



MENELAWS

— CONTRACTING CORP. —



AT HOME IN THE

KOOTENAYS

By: Greg Akeson

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An Interview with Joel Menelaws

The History

Menelaws Contracting is owned and operated by Joel Menelaws. Menelaws employs between 15-20 people and has been in operation for 11 years. Originally called K&M Contracting Ltd., the name changed to Menelaws Contracting a year and a half ago. They specialize in custom homebuilding and large scale commercial and residential renovations.

Growing up in the west Kootenay region of British Columbia, Joel's father and brother were both carpenters, so it was only natural for Joel to join in the family profession from a young age. He was, however, the first in his family of carpenters to begin his own venture with Menelaws Contracting.



Business

Menelaws' business consists of around 80% new builds, with the remainder being renovations. While there are more unknowns that come with a renovation project, they are also more interesting and provide an opportunity to be more creative as each one presents a unique situation. For materials, they work with Home Hardware in Trail, British Columbia; they get their concrete from West K Concrete in Genelle, and they use Priority Concrete Pumping in Crescent Valley, B.C.

Menelaws builds about three to four new homes a year with the majority of customers being from the west coast as well as the United States.



A project of particular interest for Joel was a multi-storey log home, built in partnership with Pioneer Log Homes, featured on the TV show 'Lumber Kings.



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Mountain Building

Joel outlines some of the difficulties common in the region: “cutting your forms around rock faces to contour the face of the rock, so that you can put your foundation in; a lot of drilling and a lot of different epoxies to anchor into the rocks and a lot of blasting; these are common things we have to do. We’re currently blasting on a site. We’ve been blasting for six months to get a new build in.”



Mountain Weather

In addition to the challenges presented by the B.C. terrain, another challenging aspect of all builds is the weather. Returning after a weekend off to pour footings for one new build, Joel recalls the hardship of working in mountain storms: “all the footings were full of snow; it was a freak snowfall, but we had concrete coming, so we had to get 15 torches and we all melted snow out of the footings because there was so much rebar you couldn’t shovel it. Then, the concrete truck got stuck and we had to order an emergency pumper, which got stuck; so we had to order another pumper to pump the concrete to the stuck pumper in order to pump it up to the job site. It can be very challenging!”

Joel enjoys many things about the life he has built with Menelaws Contracting. He enjoys working with his crew, looking back at the many homes they have built, and being heavily involved in the design process. Looking forward to the future, Joel sees Menelaws expanding and going in the direction of building multi-family developments.



Employment at Menelaws

For those interested in being a part of the future of Menelaws Contracting, Joel says, “we’ve got great leaders, full benefits, great wages, and it’s a great work environment that we can provide for anyone who is interested in the trades.”

For more information on Menelaws Contracting, visit their website at <https://www.menelaws.com/>





Volume of Work

Currently, Menelaws builds about three to four new homes a year with the majority of customers being from the west coast as well as the United States. Eighty percent of their new builds are designed by All-In Designs. Projects of note include an Airbnb at Red Mountain Ski Hill as well as a mix of new and renovated long term rental units owned by Menelaws.

Log Builds

A project of particular interest for Joel was a multi-storey log home, built in partnership with Pioneer Log Homes, featured on the TV show 'Lumber Kings.' Menelaws took part in the assembly and finishing work of the home after the original had burned down. It was the first log home for Menelaws and provided a learning curve and the gain of new experiences.

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Mountain Style

The most common building style in the Kootenays is the 'mountain style,' with lots of big timber construction giving new builds a natural wood feel. Building in B.C.'s mountainous and hilly terrain presents challenges that builders in other parts of the country may not be all that familiar or experienced with.



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