

GEM QUALITY HOMES SHINE AT TOMMIE AWARDS

Armstrong Home Builder Wins Silver For Timber Frame Project

ARMSTRONG - Armstrong's **GEM Quality Homes** are rocking the construction community.

Owners **Graham and Amanda Watson** took home their first **Tommie Award** this February, for a stunning timber frame home.

Graham has been working in the construction industry since 2000, when he started a carpentry internship. He got his trades ticket in 2007, and works as a timber framer for a number of years.

About seven years ago, Graham and his wife, Amanda, decided to step out and start their own company.

"Ever since I started, I knew I wanted to have my own company," says Graham. The move to jump into the construction world brought some initial challenges for the Watsons.

"It was probably the worst time to start a company," says Amanda. "We had just gone through a recession, and things were tight, but we figured that if we could make it then, we would be able to handle anything."

Fortunately, GEM Quality Homes was hired on a major project in Chase, where they built a number of structures on a ranch, including hay barns, horse shelters, and a large farm house.

For the past seven years, GEM has come to specialize in many forms of timber frame construction, as well as Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) construction.

"ICF is kind of like lego, where you piece it together," he says. "Sometimes we'll just do the foundation, and sometimes we do the entire structure."

GEM does a lot of work in the agricultural world, including equestrian structures, hay shelters, and even chicken barns.

This year, they were recognized as a Silver Finalist for a 2018 Tommie Award for Excellence in Single Family Detached Homes valued at \$1.5M-\$2M.

Graham had a close friend from **Canadian Timberframes** who had specifically recommended GEM Quality Homes for the job on 9947 Mara West Road.

"The fact that I could build this project alongside such a close friend made the project special for us," he says.

The timber frame was constructed in Sicamous for a client who wanted to build a home that would accommodate his dream garage.

"The garage was amazing,"



A large natural fireplace in the main living area



GEM Quality Homes owners Amanda and Graham Watson



The main living space at the award winning 9947 Mara West Rd.



The master ensuite bathroom has a curved glass shower, floating vanities with underlighting, and custom concrete countertops

says Graham. It's the only garage where I felt I had to take my shoes off when I went in."

GEM were the general contractors for the build, and worked closely with Canadian Timberframes to complete the project.

"The bathrooms were especially amazing," says Amanda. "All four of the house's bathrooms were impressive, especially the master bathroom. It has a custom shower with custom curved glass, a floating bench, floating cabinetry, and everything lights up when you walk in."

The finished project resulted not only in recognition at the Tommie Awards, but in a happy client.

"We've been very fortunate with our clients and employees," says Amanda. "We've had a lot of happy clients who enjoy the process, and a majority of our clients end up becoming friends."

For GEM Quality Homes, the happy client is key to success. They see a lot of value in word of mouth and a positive

reputation. For the Watsons, positive personal interactions between the construction crew and the client are key in offering the best possible experience.

"I think both us and our employees are easy to get along with," says Graham. "I think negative advertisement goes

a lot further than good advertisement, so we try to ensure that our customers are always satisfied and happy."

The Watsons have several good friends who have played key roles in their success.

"There have been some influential people who've helped me along the way," says Graham. "Brad Marsh from Re/Max Vernon is my best friend, and he's helped us a lot with the business side of things."

He also received a lot of help from Rick Klein of Quality First Homes and Doug Clark (Graham's old boss), who have helped with some of the day to day construction questions.

"We're just average people with a young family, but we have been extremely fortunate," says Amanda. "We had to work really hard, but we're fortunate to have met the people we've met, and to have the employees we have."

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