

## How to Build on a Budget | Tips from Professional Builders

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## How To: Stick to Your Home-Building Budget

Log home-building tips from a professional builder and a decor guru.

by: [Leah Kerkman](#) | [Log Home Design](#)

Here at [Log Home Design](#), we don't believe that having a limited budget should limit your style. Matthew (a builder for almost 20 years) and Irene (a DIY decor maven) Witt built their charming log cabin in the Northern Georgia mountains. This hands-on duo has graciously agreed to share their lessons learned while building their own home. From choosing the perfect site to selecting finishing materials, this couple gives their best advice on how to build on a budget.

### 1. Save everything.

If you're building your own home, chances are you're creative and pretty handy with a toolbox. Matthew saved every wood scrap and was able to design a stunning balcony rail with leftover pieces.

### 2. Reign in on finishing materials.

Matthew and Irene warn not to get carried away with fixtures, windows and doors. "You don't need to go with lower grade," explains Matthew. "You should just shop around. In cabins sometimes, you can get away with using mid- to low-range because you're going for a rustic look." Irene agrees, saying "Down the road, you can always upgrade."

### 3. Find compromises.

The Witts chose a manufactured log that had a rough finish on it rather than going with a handcrafted profile. As Matthew puts it, "We liked the hand-hewn look, but we liked the machine-hewn price."

### 4. Use faux stone for your hearth.

Irene and Matthew both swear by manufactured stone for chimneys. Even as builder for two decades, Matthew says you can't tell the difference. Plus, says Irene, "You can save a lot of money on concrete pouring, since you have to reinforce your floor if you're using real rock."

### 5. Get creative.

Instead of using pine tongue-in-groove paneling, which is pricey, Irene concocted a plaster mud, paint and sand mixture to apply between ceiling beams for a rustic look on a shoestring.

### 6. Don't scrimp on stains.

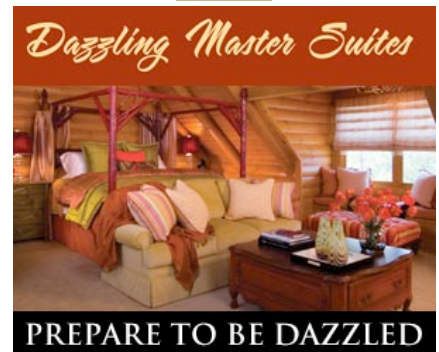
The one place not to be stingy is when it comes to your exterior stain, say Irene and Matt. "It's very import to go ahead and budget in the highest quality stains you can afford," Irene suggests. "Technically, you should re-stain every 2 to 5 years, but the better your stains, the less frequently you have to do that." Matthew also notes that a darker stain will provide a better block against UV penetration.

### 7. Put off what you can.

Some things don't make sense to postpone, but where you can, leave rooms or spaces unfinished until you can afford to finish them off. Initially, the Witts only built two small decks off their home. But taking advantage of their gorgeous mountain location was important to them, so a few years after they built their home, they went back and added outdoor spaces until two full sides of their home boasted decks.



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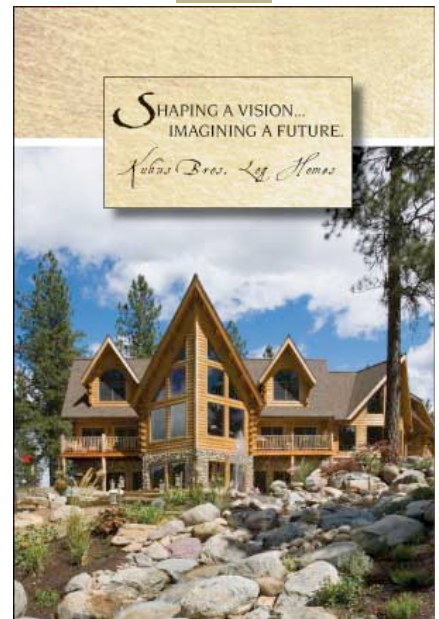
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