

# THIS OLD HOUSE® BUILDS NEW PREFAB TIMBERFRAME HOME IN WESTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Show Experts To Build Sustainably Using State-of-the-Art Technology.

Newswire Services

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Concord, MA, -- The Emmy Award-winning television show This Old House partners with custom homebuilding company, Bensonwood, to build a new timberframe home that will reflect old New England barns built centuries ago. Cutting-edge techniques, including extensive uses of prefabrication and green technologies, will be implemented to construct a new home on property owned by the Favat family in Weston, Massachusetts. Brand new episodes featuring the Weston project will premiere nationally on PBS this October (check [www.thisoldhouse.com/tvschedule](http://www.thisoldhouse.com/tvschedule) or your local listings).

The town of Weston, about 20 miles west of Boston, was a vibrant farming community when it was founded in 1713. Over the years, as Weston expanded into a suburb, the farmhouses, fields, and agricultural barns were slowly lost one by one. Today, almost 300 years since the first barn was raised in town, only a few proud survivors remain. It's the utilitarian spaces, period details, and rustic character of these old barns that are the inspiration for the Favat family's new home.

Despite being located on a main thoroughfare, the family loves their property, much of it on wetlands, with its active wildlife and bubbling brook. In recent years, however, Pete, Amy, and their children, 15-year-old Cian and 12-year-old Juliette, have found themselves outgrowing their modest 1970's-era home. After a year of trying to donate the existing house to charity, there were no takers, so the next best solution for them was to deconstruct their old house to make way for a new timberframe home.

"We were drawn to the Favat's desire to build a new house that feels like an old barn," said This Old House producer Deborah Hood. "We've been looking for the right opportunity to build new, and this project will allow us to do that in a forward-thinking way using prefabrication and sustainable products and practices."

Modern innovations and ideas layered over a traditional timberframe will create a dream home for the Favats. To achieve this goal, This Old House is calling upon long-time friend and show collaborator Tedd Benson and his team at Bensonwood, a New Hampshire-based company mainly responsible for reviving the art of timberframing, now largely using contemporary prefabrication techniques. As both the architectural firm and prefabricator on the project, Bensonwood will build 75 percent of the house in a controlled workshop environment. Entire wall systems and room modules will be built, outfitted for plumbing and wiring, with windows and finishes added, in many cases, right in the workshop. Additionally, the timberframe will be created using traditional hand-craftsmanship, as well as the latest computer-aided woodworking technology, providing a level of structural integrity that will last hundreds of years. Many of the home's components will be assembled onsite by crane over a three-week period in early June.

"We've worked with Tedd Benson and his expert timberframers for years," said This Old House host Kevin O'Connor. "It's exciting for us now to see just how far his company has come and how the building industry in general is starting to push the envelope. This project gives us the chance to share new ideas about building with our viewers."

The design incorporates two of the Favat's most important needs, to have more open space and to maintain the sense of togetherness they enjoy in their current home. The first floor of this new 3,500-sq.-ft. house will feature a great hall with a fireplace that is open to the kitchen, television area, and sitting room. Douglas Fir timbers will frame this dramatic living space, and the emphasis on exposed wood and stone will add to the rustic, earthy look the family loves.

As the Favats are an environmentally conscious family, This Old House will be using reclaimed and recycled materials throughout the new home. Most of the timbers for the project will be made from salvaged or sustainably harvested wood, as will the interior and exterior wood siding, and wide plank oak floors. Roofing shingles will be constructed from recycled rubber, paints will be low VOC, modular carpet tiles will be made of wool provided by a sustainable supplier, and lighting and appliances will be energy efficient.

Green elements have been incorporated into the design through the use of solar hot water, a photovoltaic roof array for supplemental power, and state-of-the-art mechanical systems. A rain garden also is being constructed behind the shed in their backyard to control run-off and protect the wetland area of the property. The family garden will remain, enhanced by a new composting system and rain barrels for irrigation.

With the sensitive deconstruction of the Favat's existing home, 85 percent of the materials will be salvaged for resale and reuse, many of them in a nearby Habitat for Humanity project. Deconstruction will be done by The ReStore, a non-profit organization based in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Thisoldhouse.com will feature progress of the Weston project 24/7 through four Webcams powered by [EarthCam](http://EarthCam.com). Visitors to [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com) also will be able to access other special features, such as a "before" photo gallery, project overview, and time-lapse archive where an in-depth look at the project's progress may be tracked once the transformation has concluded. This Old House magazine will feature the Weston project starting with the September 2008 issue.