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# TIMBER HOMES

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Home

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# Built for *Love*

Family and friends are welcome  
at a Colorado dream home



ABOVE: Gracefully curved knee braces support the trusses. Chad and Nancy opted for a timber frame cut from Douglas fir because its exceptional strength allows for longer spans to create a totally open great room.

OPPOSITE: Woodhouse: The Timber Frame Company incorporated a unique parallel cord system stylized after railroad trestle trusses wherein top and bottom timber cords are connected by vertical and diagonal timber webs to create an open great room that still can accommodate the heavy snow loads found in this region.

In 1997, Nancy and Chad Spears purchased a condominium in Keystone, Colorado, to rent out and use for off-season vacations. Their dream was to move from Texas to the Colorado Rockies as soon as Chad's son graduated from high school.

Two years later they discovered a beautiful area on Willow Creek in nearby Silverthorne, bought a lot there in 2000, and spent the next two years planning their new home.

"This would be the third house I had built, and I had learned what I wanted to do again and what mistakes to avoid," Nancy says. Their Colorado home would include the best of what they enjoyed in their Texas home.

During their many hours of discussing features and finishes, the Speares never once considered a timber frame home. Neither of them was familiar with this type of construction. Then, while out on a walk in Keystone, they happened upon a timber frame home under construction. After touring the home, they fell in love.

### Time for Timbers

Nancy and Chad's next move was to attend an open house at the Parade of Homes in Breckenridge. There, they met Michael Rath, one of the co-owners of Trilogy Partners. They thoroughly admired Trilogy's workmanship and style and began to discuss different alternatives with Michael. Chad and Nancy knew a timber frame home would be more expensive than a traditional stick frame, but they recognized the potential return on their investment. They were so enthralled with the beauty of the construction and its endless possibilities, they decided to explore timber framing further.

The couple considered several different builders and timber frame companies, but during one of their meetings with Michael, when he opened a spreadsheet to show how Trilogy tracked expenses, Nancy was sold on the company as businesspeople—not just builders. Working in marketing for IBM, where she manages content development for one of the company's internal websites, Nancy appreciates the value of project management and knew Trilogy would provide the level of financial accountability essential for an investment of this magnitude. With the go-ahead from the Speares, Michael hired Woodhouse: The Timber Frame Company to erect the home's frame and enclose it with structural insulated panels (SIPs).

### Open and Welcoming

One of the challenges the new homeowners encountered with their initial design was dealing









Mounds of snow shoveled from the roof all but obscure the front entrance of the Speares' home in Colorado's ski country. For efficient insulation, Woodhouse wrapped the home in structural insulated panels (SIPs) manufactured by Murus. A corrugated metal roof mimics the style used on old Colorado mine buildings.





with their steeply sloping two-thirds acre lot. To make matters trickier, the site includes protected wetlands, which limited the size of the building envelope, the actual amount of land upon which they could build. In the end, a walkout lower level helped the couple use every square inch available to them for their three-story, 4,000-square-foot home.

Steve Keller, founder and co-owner of Woodhouse explains that his company re-worked the Spearses' plans to best accommodate timber frame construction. The design incorporated a composite of truss systems to create an open floor plan and accommodate the heavy snow loads in Silverthorne. "The end result was a very unique design that is not often seen in a timber frame home," Steve says.

Entering through the front door into the main level reveals the totally open great room with living room, dining room and kitchen. Nancy's office is situated immediately to the right of the entry with western and southern exposures, making for a cheery workspace. As a full-time telecommuter, she has a built-in corner desk surrounded by windows on two walls. The office could be used as a craft room or sewing room, or could easily be converted to a bedroom, since a full bathroom is attached.

The mudroom-laundry room between the kitchen and the three-car garage makes the couple's skiing lifestyle easy. "We have built-in 'cubbies' with baskets for gloves and scarves and plenty of coat hooks," Chad says. "We even added a five-foot long bench where we can sit and remove our ski boots, then leave them on the boot warmer to dry."

