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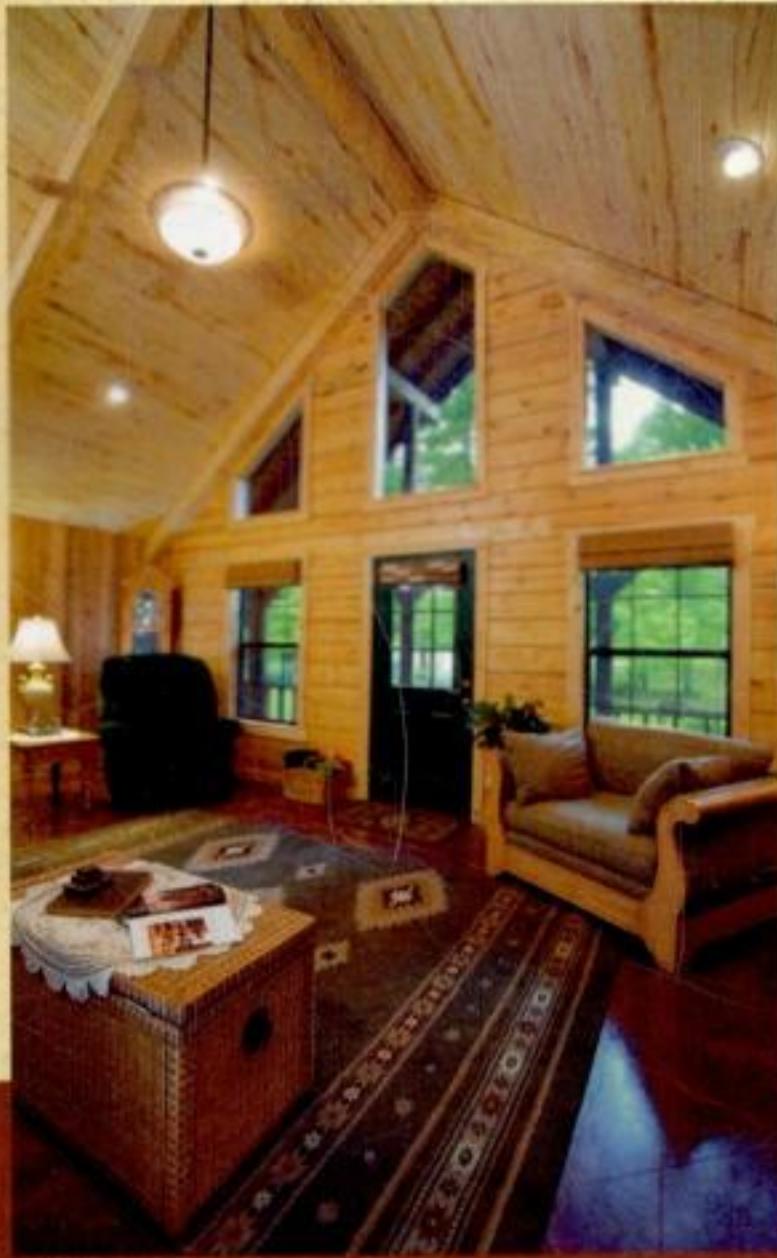
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Roger Wade photo

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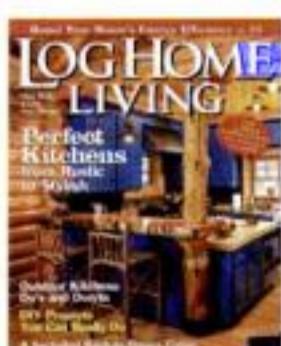
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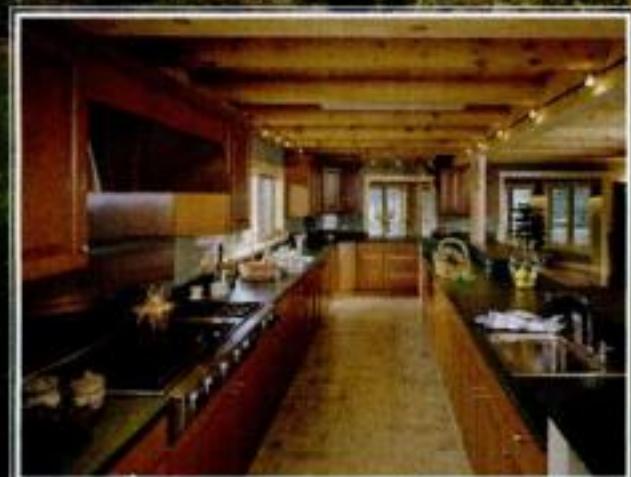
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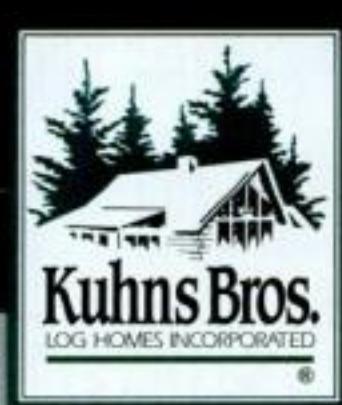
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**[Loghome.com/floorplans](http://Loghome.com/floorplans)**

### **WEIGH IN WITH QUESTIONS & VIEWS**

Forum topics in the Log Home Neighborhood cover a broad range. The chats get especially lively when the log-home experts weigh in with their views and explanations. One of the liveliest debates is whether contracting with a general contractor works out better if you go with a fixed-cost contract or a cost-plus one. It started back in January and was still running in May. Homeowners weigh in with what worked best for them, and contractors and loggies tell their side. Even though they make a good case for their position, their explanations offer pros and cons for you to consider when it comes to deciding which course will likely be the best for you.

**[Loghomeu.com/costs](http://Loghomeu.com/costs)**

### **FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK**

Tell us what's on your mind, from probing questions to random musings, and read what others have to say about all things pertaining to log homes. Recent postings have noted log homes popping up in TV commercials, tips for additions, secrets for lighting a log home and experiences with corn cob blasting to renew old logs. You'll also have regular opportunities to win prizes. Check it out.

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### **FREE DESKTOP BACKGROUNDS**

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# Elbowroom

PEOPLE WHO PINE for a log home so they can downsize baffle me. We have two homes. Together, they total 2,400 square feet. The main reason we bought our 1,300-square-foot second place was because one day we realized we'd accumulated so much stuff that it was either rent a storage unit or buy another house.

From an amortization standpoint, buying made sense. The downside of having two houses is trying to remember which house has what stuff, which explains how we wound up with four sofas, six if you count the daybeds. That's us, though. There may be people able to get along with only two or three.

Combining our square footage into just one house would certainly cut down on the sofas, but that doesn't mean we'd want the same amount of space and certainly not less, not if we're building our dream home. My idea of right sizing would be about 3,000 square feet. That'd allow room for overnight guests, who now stay in nearby motels — unless they're willing to sleep on a sofa.

A while ago, I was fortunate to visit a most spectacular home, belonging to a couple who planned it as their retirement home. It boasts 8,000 square feet but has only three bedrooms and doesn't seem as sprawly as you'd suspect when you hear "8,000 square feet." Even though it's more than twice the size of my dream, the wife kvetched several times while I was there that she couldn't find enough room for her yoga mat.

The kitchen was — I'm not exaggerating — bigger than both of mine put together. It could easily hold six sofas and still have room left to prepare and fix food without tripping over the sofas or bumping into other people. That's the main reason my dream home would be 3,000 square feet, because at least 900 square feet of it would be the kitchen.

I don't need that much room for culinary endeavors, but my dream isn't to get by with what I need. It's to get what I want, and that means room to function in the kitchen without immovable obstacles or gawkers setting down their drink glasses and fingers where I'm wielding knives. It'd be my workplace, so, yes, elbowroom would suit me mighty fine.

But that's my dream. Yours may be to go from 3,000 or even 8,000 square feet down to 1,100 or 1,300. If so, all the best to you. Consider, though: You save and plan your whole life for a home to reward yourself, a place you hope children and grandchildren will treasure visiting, and where you can store all the souvenirs of your life — and you want a home barely big enough for just one sofa? That doesn't sound like dreaming; more like settling.

Log homes aren't things you settle for. They're places you aspire to and strive for. So, treat yourself to some elbowroom. And enough space for a yoga mat.

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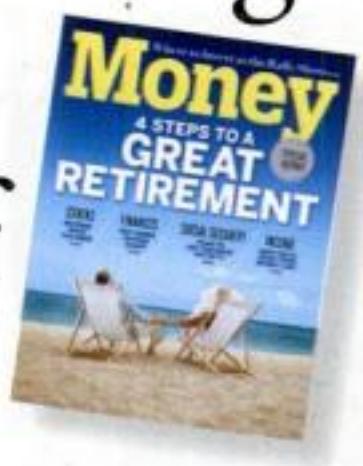
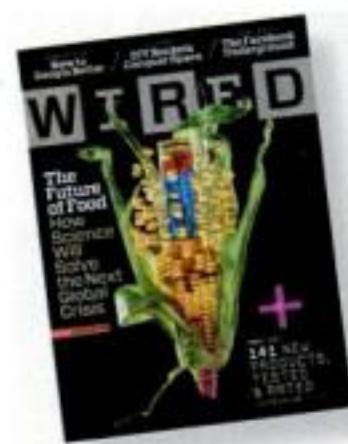
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## ask the editors

**Q:** We're planning to chink the joints of our log home. Our log-home company recommends using backer rods. What are these, and do we really need them?

**A:** Log-home buyers who prefer chinking usually do so for looks, but chinking also serves as a sealant between logs. Using a backing material behind any sealant serves two purposes: to assure the proper thickness of the sealant, so it can stretch and contract without breaking, and to provide a surface that the sealant will not bond to, so it can stretch without tearing away from the wood. The dynamics of sealing an exterior joint or crack in wood is the same regardless of the width of the gap or the product used. If the wood is unseasoned at the time a sealant is applied, the wood will shrink with time. In order to compensate for the shrinkage, the sealant must be applied so it can stretch. When a sealant is applied too thick, once it cures, it won't be able to stretch enough to compensate for the wood's shrinkage and may rip apart. When applied too thin, it becomes too weak to stretch without breaking.

Several backing materials help chinking maintain a tight seal. Round backer rods, which are relatively inexpensive and come in a variety of sizes, work best for smaller gaps, joints and cracks since they're flexible and can be pushed into a crevice without needing to be nailed or stapled. Grip Strip, which comes in widths from 1.25 to 5 inches, is designed for sealing larger gaps. Similar in composition to a backer rod, it can be squeezed in between round logs and provides a flat sur-



face. For wide chink joints between squared logs, use polyisocyanurate board (polyiso or Rmax) or expanded polystyrene (EPS) beadboard. Be sure to keep one side of the beadboard covered with foil to help reflect the heat and apply chinking over the foil side.

Materials you should never use as backing include blue board or any other colored beadboard (it outgases and creates blisters in the sealant), open cell foams (they absorb water), extruded polystyrene (causes blisters) or anything you're not sure about.

For joints that are too narrow to insert even the smallest-diameter backer rod, a narrow strip of water-resistant masking tape works quite well. Don't use masking tape that wrinkles when it gets wet since the wrinkles may show through the sealant. Another option is pinstripe tape, available at most automotive supply stores in widths down to 1/8 inch. The tape is vinyl, so it's waterproof, and sealants won't adhere to it.



To prevent chinking from stretching too much (above), use a backing material such as Grip Strip (top).

PentaChink Systems photos

## media

**The New Outdoor Kitchen: Cooking up a kitchen for the way you live and play** (Taunton, \$19.95) by Deborah Krasner. This book takes all the guesswork out of outdoor kitchen design. Covering everything from smart site selection and electrical considerations to silverware and china, the author offers practical advice on how to plan and build a kitchen that fits in with your home and lifestyle.

Order these books from the Log & Timber Home Bookstore: 800-850-7279 or [loghome.com/shop](http://loghome.com/shop).

## Outdoor Kitchens and Fireplaces

(Schiffer, \$19.95) by Tina Skinner. With more than 100 pages of photographs, this overview of outdoor living spaces goes far beyond open-air kitchens. If you're looking for creative design ideas, here's a showcase of outdoor kitchens, fireplaces, patios, bars and much more that reveal a taste of the endless possibilities.

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## log on

### Finding Online Design Help

These four web sites provide custom-design services, as well as an array of existing plans to serve as the starting point for your own design. Some of these firms sell plans directly; others design your home by using your ideas, sketches and compilation of pictures of homes that appeal to you.

#### **Designma.com**

Winner of *Log Home Living's* 2009 Best Floor Plan Award, Murray Arnott Design stresses the importance of working with clients to understand the spatial environment of their home. "We assume the role of translator," explains the site, which features a portfolio of 14 designs, ranging from 1,278 to 6,285 square feet.

#### **Dirksondesign.com**

Dirkson Design Services boasts more than 30 years' experience designing custom log homes. The site features a catalog of stock plans, costing from \$350 to \$1,150, and promises not only to refine your custom design, but also to make suggestions to lower construction costs.

#### **Log-home-plans.com**

Log Home Plans & Kits offers more than 100 plans, from cabins to full-size homes, from its 11 sponsors and provides links to their sites by clicking on the size plan you're interested in.

