

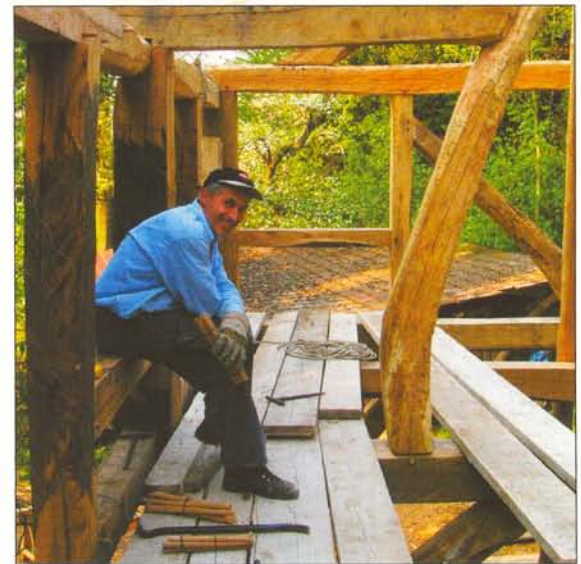
## Franz's Frame

### Khya Saban

In the pleasant lowlands around Stattersdorf, Austria, just outside St. Polten, to the East of Vienna, CF member Franz Ambichl has been stockpiling timber for twenty years. Franz fells the oak trees and hauls them out of his family's forest to the mill with his self-built log arch. The cut timbers were then surreptitiously stacked around his property. The framing phase of the project began in late March 2006, in twenty centimetres of snow. Each timber was unique, so the first two days of the project were spent deciding which timber would be used for individual posts, beams and braces. If, by chance, the ideally dimensioned timber wasn't available for say, a collar tie or sill plate, Franz would drive off in his tractor and cut the needed timber from the forest.

The frame Franz designed has a strong medieval component; one that suits the randomly dimensioned timbers very well. There are many posts meeting wavy beams, supported by curved and winding braces. This is a dream realised for Franz, and he chose his compatriots carefully, importing them from both England and Canada. Gabriel Langlands and Dave Madden came over with keen ideas and sharpened chisels. Utilizing both square rule and scribing techniques, they created unique scarf joints and found the way through or around each twisted timber to create an amazing three-dimensional puzzle of solid oak. They put in long days, scribing, cutting, fitting and scrutinizing the frame. By early May, as the pear blossoms opened, the structure began to take form. The three cross frames and two wall plates went up, and the second floor jetty followed, using a one tonne chain hoist and a lot of creativity. The final product is an incredible looking, and impressively strong two-storied shop, which Franz will use to pursue one of his many passions, machining the parts to build his motorcycles.

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Photos  
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- Top** Placing window sill
- Above** Franz
- Below** Chain hoist and collar tie
- Opposite top** Upper wall frame
- Opposite insert** Doorway and brace
- Opposite below** Franz Dave Gabriel





Photos: Khya Saban