After a day of romping in the woods and running through the creek, their Bernese mountain dog,

LEFT: Tucked into the opposite corner of the great room from the fireplace, the kitchen features granite counters with beige, green and gray hues that remind Nancy of the Colorado Rocky Mountains where they live. BELOW: Knotty pine decking on the ceiling accents the home's timbers. Trilogy Partners custom-built the alder bookcases that line the second-story balcony.



RIGHT: When the doors to the glass block shower are closed, the oversized shower with dual showerheads and a built-in bench simulates the warmth and relaxation of a steam shower. Granite covers the deck around the jetted tub and the vanity with two large double sinks. BELOW:

To make sure her furniture would be a perfect fit, Nancy modeled her new master bedroom on the floor plan of their Texas home's bedroom. The two-sided gas fireplace in this room doubles as a heater for both the bedroom and adjoining master bath.

Moguli, gets too dirty for even the mudroom. Chad and Nancy included a drain in the sloping floor of the garage. A hose attached to a sink assures Moguli can have a shower and enter the home clean.

A work area in the garage makes room for sports equipment, gardening and painting projects. In the home's lower level, a 400-square-foot workshop/storage/utility area (which could be converted to another bedroom), provides space for Chad to pursue his hobbies when he's not engaged in his private counseling practice. Even though Chad's father was a doctor, he learned woodworking skills from his grandfather, who was a carpenter by trade. Chad helped support himself through college building homes.

On the upper floor, the master bedroom suite has a huge walk-through closet with a built-in window seat





under an arched casement window. A 200-square-foot unfinished attic storage space can be accessed from the closet. An additional guest or child's bedroom with full bath also occupies this level.

The lower-level walkout has a family room flanked by two king-sized bedrooms with private baths. Accommodating guests is very important to Chad and Nancy: Even the lower-level storage/work room has been used by teenage visitors bedding down on blow-up mattresses during spring break. But the real surprise is found in the closet at the bottom of the stairs where Nancy and Chad installed a set of bunk beds hidden behind a louvered door for the enjoyment of younger visitors.

### Sharing the Love

At 9,000 feet elevation, this section of Silverthorne experiences a relatively short growing season—with some years offering fewer than 30 frost-free nights. Undeterred, Chad worked to return the majority of the lot back to its natural state with native grasses and at least 32 different varieties of wildflowers. He added perennial gardens on either side of the stairs leading to the front door and filled them with colorful lupines, columbine, poppies and day lilies.

Each year Chad unflinchingly hangs baskets of lobelia from the timber frame beams, but he varies the types of annuals he includes in his pots and containers on the deck. Nancy reports watching

neighbors and hikers passing by her office windows, who are so delighted by this vibrant array of plants that they often stop and point out to each other the blooms basking in the sunshine.

“When we were building this home, I looked at how beautiful it was and began to feel very guilty for our good fortune,” Nancy recalls. “How could we be so privileged to have so much when so many people have so little?” A good friend of the couple told Nancy that it isn't what they had, but how they used it, that mattered. So, over the years Chad and Nancy have found great joy in sharing the gift of their home. It's not uncommon for the house to be filled with different guests almost non-stop from Thanksgiving to St. Patrick's Day—guests sharing the laughter and the camaraderie of close family and friends who care deeply for each other.

After taking in the splendor of the mountain area or spending time cross-country skiing, horseback riding or hiking, their guests all return to the warmth of a home built with love. **THI**

### RESOURCES

**The Murus Company Inc.**, (800) 626-8787, [www.murus.com](http://www.murus.com)

**Trilogy Partners**, (970) 453-2230, [www.trilogybuilds.com](http://www.trilogybuilds.com)

**Woodhouse: The Timber Frame Company**, (800) 227-4311, [www.timberframe1.com](http://www.timberframe1.com)

The Speares' property is situated between two 13,000-foot mountains and is across the road from the Willow Creek trailhead entrance to the White National Forest. The stock pond ditch, also legally known as the “Bruce Springstream,” wraps around two sides of the home and is audible from the exterior living spaces.

**WEB EXTRA:**  
Look for floor plans at  
[TimberHomesIllustrated.com](http://TimberHomesIllustrated.com)