may save monthly on your energy bills by upgrading your equipment and estimate how much the new equipment may save you over its life cycle. All of which is very important to evaluating your house and determining possible energy savings that you may be able to obtain.

We have all asked ourselves what is the best thing we can do to save money on our energy bills? We are able help answer that question with test equipment that quantifies the amounts of air infiltration and identifies the problem areas that can lead to your energy losses. That is taking energy loss to a whole new level. Wondering if your windows are leaking? Trying to decide where your money will be best spent on improvements? Need to determine if your heating and cooling system is costing you money? We can help you answer these and many other questions regarding your home.

Contact Elizabeth and Dan Guinn at info@danguinnhomes.com for the free report, "Top Ten Best Ideas to Reduce Utility Bills and Spend the Savings on What You Really Want!" Just send me an email requesting a copy and I will speed one out to you!

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please email us at info@danguinnhomes.com and type cancel subscription in the subject line.

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be writing about this product if it didn't outperform standard construction practices, right? The walls are poured with the equivalent of 2 inches of foam insulation in them. This gives the wall an R-19 insulative value without adding anything to it! If you then build interior walls using standard 2x4 construction and add the standard R-13 batt insulation, you will have a total of R-32 which immensely better than the typical home. Because these walls are poured and then sealed together, when completed, they not only pass the blower door tests, they perform six times better than a standard framed house. This means less of your precious utility bucks floating off into the wild blue yonder which results in a 30 to 40% lower energy bill.

This type of exterior also passes my parent of male teenage child test as well. I dare him to put a hole in this siding with his airsoft gun!

I can foresee your next question: "How much does it cost?" I'm glad you asked. These log homes cost exactly the same as a real log home which would be about \$70 to \$80 per square foot of living space unfinished, roughly the same as real log homes. This is higher than your typical construction but you have to take into account that no extra insulation is required to meet the building code. And did I mention that delivery is free?

I have tried, but I can't find a down side to this product. Having dealt with termites before, and the way the building codes are going to require so much more in the 2009 code, this type of construction makes a lot of sense. Don't take my word for it, take a look at their brochure at <http://www.everlogs.com/pdfs/ELS-Brochure.pdf>

*Taking you from
Dreams to Reality
Psalms 127:1a*

