



## **\$28M LOG CABIN 'TO LAST 400 YEARS' BIGGEST LOG HOME IN THE WORLD**

### **Football field-sized home features rooftop walkway**

By Mark Hume

Vancouver~ A man's home may be his castle, but you don't often hear that said about a log cabin.

Then again, they're not making log cabins like they once did.

The biggest log home in the world is starting to take shape in Williams Lake B.C., where it will be built, numbered like a jigsaw puzzle, then disassembled and shipped to Steamboats Col., to become the centerpiece of a 7,000 acre ranch.

At 114,000 square feet, the \$28-million log home being built for an Oklahoma businessman who made his fortune on print and internet publishing, will have a footprint almost as big as a U.S. football field.

It will be almost twice the size of The Jewel Of The North, a private house on the shores of Moberly Lake, B.C., that was the biggest log home in North America when it was finished last year.

"It's quite a mansion," Andre Chevigny said of the house his company Pioneer Log Homes of British Columbia, is building for the Oklahoma family.

"It will be the largest log home in the world? and there aren't too many log resorts or hotels bigger," Mr. Chevigny said.

The basic package for the house alone will cost about \$6-million. Building it and adding all the other materials, from stonework to windows, plumbing wiring, and heating will push the overall cost to from \$24-million to \$28-million.

It will take about six years to complete, with nearly a year being used to peel, prepare and assemble the log shell in Williams Lake.

"It's made from all oversized logs. It's all Western Red Cedar and when its assembled it will take more

then 60 trucks to haul it down to Colorado," Said Mr. Chevigny, who said it is the most ambitious housing project his company has ever undertaken.

About 50 craftsmen are working on the project, with about 25 different aspects of construction underway at the moment. "I couldn't even begin to say what stage we're at? there is so much going on. It is a very complicated project."

For those who grew up thinking log cabins are dark, moss covered shelters used by trappers and range cowboys, or rustic ski chalets that are drafty and hard to keep warm, It's time for a reality check. Over the past 30 years log home construction has undergone a major revolution, marrying age-old Canadian craftsmanship, with ancient European log joining methods and modern engineering and architectural designs.

"With log construction nowadays we're architecturally challenged," Mr.Chevigny said. "We do stuff with the logs now that the old timers could never have imagined."

Log homes today are among the most beautiful structures being built. "This home has been engineered to last 400 years," said Mr. Chevigny.. "Our client wants it to be there basically forever." Mr. Chevigny declined to discuss his client's private life, but said he could reveal that his client had established a family trust to cover the estate, which includes a clause forbidding hid children from selling the home. There a financial provisions to ensure that they do not have to worry about taxes for 50 years. The house looks out across a broad valley to a mountain range, said Mr. Chevigny. And that vista has been incorporated into the house's design.

"When you walk in, you enter what we call the Mountain Room," said Mr. Chevigny, describing how walls of glass allow an unrestricted view. And if that's not good enough you can always go for a walk on the roof. Mr. Chevigny said one of the building's unique features is a tower and a walkway. "On top of the roof, about 85 feet from the ground level, there is a lookout tower that is open to the stairs. You can walk out of there, in either direction, on a side walk along the ridge of the house."

The roof is covered with copper shingles. The dining room is 60 by 80 feet. There's a library that has as a centerpiece a massive tree stump, complete with roots that rise up through the structure of the house to support the roof. Mr. Chevigny said the crews working on the project are very proud of what they are doing. Most of the company's clients are interested in far more humble homes than this one. The art of log cabin building was fading to obscurity when Bryan Reid Sr. established Pioneer as a handcrafted log home building operation in Williams Lake in 1973. He chose the area, 350 miles North of Vancouver, because of the vast stands of spruce, pine, fir, and western red cedar that are found nearby. At the time, traditional log cabins tough, functional structures used by trappers and ranchers were still being built in the region by locals. Before starting his company, which now routinely builds million dollar homes for clients in the United States, Asia, and Europe, Mr. Reid spent several years "learning the almost lost art of hand-crafted log building from a native Indian (Samson Jack) in the area"

Mr. Chevigny said the company has grown over the years by using skilled craftsmen, striving to keep abreast of the latest techniques in wood construction, using the best timber they can find, and keeping things simple. "People who build log homes have traditional values. They are the best people in the world to work for," he said. "And we're lucky enough to have the best crew in the world here." On the business side, the company strives to have "an old time" personal touch. Mr. Reid, the founder, was at a home show in the U.S. when this client approached him. They talked about log homes and shook hands. He had been looking for the right builder for four years. Asked what it was about the little Williams Lake company that so impressed the U.S. multi-millionaire, Mr. Chevigny replied: "Its about the quality of work. Honestly it wasn't until I got out and started traveling the world that I realized how good we are."