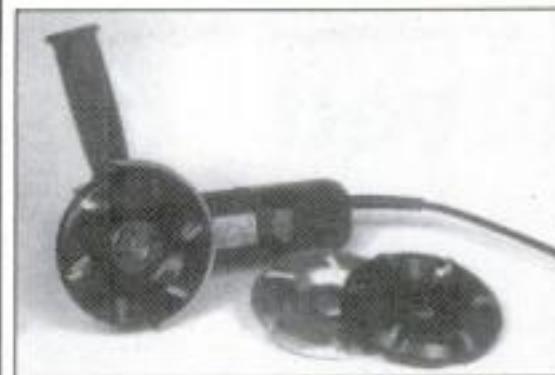
#### **Loghomedesign.ca**

R.C.M. CAD Design Drafting Ltd., winner of *Log Home Living's* 2010 Floor Plan Design Award for homes under 2,000 square feet, is headed by Cyril Courtois, who designed log homes for Japan and Korea before moving into the North American market. Besides providing paper plans, each project includes an interactive CD-ROM showing two exterior animations of the log work and finished home.

**Outdoor Kitchen Ideas That Work: Creative design solutions for your home** (Taunton, \$19.95) by Lee Anne White. Dreams meet reality in this guide to practical kitchen design. With its wide variety of examples of entire kitchens, as well as the individual components, the book shows how to make attractive, realistic designs work for your home and landscape.

Read about outdoor kitchens on page 52.

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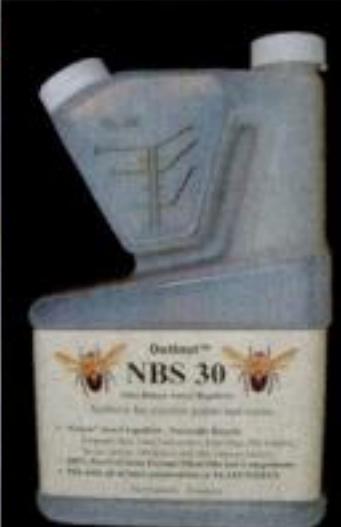
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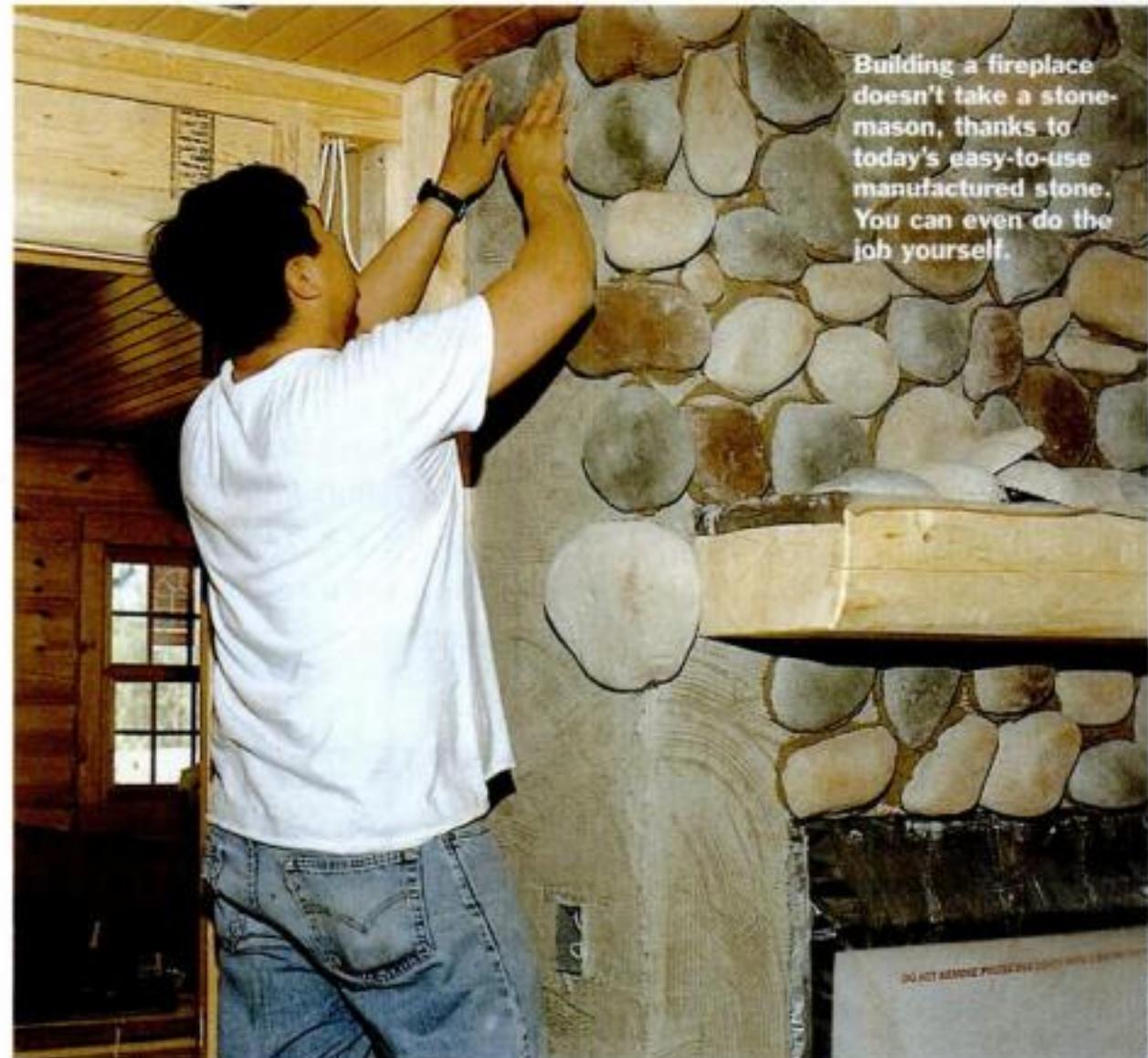
# Getting Involved

## Examine the pros and cons of doing it yourself.

IT STARTS SIMPLY — a change of paint color or a fresh coat of varnish, some touch-up caulking or replacing a fixture. But somehow it ends up being a full-blown “gut-and-rehab.” After all, if we’re going to repaint, why not use the opportunity to get rid of that worn carpet and put down the hardwood we wanted in the first place? And as long as we’re changing the floor, let’s get rid of that generic trim and add stylish solid-wood trim that better matches the overall look we want. But the trim won’t look right with those cheap doors. Suddenly it’s either time to call a contractor or don safety goggles, hearing protection and a hard hat.

Doing it yourself (DIY) has several things to recommend it, along with some cautions. Three attractions of DIY for major remodeling projects are flexibility in scheduling and planning, satisfaction and money. The main drawbacks of DIY, on the other hand, are flexibility in scheduling and planning, satisfaction and money. So much for simple choices. I’ll explain.

DIY projects offer more flexibility in scheduling than contractor-run projects. This is both good and bad. A major remodel disrupts your life. Fixtures are out of commission, floors are left bare, and some construction steps can generate a considerable mess. Contractors have to take a “git-er-done” approach, and you simply live with the results of their workflow. The project gets done faster, but the kitchen, guest bedroom or bath may be out of commission when in-laws arrive for a visit. When you tackle the project yourself, you have the flexibility of slowing down or speeding up to match other circumstances. You can also break steps down to allow some areas you’re working on to remain partially functional while you work on others. For example, you can leave plumbing functional while you change out cabinetry and remove old flooring, working around



Building a fireplace doesn't take a stone-mason, thanks to today's easy-to-use manufactured stone. You can even do the job yourself.

the toilet until the new floor and cabinets are ready to install.

You have more flexibility in planning with DIY. This, too, is both good and bad. You can hold off making some design decisions until you’ve removed existing finishes to get a better idea of the raw space. In order to bid fairly, a contractor has to know the details of a project beforehand. Making changes once the project is under way means paying a lot more, plus having the contractor and helpers as houseguests longer than most people prefer. DIY allows you to interrupt a project while you bargain shop or wait for an upcoming home show to get ideas.

Satisfaction with the results of a DIY project depends on several things: your temperament and skill, the nature of your

project and your level of tolerance for the unexpected. If you have an obsession with perfectly parallel and uniform but no experience laying tile, don’t take on your master bath as a first project. Don’t choose finish materials that cry “amateur” if everything doesn’t align perfectly. A good cabinet installer can align cabinets so the joints where units meet virtually disappear. This ability requires hands-on experience under a variety of situations since cabinets and walls are constantly conspiring to create shoddy installations. Professionals are on to these traits, but are you? If not, can you live with the results?

You can thwart perfectionist tendencies by choosing finishes and methods that allow some flexibility. Drywall comes to mind. Finishing drywall so the

seams between sheets disappear is an art. Professional finishers can do an entire house in a few days, whereas a homeowner with limited experience may spend a week on one room, only to have the seams come screaming through the paint.

Over the years, I've taught a number of homeowners my simple, don't-fight-it approach to drywall finishing. When the drywall is up, do only the first step of joint finishing, bedding drywall tape in joint compound and smoothing so that the tape is barely covered by a thin film of joint compound. When this dries, grab a paint roller with a coarse texture roller sleeve installed. Dip it directly into the drywall mud and have fun. Roll the drywall compound randomly onto the entire wall in great swirls and wandering strokes. This technique will result in a surface that looks like an amateurish frosted cake. Now use a smooth-edged rectangular trowel like those used by masons and tile setters to knock down any peaks and roughly smooth the surface. Take care to leave some of the irregularities created by the

texture roller. When the mud dries, paint as you would any other wall. The result will be similar to the walls of an ancient adobe building or old Tuscan villa. This look goes particularly well with logs and stone, and there shouldn't be any drywall joints showing through. Generally, such rustic materials and methods are much more tolerant of irregularities because, well, the irregularities are often what make things rustic.

Money often plays a big role in the decision to tackle a project instead of hiring it out. Half to two-thirds of a project often goes toward labor. Labor costs make up a larger portion of remodeling projects than new construction because of the demolition phase, plus the need to work much more carefully around existing construction and homeowner needs. Several factors can tip the balance one way or the other.

Have you got the tools for the undertaking? Many remodeling projects rely on the tools that can be found in most basic home shops. Others require specialized equipment, such as tile saws, hammer

drills or scaffolding. Fortunately, you can rent many specialty tools. But beware. If it takes you a month to do what a contractor could do in a week and you're renting the equipment to do it, any DIY savings can quickly evaporate. Note that skilled tool aficionados often use this very argument to increase their tool inventory. ("But, I can buy a reciprocating saw for what three weeks rental costs, and we'd have it around for your next project.")

The last topics to determine your DIY potential are safety and structure. Safety is a major concern in any type of construction project but especially for remodeling. Blindly cutting into walls can quickly and unpleasantly reveal the location of pipes and wires. Accidentally sawing through the 30-amp wire that feeds your stove is something I discourage. Breaking up tile without safety glasses can leave you permanently blinded or disfigured. Before tackling any DIY project, understand the demolition and construction steps involved and their safety implications. Know where and when you need to turn off power or

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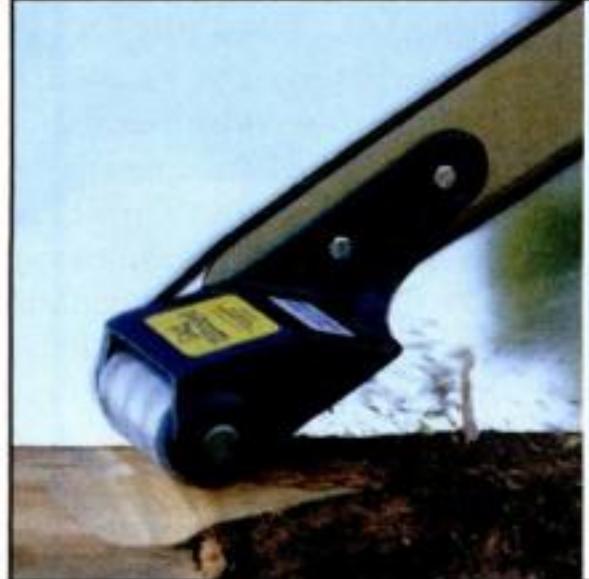
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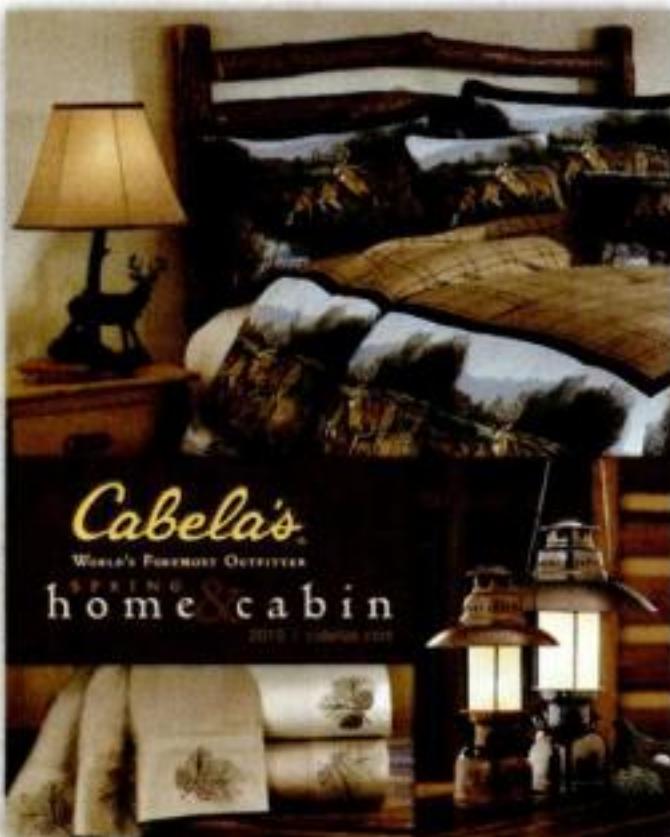
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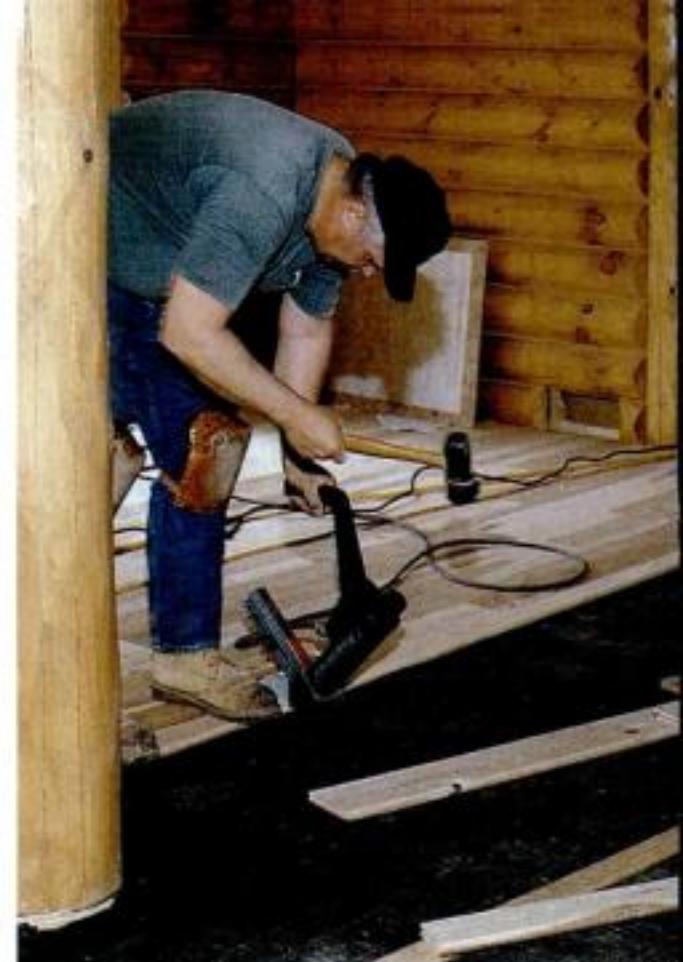
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**Having proper tools is the first step to a successful DIY project, but you also need the right temperament and skill.**

water. Be especially careful when doing anything that could affect your home's structural integrity.

In a former home of mine, a tiny bedroom window looked out on a beautiful woodland view that cried out for a picture window. So I designed a picture window with window seat and flanking bookcases (to solve another problem). My wife, a genuine "git-er-doner" was mystified when the first load I hauled into the bedroom was a stack of 8-by-8-inch timbers.

"I thought you'd just take out the window and chain saw a larger opening," she said.

"That's the plan," said I. "However, you'll notice that we are removing a window 3 feet wide and replacing it with one 9 feet wide within 3 feet of the corner of the house. Instead of a permanent droop in the roof with the pesky leaks that can accompany such, I'm setting up temporary bracing that I'll remove after I've installed the new window header."

If you're having trouble following what I just described, you need an education in how houses are built. Books on remodeling or a visit with a contractor friend can save you much grief, money and maybe even your health. Note that log walls are a little more tolerant of chain saws than conventional framing; however, they don't eliminate risk entirely. For example, cutting a large opening directly beneath a major

beam in a log wall isn't wise.

With an understanding of the pros and cons of going DIY, let's consider some specific projects and how DIY-able they might be. Kitchens and baths are two of the most frequent remodels and generally the most costly. A major project may involve electrical, plumbing, rough carpentry, finish carpentry, cabinet installation, floor and wall covering, and perhaps heating and cooling system changes. In some areas, building codes may require that licensed professionals handle electrical and plumbing work. Everything else is up for grabs.

If you are moderately handy and have basic carpentry tools, you can tackle most tasks involved in a kitchen or bath remodel. If you have an aptitude but limited experience, consider dropping in on a tile-setting or vinyl-flooring seminar offered by a local building-supply store. Saturday morning remodeling and home-building TV shows are good sources of information, although the ease and speed with which professionals work can lull you into a false sense of security. Study them for the tools used and general tips.

Installing a wood stove or fireplace also falls within potential DIY territory. Here you may be dealing with structural issues as well as strict building-code requirements, so make sure you understand both before cutting anything.

Flooring, except for carpeting, often works as a DIY project. Vinyl, vinyl tile, floating laminate or engineered wood floors require few special tools, and those aren't expensive. For the more ambitious, installing and finishing solid hardwood floors is also a possibility. However, I'd stay away unless you can lay your hands on a special type of floor sander with orbital sanding heads instead of a traditional drum sander. Drum sanders are essentially a cross between a self-propelled lawnmower and a high-powered belt sander. Without the touch acquired only through experience, pushing "start" on a drum sander can send you careening across the room as the machine cuts a nasty, permanent gouge in that new expensive flooring.

Applying tongue-and-groove on walls and ceiling is another popular pastime for log-home owners. If your budget prevented you from installing it when your

home was built or your tastes have simply changed, building-supply stores offer thin tongue-and-groove that goes on easily over drywall. Buy or rent a portable miter saw. A portable air compressor and finish nail gun will move things faster and neater.

High-quality cabinetmaking requires a fairly well-equipped shop, with at least a table saw and jointer, plus knowing how to use them. For smaller cabinet projects, such as a bath vanity, consider repurposing

a piece of old furniture from a flea market or yard sale. For example, a little work with a saber saw and some varnish can turn a worn oak dresser into a handsome vanity.

In the final analysis, four questions can answer whether to DIY. Do you want to? Do you have the time? Do you have the skills and tools or a way to acquire them? Finally, can you afford it? If you can answer all these positively, it's time to make sawdust. ■

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The advertisement features a photograph of a rustic kitchen with light-colored wooden cabinets, a dark countertop, and a large window overlooking a forest. Overlaid text reads: "THE RECIPE FOR THE PERFECT *lifestyle...* ... BEGINS WITH THE PERFECT INGREDIENTS". To the right, three columns of text highlight features: "innovative designs", "attention to every detail", and "unparalleled craftsmanship". The Jim Barna logo, featuring a stylized tree and the text "JIM BARNA LOG & TIMBER HOMES", is positioned at the bottom right. The tagline "Quality you can trust. Lasting beauty you will treasure." is centered at the bottom, along with the phone number "Call 1-800-962-4734" and the website "or visit us online at www.jimbarna.com". The email address "email: info@jimbarna.com" and the slogan "DREAM IT. BUILD IT. LIVE IT!" are also included.

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## Logs are a big first step to lower your home's energy use.

SINCE THE 1970S, we've moved from awareness of energy efficiency to obsession. The result is a Tim "The Tool Man" Taylor approach to insulation: more power. That's fine for ordinary buildings, but you can't stuff or blow more fiberglass inside solid-wood logs. You can, however, boost a log home's energy efficiency. Rather than rehash broader applications, such as Energy Star appliances, fireplace inserts and super-thermal windows and doors, let's look just at ways to improve energy efficiency that pertain specifically to logs.

**More log.** Bigger logs insulate better than smaller ones but not because they're

more solid. To the contrary, they have more non-solid parts. Logs insulate by cellulose cells, which, once the tree is cut down, lose their moisture through evaporation. The hollow cells slow the transfer of heat according to the principle of thermal mass, which is the capacity to absorb, store and release heat over time. Thanks to tests and studies by the Log Homes Council, the nation's Model Energy Code recognizes the energy-conservation benefits of thermal mass. Temperature extremes reduce the effectiveness of thermal mass, so if you're building in subarctic or subtropical regions, boost your heating and cooling output, and rely on big logs to extend it.

Although wood's natural insulation doesn't translate well into R-value — a quantifiable standard for manufactured insulation — these values increase with the diameter of the logs. They also vary by density and species. The average is 1.25 per inch, ranging from 1.50 for western red cedar to 0.95 for southern yellow pine. Keep in mind that those values apply only at the thickest part of the log, suggesting that log profiles with equal thickness work evenly. Despite logs' lower-than-fiberglass R-values, a recent study found that logs have an actual thermal-performance value equal to R-22 for a building with 10-inch diameter logs and no insulation added.

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**Less log.** A log home doesn't have to be big-log or even all-log. In fact, some buyers today prefer a balance of log and other materials, mostly for looks. For reasons having to do with the nature of wood, cost or ease of construction, other buyers prefer to mix logs and conventional construction. This tendency is common in two-story homes, where the upper level is almost always stick-built. Typical stick-built walls equate to R-9, but that's before adding insulation, which can really boost the wall's efficiency.

For hybrid homes, walls are conventionally built and then covered with half-logs. When you add the half-logs, you don't gain the thermal-mass benefits of full logs (although some handcrafted half-logs are thicker than some milled full logs), but they do add substance to the sheathing that thinner siding can't approach. Log siding is boards, not logs.

**Atop logs.** Energy efficiency should be a summary of total house performance, not a wall here and a window there. Studies have found the weak link in overall efficiency is where walls meet windows, doors and especially roofs. Structural insulated panels (SIPs), long a standard for timber-frame walls and roofs, are gaining popularity for log-home roofs, which are typically open and lack added insulation. What's more, these super-insulated panels, which can rate R-50 and higher, are appropriate and especially effective as walls for half-log homes.

**Between logs.** Potential for air infiltration reducing energy efficiency is greatest where logs touch and don't. Logs are individual components working together to form walls and other parts. Logs that don't butt or fit tightly rely on other means to keep out weather. Fasteners and sealing systems using caulk, foam gaskets and, on precision-milled logs, tongues and grooves are just some ways to fill the gaps. When you're shopping for logs, make sure they get the best help they can.

**Outside logs.** Sure, you can cover your logs with super-insulated non-log ma-

terials, but what's the point? You may quadruple your walls' energy efficiency, but you're hiding the reason you wanted logs in the first place: to look at.

**Log design.** Because energy codes are strict and getting stricter, log-home companies are working to meet their requirements. One measure of code compliance is prescriptive, where insulating factors in the home's envelope are calculated prior to

construction rather than tested afterward. Companies use a Department of Energy computer program called RESCheck to design a home that meets code for its climate zone. And at least one company submitted its materials and designs for independent testing and qualified for the government's Energy Star certification. Certifiable measures like RESCheck and Energy Star offer assurance that your log home will perform efficiently. ■

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# Bucking the Trend

**Before planning your kitchen, rethink stainless steel and granite**

AFICIONADOS OF HGTV, Fine Living and DIY networks have seen prospective homeowners prattle on about stainless steel and granite. There's no question that better price points have turned these once out-of-reach materials into nearly standard fixtures in today's kitchens. If you're among the many who have embraced these trends, you are no doubt pleased at their accessibility.

But log-home owners tend to be trend-buckers. Just the choice of log elevates you into the realm of discriminating taste and elite materials. So, why would you want to follow the herd at the kitchen shop? Improved production standards have lessened a lot of the early problems with stainless steel and granite, but there are still practical reasons to carefully consider both before investing thousands of dollars to install them in your kitchen.

Stainless steel gets its bragging rights from the infusion of chromium metal, which is combined with other materials, such as nickel, nitrogen and molybdenum. The mix determines how corrosion-resistant it will be and how magnetic. There are approximately 60 grades of stainless steel, so obviously there are differences in quality. The thickness of the stainless steel sheet over the steel base also has a direct impact on how quickly and easily it becomes dented or rusted.

At the extreme end, blame the Food Network for introducing chef entertainers with commercial-grade stainless steel appliances that always look new and, well, perfect. Commercial-grade stainless appliances can be steam-cleaned and sterilized, which makes them so appealing to restaurants that face scrutiny by health inspectors. If your kitchen faces nothing more daunting than the mother-in-law white-glove test, you may find this feature to be overkill. In fact, heat from the



Ode Wood Limited photo

Sometimes it's better not to use stainless steel and granite, despite their popularity.

stainless steel oven can be so intense it actually singes adjacent cabinets. And no thickness of stainless steel can muffle the noise from commercial-grade refrigerators or dishwashers.

As popular as stainless is these days, granite countertops may be even more successful. Even if you aren't a fan, you have to agree that their wide range of colors and patterns contributes to the natural beauty of a log setting. But think twice about granite for a couple of reasons: durability and radon.

Although granite can be hard enough to break steel saw blades, all those lovely veins and decorative spots are actually stresses that can chip, break and lead to major flaws. The exposed granite must be sealed and resealed to protect its porous surface. No vinegar-based cleaner, no Comet — ever. Wipe up spills and watch for burned fingers as a result of radiating heat from hot pans on the surface.

Studies have also shown that granite

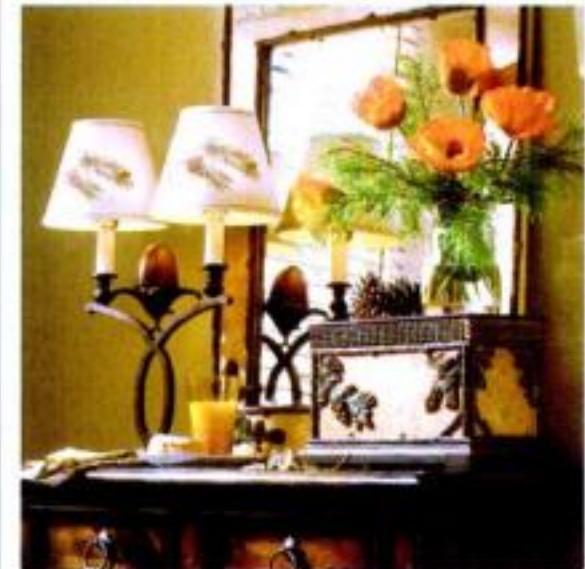
emits radon, a naturally occurring gas that is poisonous to humans when concentrated. Reports indicate that China has barred installation of any but the highest grade of granite in homes there, even though it exports all grades around the world.

And while stainless steel can at least make the claim to being more eco-friendly because it's recyclable, the same cannot be said for granite. It is removed from the earth by strip mining. It is a non-renewable material — and that's not something to brag about. While every building material has a carbon footprint of some kind, planet-friendlier materials than stainless steel and granite are available and affordable.

The issues with these two popular materials are certainly something worth thinking about — before selecting your finishes and appliances rather than questioning your selection later. With so many interesting choices available, you don't have to feel locked into what you may have come to believe are your only possibilities. ■

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# Cabin Land

**Enjoy rustic lodging in Giant City State Park.**

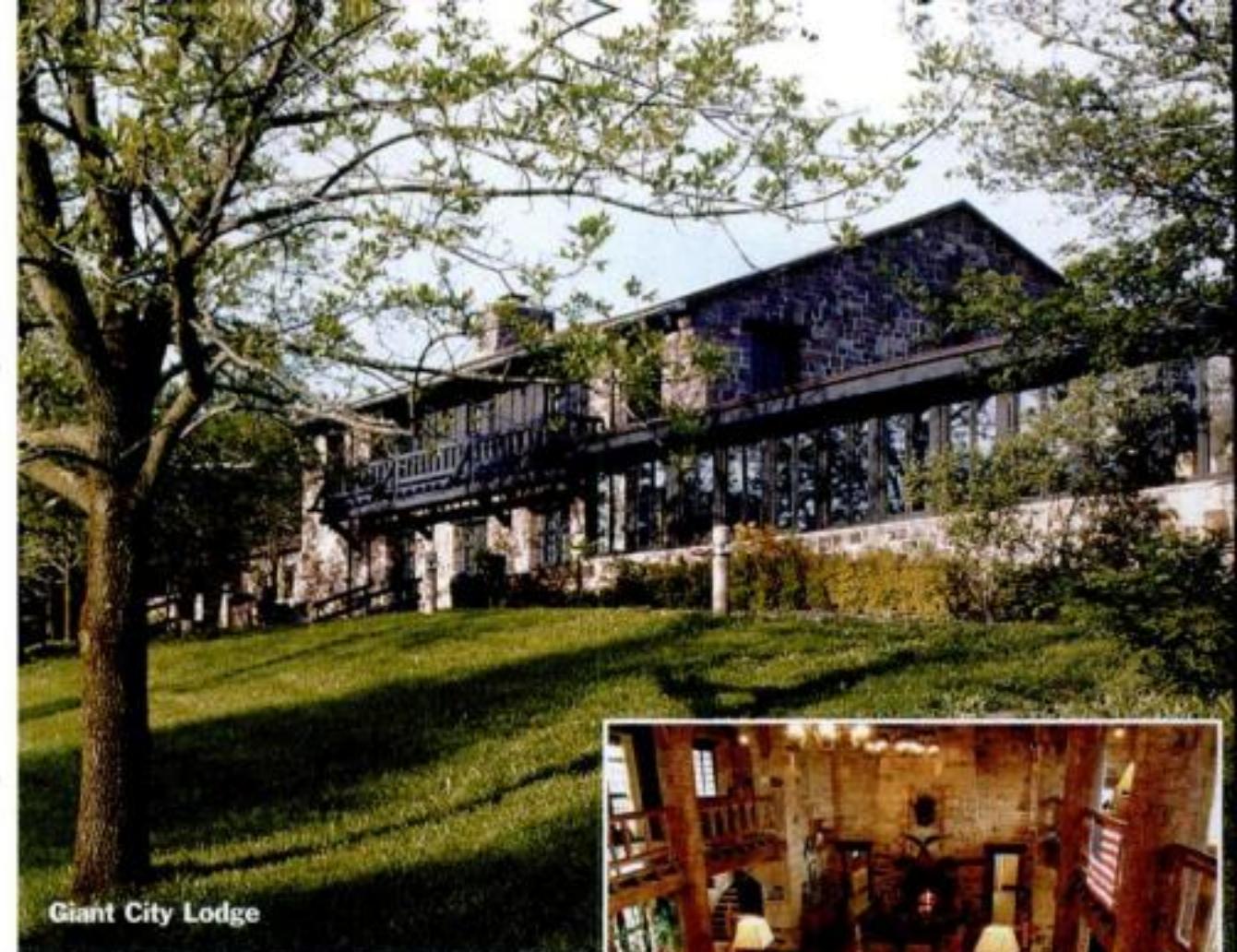
By Diana Lambdin Meyer

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, on its path to the Gulf of Mexico, intercepts the Ohio River about midway down the continent and creates the southern tip of Illinois. It's not the vast prairie of central and northern Illinois but a smaller region featuring massive sandstone boulders, unusual outcroppings and varied animal and plant life. It's also home to a man-made attraction: spectacular Giant City Lodge.

Located in the sprawling Shawnee National Forest, which includes Giant City State Park, the park lodge is one of those great structures built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Construction lasted six years. A handful of those original CCC workers still living in the vicinity or their offspring can often be found in the lobby or one of the three dining rooms recounting tales of the project.

Although its walls are sandstone, not logs, local hardwoods provided much of the woodworking in the lodge. White oak logs, harvested locally and hewn on-site, make up the interior posts and beams. White oak was also used to fashion the entry doors, the main and balcony floors and all the lintels. The original roof shingles were made of hand-split oak. Pecan wood forms the circular stairs leading to the balcony on the upper level. An on-site blacksmith did all of the ironwork.

When the lodge was dedicated in 1936, it consisted of the lodge building and six overnight cabins. The cabins didn't stand the test of time and were demolished, but today the park boasts 12 Historic Cabins, each having one room and two double beds; 18 duplex Prairie Cabins, with a queen-size bed in the bedroom and a Murphy bed in the living room; and four larger Bluff Cabins, overlooking the woods near the lodge, each with two queen-size beds, a fireplace and a deck. Nightly rates range from \$69 to \$139.



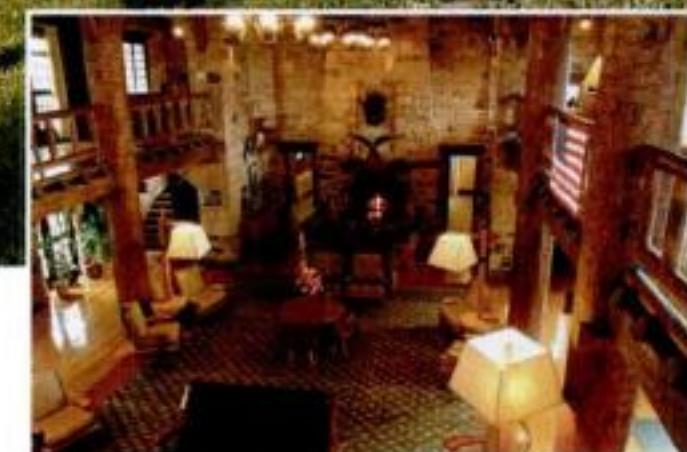
Giant City Lodge

CCC workers also made the Adirondack-style furniture that still fills the lobby, using white oak and maple. The workmanship is so good that you'll find identical furniture made by the same CCC craftsman at other lodges in the Illinois park system.

Giant City's name comes from the street-like paths formed by giant boulders placed so perfectly that they seem almost man-made. In recognition of the region's uniqueness, the state created the park in 1927. Originally 1,100 acres, the park has expanded to 4,000 acres. It hosts more than a million visitors a year who come for rock climbing, rappelling, hiking, horseback riding, camping, fishing and hunting.

Many visitors and some locals come to the lodge just to enjoy its ambience, including the 40-foot-tall stone fireplace and some of the best fried chicken around. Besides the chicken, the culinary attractions are down-home dishes, made-from-scratch gravy, fruit cobblers and strawberry shortcake.

One of those dining rooms bears the name Bald Knob, referring to the nearby hilltop that is the highest point in southern Illinois and the site of the largest man-made cross in North America. The hill of Bald Knob rises more than 800 feet above the river valleys; atop it, the cross soars another 111 feet, with arms extending horizontally nearly 65 feet. The white porcelain steel panels are illuminated by 40,000 watts of light, which can be seen over an area covering nearly 7,500 square miles.



Just a few miles south of the Giant City and Bald Knob Cross is the county seat of Jonesboro, the southernmost town where Abraham Lincoln, in his 1858 Senate race, faced Stephen Douglas in their series of seven debates on the issue of slavery. A plaque and frequent re-enactments in Lincoln Park, which is a portion of the Shawnee National Forest, commemorate the now-revered events.

Less known about this part of Illinois is that the Cherokee Nation's Trail of Tears passes through here on the northern route to the Oklahoma reservations. It was here in that bitter winter of 1838-39 that more than 10,000 American Indians were stranded because of ice jams on the Mississippi River.

Abundant natural beauty, history and rustic accommodations make a visit to southern Illinois sure to be an unforgettable experience. And one that won't strain your vacation budget. ■

**IF YOU GO:** Driving is the easiest way to journey to Giant City Lodge, located in Makanda, Illinois. The closest airport is St. Louis, more than two hours away. Amtrak provides daily service to Carbondale, about 15 miles away. For information, phone 618-457-4921 or visit [giantcitylodge.com](http://giantcitylodge.com).

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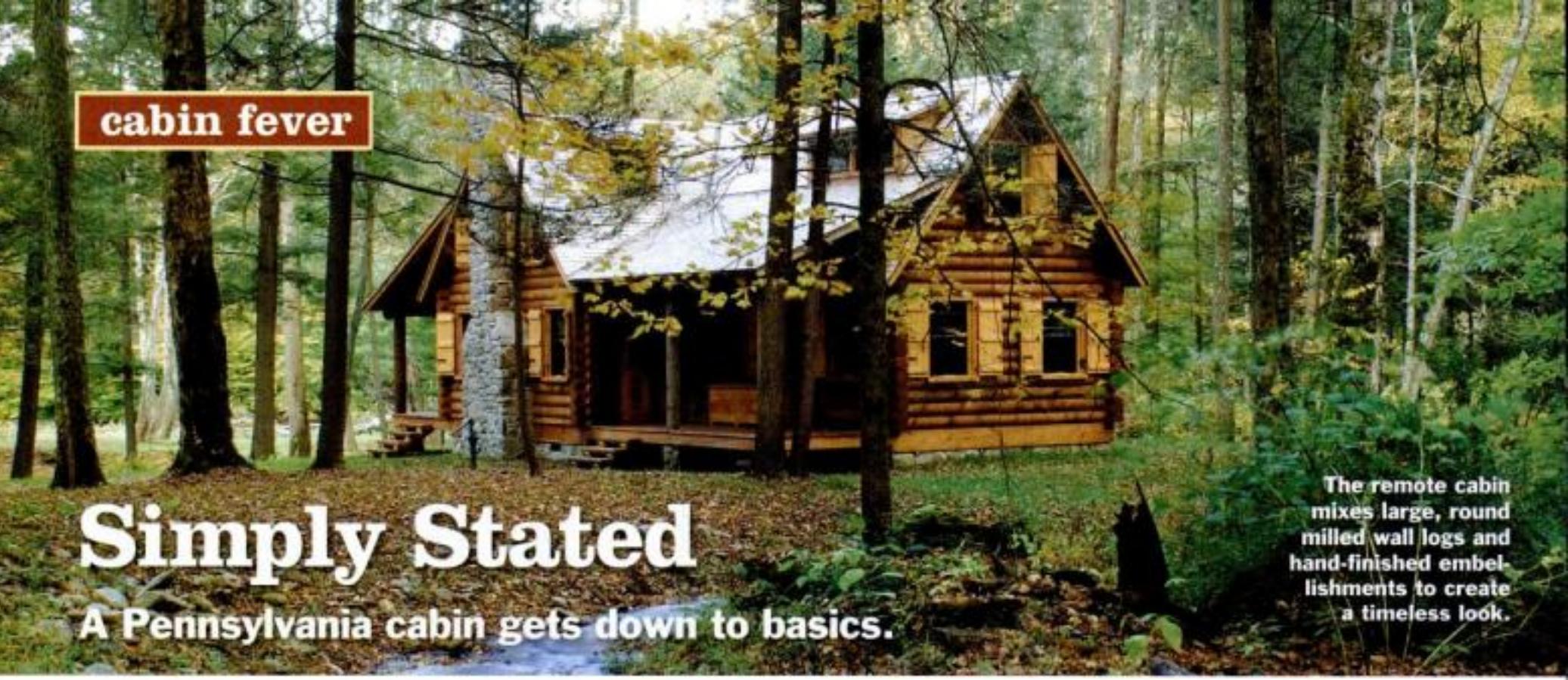
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Log Home Planner Kit

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cabin fever



# Simply Stated

## A Pennsylvania cabin gets down to basics.

The remote cabin mixes large, round milled wall logs and hand-finished embellishments to create a timeless look.

By Roland Sweet

LOCATED IN CENTRAL Pennsylvania, two miles from the nearest road, this creek-side cabin bespeaks rustic bordering on primitive. It has no water or power, only an outside well and an outhouse. What it lacks in creature comforts, though, it makes up for in workmanship.

The site came with a run-down cabin that the owner intended to restore before realizing a new place would better serve his desire for a retreat to hunt, fish and knock about. "The owner told me, 'Build me a cabin,' and then let me take it from there," builder Miles Reynolds recalls. "We've worked together for 20 years, so I know pretty well what he wants."

Reynolds, who'd never built any kind of log home, stuck to tradition and

*continued on page 87*



Elemental Log Homes/Brian Gonsalves photo

**ABOVE:** Debarked logs form ceiling beams in the bare-bones kitchen, whose only appliance is an early 20th-century wood stove. The spiral stairs to the loft are shown in the background.

**LEFT:** The cabin follows the T-shape of its predecessor, adding peek-a-boo dormers for interior light. The photographer brought a generator to use to take pictures.

**TOP RIGHT:** Rustic furniture and the sturdy stone fireplace give the cabin a step-back-in-time sense.

**RIGHT:** The cabin has five sleeping areas, including two in separate lofts, tucked into nooks to avoid feeling like a barracks.





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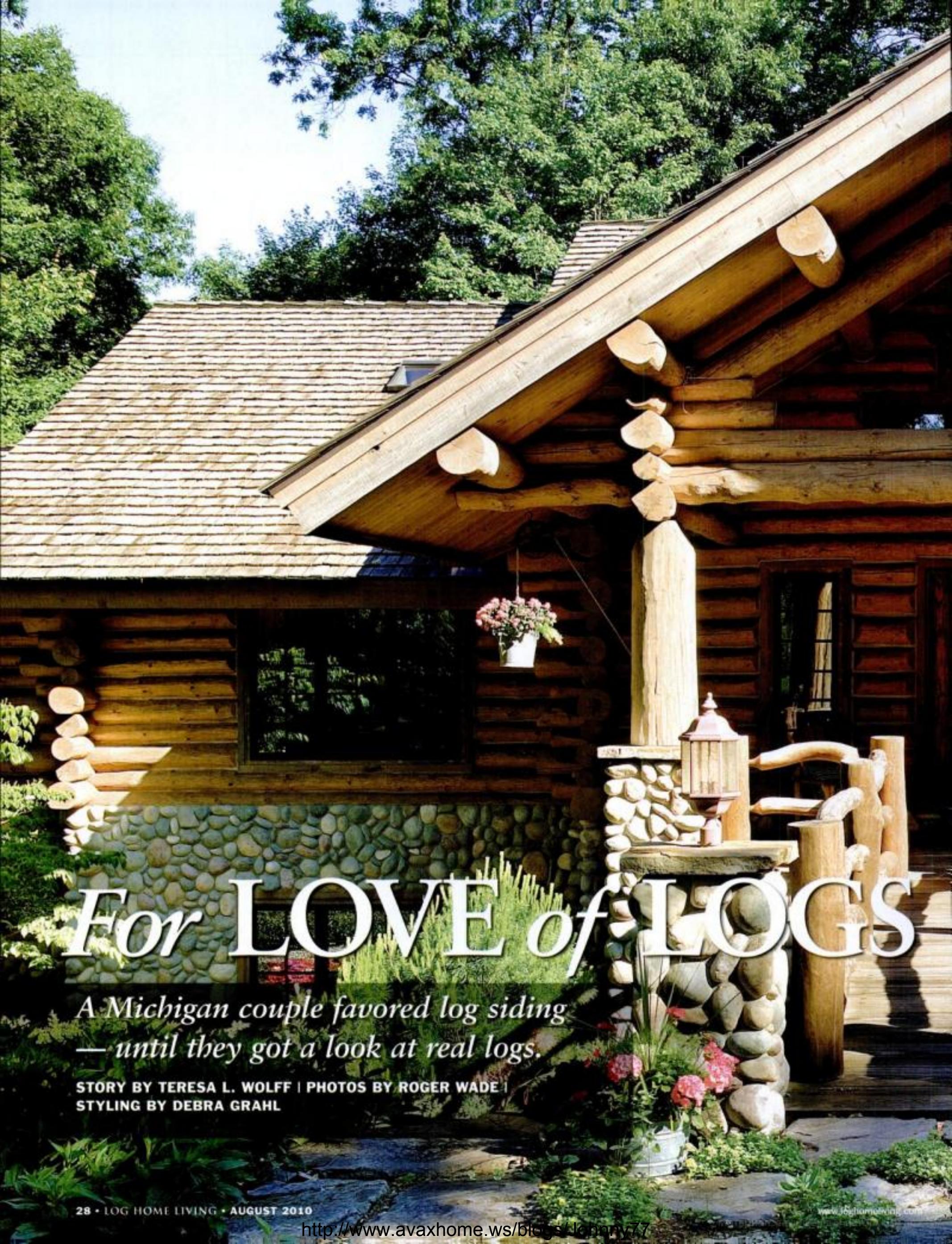
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# For LOVE of LOGS

*A Michigan couple favored log siding — until they got a look at real logs.*

STORY BY TERESA L. WOLFF | PHOTOS BY ROGER WADE |  
STYLING BY DEBRA GRAHL



Handcrafted red pine logs, bolstered by stonework, a custom door and two 22-foot log beams supporting the king-post porch truss create a rustic look.





**Homeowner Evan Dufendach added distinctive touches, including a washtub chandelier in the dining room (inset) that illuminates the custom walnut table and hickory chairs. In the roomy, open kitchen, a horse trough serves as a vent hood. The floor had to be reinforced to support the natural stone island and breakfast bar. Evan and Terri choose antique heart pine for the flooring on the main level.**

**W**hen Evan and Terri Dufendach decided to build a rustic home outside Grand Rapids, Michigan, they planned it to be stud-framed with log siding in and out and a log roof system. After drawing a rough plan, however, they realized that siding just wouldn't do.

While looking into alternatives, Evan accepted an invitation to visit a full-log home being built nearby. "I went alone and was hooked the moment I walked through the door," he recalls. "It took less than 20 minutes to get Terri there. The home was absolutely gorgeous, and we would then not consider anything less than handcrafted full logs."

The Dufendachs shared their concerns about log construction with the builder, Dennis Carpenter, owner of Sawmill Creek Woodworking, and with Eric Gordon, vice president of Maple Island Log Homes, which provided the home's large-diameter red pine logs. The two men explained that most problems people had with logs occurred years ago and were attributable to lack of knowledge and poor planning. "They pointed out exactly how problems are avoided," Evan says.

Terri and Evan worked with Gordon Hughes, Maple Island's architect, to adapt their design for logs, creating a ski lodge look and feel. To take further advantage of the full-log look, they requested log valley rafters to give the roof a more finished look. They also added a small loft office-studio above the kitchen to give it a more intimate feel.

The loft is accessible by a magnificent cherry log staircase, which became the home's focal point. "We found a tree on-site with a huge bend in it," Evan explains. "Dennis made both of the stringers for the staircase out of that one tree and tapered it so that it is narrower at the loft than it is in the great room. His eye and skill with the pocketed half-log steps and the irregular handrails and spindles make it a true work of art and a favorite feature."

"It's perfect for taking prom pictures," Terri adds, noting the couple regularly hosts high schoolers for a Young Life outreach ministry.



Evan, a commercial developer and contractor, acted as the general contractor but relied on Carpenter to add his wisdom, skills and resources. "The home truly is a tribute to Dennis," Evan stresses. "Without his experience and creative genius, I would have built in my own troubles and missed opportunities for adding unique character."

The 6,500-square-foot home features a sunken great room with a view through an expanse of windows. To achieve the space they wanted for entertaining, the Dufendachs placed the kitchen, dining room and sunken breakfast room to the right of the entryway. To the left of the great room is Evan's office with built-in bookcases, two antique desks and a drafting table. The master suite lacks doors, allowing Evan and Terri to walk unimpeded between the bedroom, bath and walk-in closet. "We thought it would be nice to have a fire in the great-room fireplace and

then be able to enjoy it when we went to our bedroom," Evan says. "Thus, we designed the home with a two-sided, wood-burning fireplace between the rooms. We can close off the bedroom side when we want privacy."

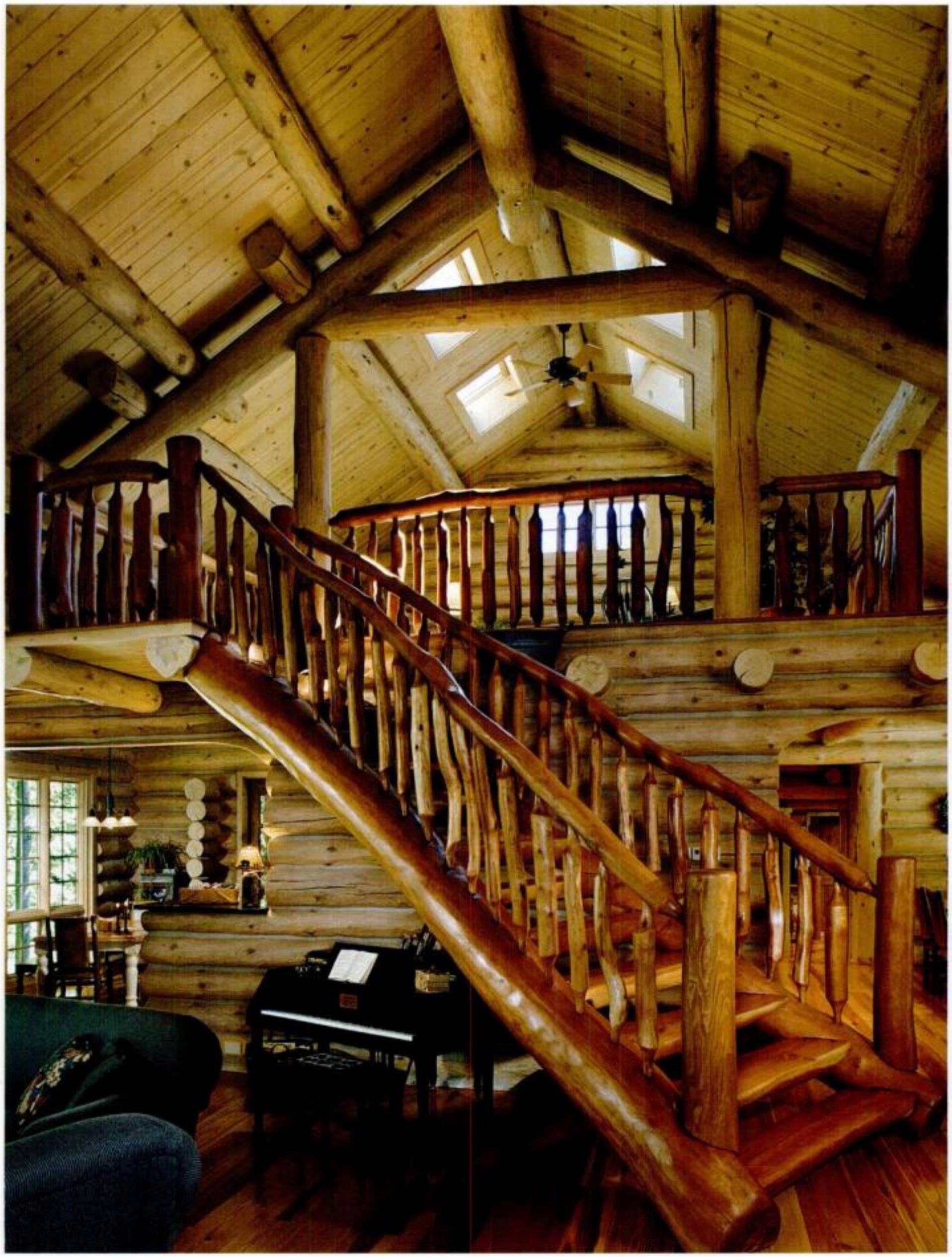
They built the home over a basement foundation, which they finished with western red cedar paneling. The space features a large recreation room with kitchenette, a workout room, a computer room tucked under the stairs, a full bath and two bedrooms, each with its own bath. An attached two-story garage can hold three cars on the main level and five on the lower level. "Over the years, we rarely have cars down there," Terri says, "since many friends ask us to store their household belongings when they were moving."

The staircase isn't the only place where Carpenter and his son, Frank, plied their woodworking talents. They also built the kitchen and kitchenette

**ABOVE:** Handcrafted red pine logs, a wood-burning fieldstone fireplace, the cherry log staircase and mantel, and antique heart pine flooring combine to create a natural setting in the great room. The two-sided fireplace also serves the master bedroom. Valley rafters give the pine tongue-and-groove ceiling a more finished look. Evan crafted the rustic fireplace screen.

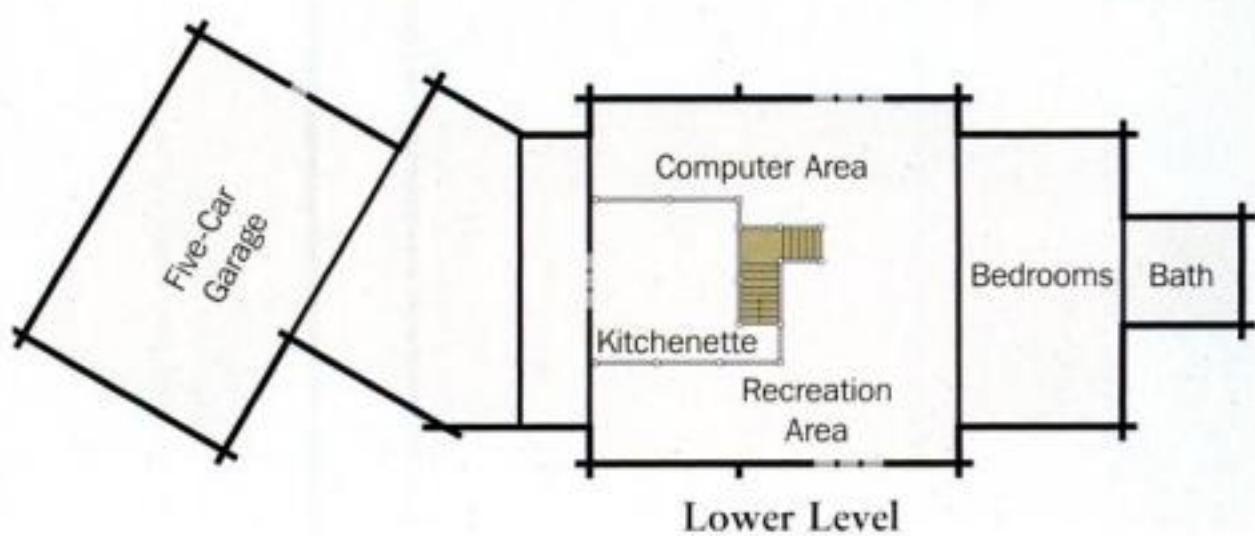
**RIGHT:** The tapering staircase, which builder Dennis Carpenter crafted from a cherry tree on the property, incorporates the tree's natural contours, as well as its distinctive irregularities in the handrail and spindles. Skylights in the purlin-and-gable roof system illuminate the loft.

cabinets, the bathroom vanities, cherry log handrails, custom doors throughout, and window and door frames. "Terri and I were so pleased with their work and couldn't believe it the day our finisher, Tom VanHaften, showed up with strange torture-looking tools and started beating up on all of the cabinets," Evan recalls. "We just couldn't watch, but we both love the distressed look he created."





**ABOVE:** The master bedroom features a custom-built four-poster bed made from the gnarliest wood the furniture maker could find. Large windows view the surrounding woods, while skylights in the cathedral ceiling provide natural illumination. The fireplace adds a cozy touch.





**LEFT:** Arched red pine logs create a doorless opening between the master bedroom and bath. The apron-front sink fits beautifully with the distressed custom-built, furniture-style knotty pine cabinets and granite countertops.

I couldn't believe I was paying someone to damage our woodwork. After all, I had sons."

Evan contributed his own ideas. One day, he asked Terri how she felt about hanging a horse trough in their kitchen. Go ahead, she said tentatively, and the trough became the hood for the exhaust fan and lights over their island stove. He didn't stop there. "When we first built the house, we bought a light fixture for over the dining room table, but we never really liked it," Terri says. "So Evan happened upon an old worn-out dual pony cart harness at an antique shop and knew exactly what it would become. He attached two galvanized washtubs, installed both up and down lights, suspended his new 'chandelier' using an old rusty chain, and covered the outlet in the log above with a rusty saw blade."

Although the Dufendachs live in the country, they're far from isolated. They originally purchased 20 acres, intending to split the property between two homes. Because the area lacked other younger families, Terri challenged Evan to create a community for their sons, A.J. and Derek, who're both now grown. So Evan bought 10 more acres and divided the site into 12 lots, retaining eight acres off the cul-de-sac for his family. "It was great for our boys to have other families with children close by," Terri explains. "We developed that wonderful sense of community I was hoping for."

"The home turned out better than our greatest dreams," Evan says, "It was such a labor of love, I don't think we could ever sell it." ■

## home details

**SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 6,500

**LOG COMPANY:** Maple Island Log Homes

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 87.



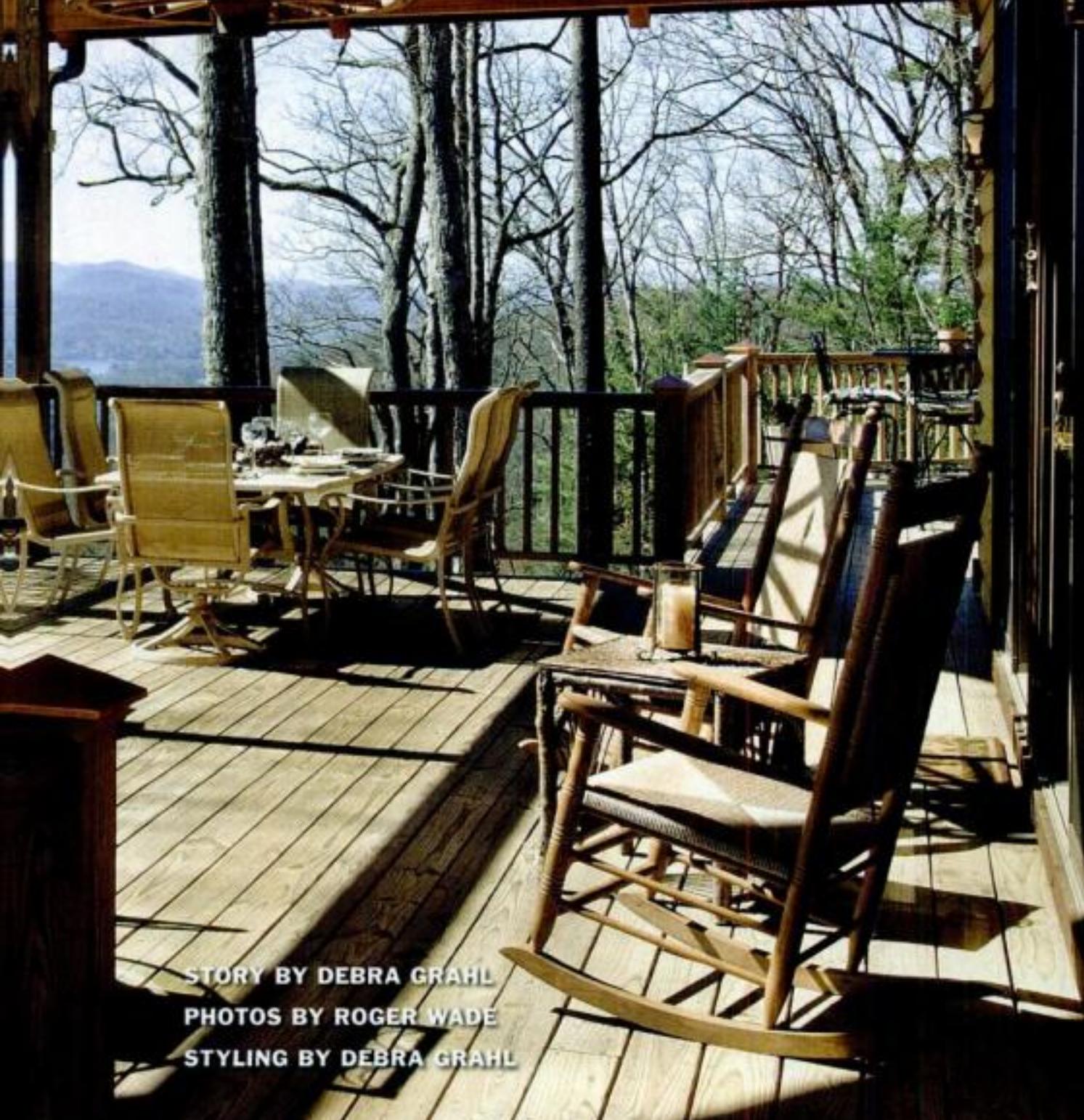
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**LOGHOME**  **COM**

See 10 additional views of this home.



# ROOM *and a* VIEW

*A North Carolina home captures  
the grandeur of its highlands setting.*



STORY BY DEBRA GRAHL  
PHOTOS BY ROGER WADE  
STYLING BY DEBRA GRAHL

The popular rear deck provides nearly 900 square feet for family and friends to gather and enjoy sunset views or a meal prepared on the grill. Because the sloped site drops away from the deck, the space has the feel of a tree house. The knotty pine ceiling provides midday shade.





**S**tanding on the deck of their North Carolina log home, overlooking woodlands and the layered vistas of the Blue Ridge and Smoky mountains, Dillie and Jimmy Wammock are a long way from their home in Gulf Shores, Alabama. They found their way to the highlands community of Cashiers at the invitation of Jimmy's longtime friend and business partner, Henry Davis. "When Dillie and I came from Alabama to visit, we left home on a hot, steamy morning, with the temperature at 101 degrees," Jimmy recalls. "We arrived at Cashiers at three o'clock in the afternoon to a temperature of 74. It didn't take long for me to ask, 'How do I get a little piece of this heaven for myself?'"

As fortune would have it, the lot directly across from Davis's was for sale. Lured by an unbeatable view of old-growth forest on Big Sheepcliff Mountain and the indigo mountain skyline on the horizon beyond, the Wammocks

bought the property. They agreed the land called for a home that mirrored the setting: a log cabin amid the trees. They designed it to take full advantage of the views, positioning each room and two decks to capture a great vista.

Their only concern was the steepness of the lot. "We're from the flatlands of the Alabama coast," Jimmy points out, "and the prospect of attempting to build on a site like this was daunting."

Davis laid the couple's fears to rest by introducing them to a neighbor, Kevin Ebberts, who has been building custom homes in the mountains for 13 years. Five of those projects were log homes. Ebberts assured the Wammocks that their property was well suited for the type of home they wanted.

The site was not without its challenges, however. The mountains of western North Carolina are reputed to be the oldest in the world and are formed of solid granite. Fortunately, the Wammocks' site required blasting in only

**ABOVE:** View-friendly windows and patio doors provide natural light to the great room that flows to the dining and kitchen areas.

**OPPOSITE:** Dillie Wammock furnished the cozy great room with overstuffed chairs and sofa and area rugs that she bought locally. "I'm not a shopper," she admits, "so it had to be easy for me, so it was great to find local places where I could pick and choose furnishings." She ordered fixtures online and even got a discount because of the volume of her purchase.

two small areas. But then the downhill side of the lot had to be reinforced with a heavy-duty structural concrete wall system. The engineering required for the foundation was critical for structural integrity and increased the cost of construction, but the benefits of the hillside placement to take advantage of the magnificent mountain views far exceeded the additional cost.

Another concern was breaking ground in February. Ebberts, a native of Buffalo, New York, assured the

Dillie designed the open kitchen to encourage guests to congregate around the island. "Some even dive right in and help with the cooking," she says.







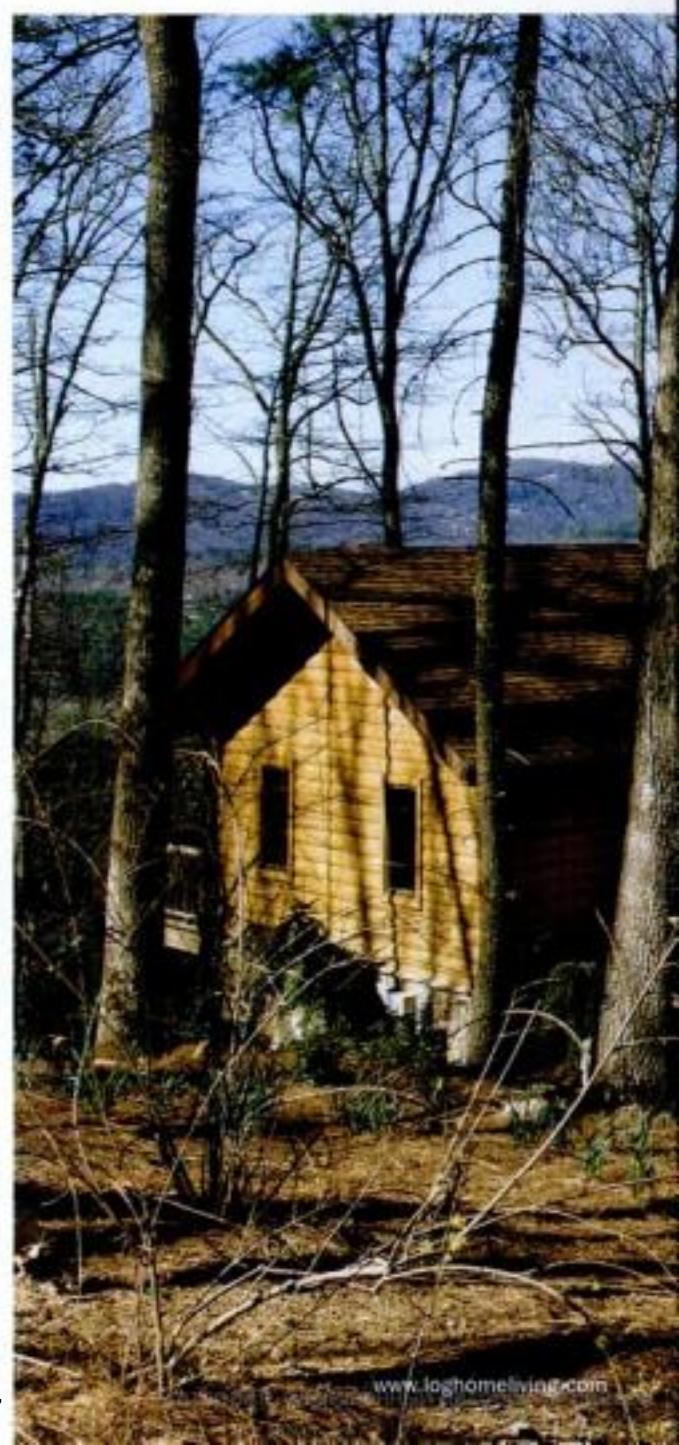
Wammocks that a little snow and cold wouldn't delay the project, which took a mere eight months to complete. While their home was being built, Jimmy and Dillie stayed across the street at Henry and Gail Davis's house, allowing them to be on-site much of the time. "We were able to help Kevin out by running around for him, fetching miscellaneous materials that he needed, so he could stay focused on building rather than driving up and down the mountainside for building supplies," Dillie says. "Other than that, we tried to stay out of his way and concentrated on clearing the yards."

When the Wammocks weren't at the site, Ebberts e-mailed them progress photos of the construction and recommended modifications that he felt would improve the home. Because Kuhns Bros. Log Homes had produced the five log homes that Ebberts built before this one, the couple chose the Pennsylvania company to provide theirs. They started with the design. "The Wammocks' plan was modified from one of Kuhns Bros.' models," company sales representative Joe Rucci recalls. "The couple supplied me with sketches, magazine photos and

plenty of verbal description of what they were looking for." Pointing out the value of teamwork at every stage of the project, Rucci credits Ebberts for most of the creative guidance in the design process. "Kevin made rough drawings that I converted to finished drawings, then Kuhns Bros.' engineering department converted the drawings to blueprints and provided engineering seals and energy calculations as required by local building codes."

The logs used for the 4,323-square-foot home are 6-by-8-inch D-profile with dovetail corners. They're milled eastern white pine, kiln dried for five weeks. Although the company's log package provided most of the building materials, including windows and doors, the Wammocks saved money by buying certain items, such as decking, locally. Ebberts built the deck railings out of native mountain laurel obtained locally.

Even before their home was finished, Jimmy and Dillie began to feel a strong local connection. "People would drive by and see us working the land, also noticing a new log house going up," Jimmy says. "They would stop and chat with us, and before you knew it, we would

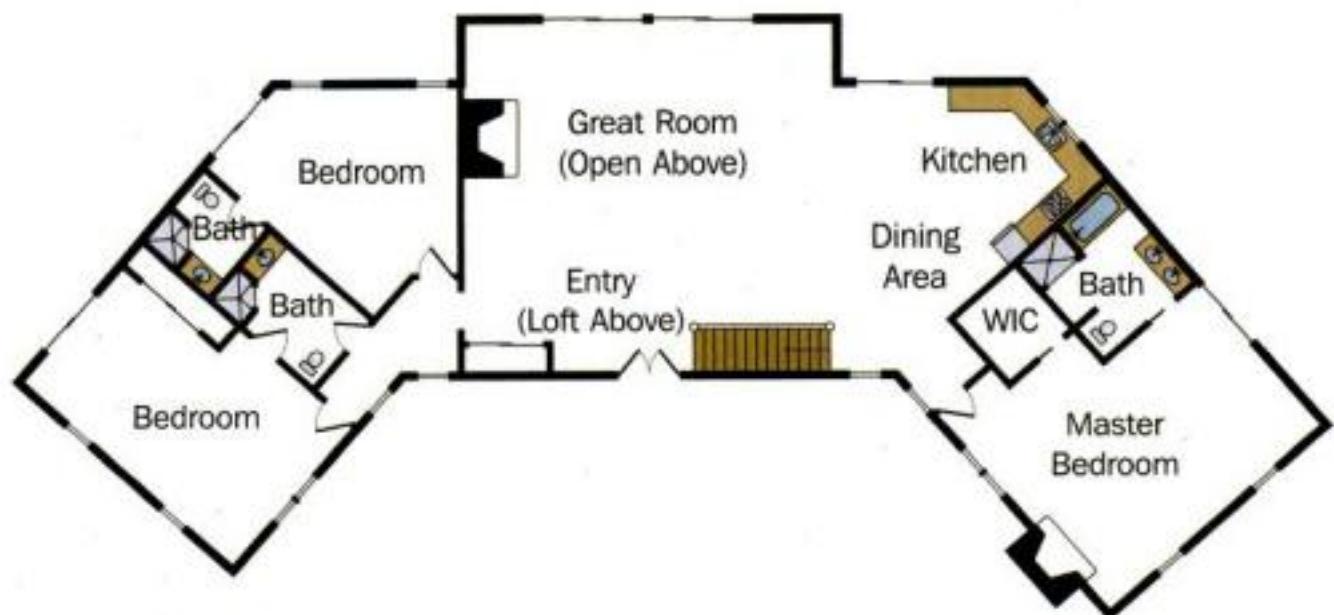


be promising to get together for dinner. There are so many obvious reasons for wanting to be here in the North Carolina mountains, but by far the greatest reason is the local folks."

Dillie and Jimmy divide their time between the Gulf of Mexico and the mountains in 10-day to two-week increments. They like all four seasons at both locations, so they tend to travel from one home to the other when the mood strikes. "We have the best of both worlds," Dillie says. ■

**OPPOSITE:** Desiring a completely different look from their Alabama seaside home, the Wammocks embraced a western design motif, especially evident in their master bedroom. Furnishings include a cowhide rug and a Bev Doolittle print above the Tennessee fieldstone fireplace.

**BELOW:** The Smoky Mountains rise in the distance, providing a compelling view for Dillie and Jimmy Wammock. By doing the landscaping themselves, the Wammocks kept the lot natural and took advantage of stone outcroppings to shape garden beds. They even made the split-rail fence.



## *home details*

**SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 4,323

**LOG COMPANY:** Kuhns Bros.  
Log Homes

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SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 87.

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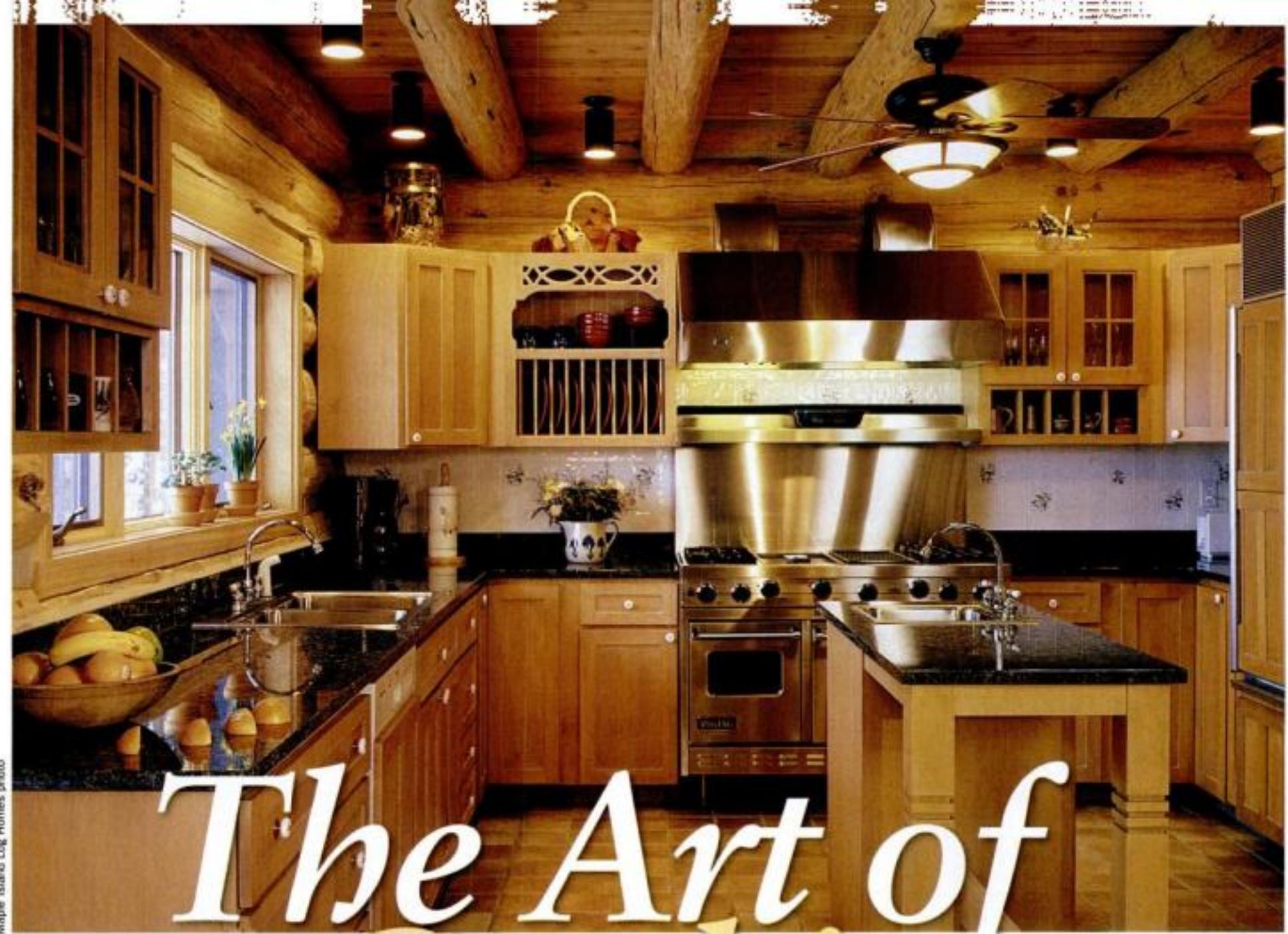
See 13 additional views of this home.



Today's log-home kitchens are in sync with the down-to-earth artisanal-food ethic, which extols using fresh, whole foods. Well-equipped artisanal kitchens feature plenty of room, multiple work stations, abundant food-storage options and energy-efficient appliances.



Ricky Mountain Log Homes photo



Maple Island Log Homes photo

# The Art of Cooking

*Log-home kitchens embrace the specialty foods trend.*

**By Leslie Southard**

**A** revolution is brewing in today's kitchens. Increasing numbers of people are turning from pre-packaged, big-branded, mass-produced foods in favor of what's widely referred to as artisanal food.

A century ago, small-scale, local food producers — farmers, bakers, cheese makers — didn't consider themselves artisans. They were simply trying to put food on the table for their families and perhaps have some left over to barter with neighbors for other necessities and niceties. Food production was of necessity a local enterprise. There was no food mass production, mass transit or mass distribution. No drive-throughs, takeouts or order-ins. Folks then surely took pride and pleasure in bringing in a good harvest, aging a cheese perfectly

and browning the perfect crusty loaf, but their labors were born out of necessity, not artistic expression.

Much like their hardworking ancestors, today's food artisans grow, cultivate and prepare everything from tender baby vegetables to the freshest of seafood to the crustiest breads to exotic spices, pungent cheeses and fragrant wines. They're rejuvenating a once-thriving local and sustainable food movement. Lest we dismiss technology and mass transit, though, we do have the Internet to thank for deliver-

ing these wonderful artisanal foods to our far-flung doorstep.

Designing and outfitting a kitchen to accommodate the storage and preparation of such worthy ingredients might seem daunting, but such could not be farther from the truth, particularly for today's log-home owner. The very idea of a rustic log kitchen with Old World ambience sets the perfect stage for all the necessary accoutrements of an artisanal kitchen.

## Multiple Workstations

For starters, regardless of the size of the home, log kitchens have been on a steady growth spurt. Log-home kitchens have always been large enough to accommodate

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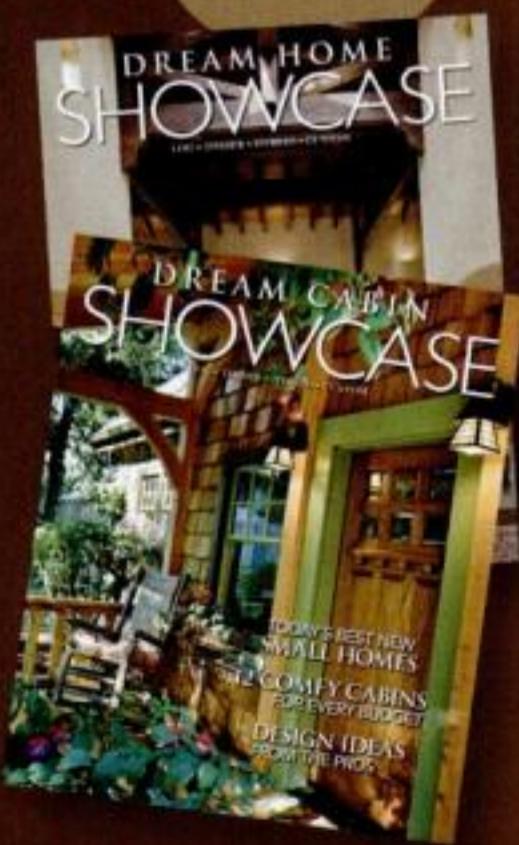
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New from  
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more than just one person, but now they're becoming large enough for everyone to fit comfortably. Leading producers report designing upscale kitchens with keeping areas and sitting nooks beside fireplaces, as well as two to three workspace islands within one kitchen. Some kitchens are big enough to host their own cooking show.

Having more than one cooking station negates the adage, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." One person can easily wash, chop and dice just-picked vegetables at a chopping-block island outfitted with a small sink, while another grills or sautés at a cooktop station.

Options abound to make life easier for artisanal aficionados. For fresh pasta fans, a pot-filler — a swing-armed faucet installed above the cooktop — saves having to tote a heavy, sloshing pot across the kitchen. Integrated cooktops, which feature a steamer, grill, electric cooktop and high-output gas burner for wok cooking, accommodate all manner of cooking styles.

If your cooktop is located within an island without hooded ventilation, be sure that you have a downdraft ventilation system and not just an air-circulation fan. The downdraft system should be hooked to the ductwork under the house so that it vents the grease and steam outside. All a fan will do is blow around the grease and odors where they'll accumulate on surfaces — a particularly unpleasant consequence in log homes with open layouts where kitchens flow into other living spaces.

For baking and broiling your food finds, electric ovens tend to brown more evenly, while gas ovens produce the highest heat for broiling. Dual-fuel models are available, but, if space allows, installing two ovens, one gas and one electric, serves both purposes and ensures that you won't have to do the oven shuffle with too many things to bake and not enough oven space, even during the holidays.

### Food-Storage Options

Multiple islands mean not only more workspace for families who enjoy cooking together, but also can house a variety of food-storage accessories and cooking equipment. This storage space can be particularly convenient in log-home kitchens with vaulted ceilings, where pot racks and overhead storage aren't options. Located

under the island counters, drawers offering various functions, such as refrigeration, dry goods storage, wine chilling or dishwashing, are particular convenient for those who regularly enjoy fresh and specialty foods.

Certain artisanal foods are better suited to being segregated into smaller compartments, such as refrigerated drawers, both for their own sake and that of other foods in close proximity. "We sell our cheeses at the peak of their ripeness, and they should be kept in the warmest part of the refrigerator and consumed within a few days," says Dan Dowe, president of Artisanal Premium Cheese in New York City. "Some people have stored their cheeses in their wine cellars, but, especially with the more pungent cheeses, the smell can be off-putting." Especially if it is a cheese from the company's "Stinky Cheese" line. Dowe practices affinage — the art of proper aging of cheeses — and handcrafts and ages a constantly evolving array of cheese, which is available by mail order. "People ask me how long they can store their cheese before eating, but fresh artisanal cheese is delicious," Dowe says, "and why would you want to wait to eat it?"

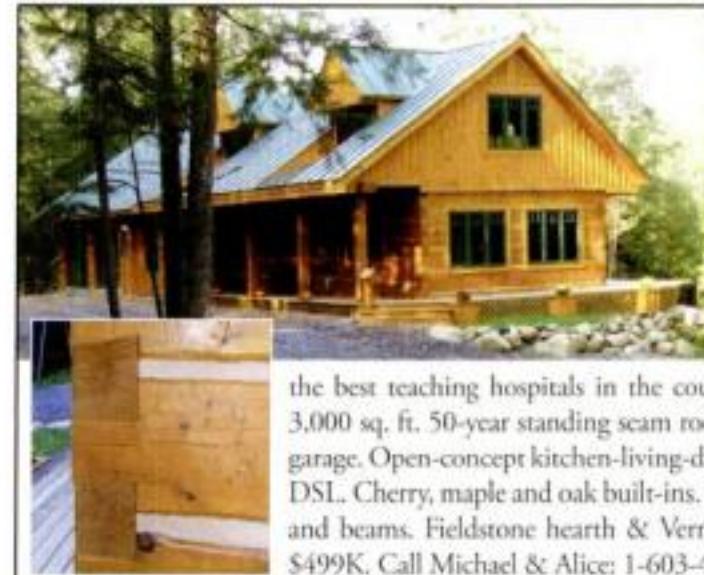
Having a small dedicated storage unit for a favorite specialty food means you can enjoy it at peak flavor at any time. A smaller refrigerated drawer dedicated to cheese, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood or other specialty food items allows you to adjust humidity and temperature — and eliminates the need for a barricade of odor-absorbing baking soda boxes.

When preparing a special dish, there's always that special ingredient that truly romances the taste buds. "Spices are the true soul of cuisine," says Nirmala Narine, who has traveled the world in quest of exotic spices and recipe blends to add to her line of organic products, which she sells through her company, Nirmala's Kitchen. "I go to small plantations and search out where the spices are and how to cook with them," she says. "I even spent two weeks with Berber tribesmen. Everywhere you go, there is a different recipe for a spice blend."

As with other specialty food products, spices need special care when storing and deservedly so. "Spices are precious things," say Narine, who was born in Guyana and

*continued on page 71*

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# Recipe for Success

By Esther & Franklin Schmidt

*To achieve rustic flavor, cabin kitchens blend convenience with country charm.*

Walk into any log home, and there's no question where you are. Your first clue is, of course, those glorious walls, be they chinked, round, square, large or small. Another visual tip is the presence of that primal element: fire. Either a fireplace or wood-burning stove is de rigueur in a log home. Rustic furnishings and wood floors most likely set the design tone. So far, so good: This is a log home.

Log homes  
follow general  
kitchen trends,  
except in cab-  
ins, which favor  
country or even  
rustic styling.



Rocky Mountain Log Homes photo

**Colorful cabinets help define the kitchen in an open cabin, and a narrow breakfast bar further delineates the space while providing an informal eating area surrounded by log walls.**

Now, enter the kitchen. You'll probably find a big surprise. Fact is, most log-home kitchens these days look more like those in well-heeled, suburban houses than in rustic getaways. Despite the presence of wood beams or a glimpse of log wall, kitchens in log homes seem to pay more homage to big-box stores and high-end decorating marts than they do to cabin style.

This transformation is understandable. Although fine cooking is possible in almost any kitchen, living large, gourmet style, in Davy Crockett digs is challenging. Truth be known, however, aside from all the hype from appliance manufacturers — and at the risk of losing the equipment competition to the cooks in the cul-de-sac with their 9,000-square-foot kitchens — all you really need for a good sauce reduction is a decent pot and a stovetop. And that stove doesn't have to be an eight-burner, stainless

steel turbocharged behemoth. The best and most log-appropriate cabin kitchens reach a middle ground, allowing cooking convenience while retaining country ambience in the room that most everyone agrees is the heart of the home.

Since cabinets take up much of the visible room area, their style dictates a large portion of the overall look of the kitchen. The more cabinets are designed to resemble pieces of old-fashioned kitchen furniture, the more rustic-looking the kitchen will be. Wooden, open-glass cabinets displaying stacks of dishes create the ultimate country-style statement. That message speaks even louder if the cabinets are topped with crown molding.

Another way to convey rustic styling is to add, or even substitute, antique, freestanding cabinets. These pieces offer at least as much storage space as built-ins and can even be less costly than high-

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grade manufactured or handcrafted but uniform-appearing standard kitchen cabinetry. They instantly signal an outside-the-box kitchen.

Other elements that bring a rustic feel to a log-home kitchen are beamed or wood ceilings and wood floors. Natural as opposed to metallic materials, such as stainless steel, help create a more timeless cabin kitchen. For most log-home owners, however, the pull of clean, cool stainless steel is irresistible. So today, even the most rustic designed cooking areas, replete with log walls, country style cabinetry and antique accessories such as crocks and pottery, seem to contain at least one stainless steel appliance. After all, if the decorating gods on HGTV push stainless, who are we to defy their commandments? Just don't overdo it.

The most frequently used design element that really baffles country-design sensibility is, without fail, those granite countertops covering the surfaces of even the most rustic kitchens. How this design phenomenon, also strongly encouraged by



Cabin kitchens offer country-style cooking convenience but without the gleam of stainless steel or the shine of granite.

HGTV, took over is a real puzzle. Oceans of shiny marble surface expensively appear amid wood walls, rag rugs, antiques and "Gone Fishin'" signs. It isn't that granite isn't great looking and practical, only that it belies the notion of rustic. There are

many other materials to cover countertops and kitchen islands. Butcher block may need a bit of upkeep, but it's perfect in a country-style space. Matte concrete and soapstone both are highly durable and at least not shiny.

Tile is another great alternative. Myriad styles, colors and patterns can be used on countertops and backsplashes, to say nothing of floors. Granted, you need to keep the grout clean, but by using cutting boards and cleaning the tile regularly, it can be as sturdy a material as you can find — unless your kitchen has sumo cooks slamming heavy pots and pans onto its surface.

In summary, there are no rules about how anything in a log home should look, but if you're keeping your cabin kitchen rustic, especially in an open floor plan where you can see into the great room from the kitchen, it makes good design sense to at least give a nod to country style. With some well thought-out choices, you can bake your soufflé — or cornbread — and eat it, too. ■

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*Kitchens find a second home outdoors.*

By Joyce Standridge

# Open-Air Cooking

**K**itchens located away from the rest of the home's living space used to be the mark of wealth and status. In centuries gone by and without benefit of air conditioning, a second, or summer, kitchen was appended to the house, usually with some kind of porch or degree of separation.

Photo © Michael Joseph Photography

That arrangement changed during the course of the 20th century. Today, many log and other homes feature open floor plans, where the kitchen couldn't be more centrally located. This popular layout was such a long time coming, why would anyone want to change it?

Well, just as people figured out that the kitchen could be the functional center of the home, they also realized it could be the heart of their outdoor living, too. Since log homes are nearly always built to take advantage of the great outdoors, a lot of a family's time is going to be spent there. Who wants to draw the short straw and have to go inside to start cooking a meal or even just prepare a snack? Who else wants to break up the fun and move indoors to eat? As a result, the modest charcoal grill and vinyl folding chairs where people balance meals on their lap have grown exponentially. Today's outdoor kitchen can be so well executed that it rivals its indoor cousin.

**Outdoor kitchens allow not just dining outside, but also food prep and cooking.**



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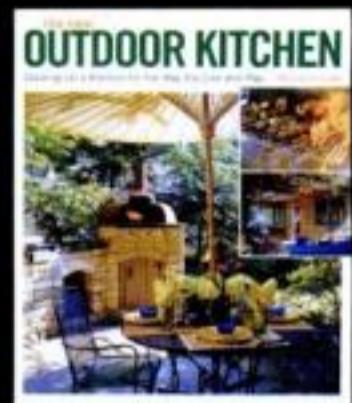
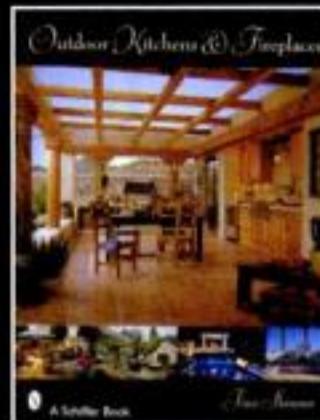
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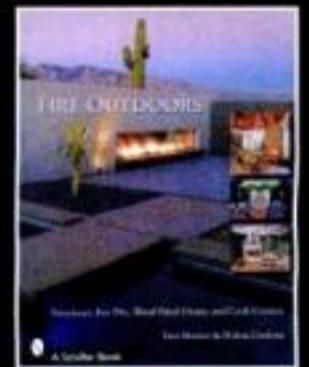
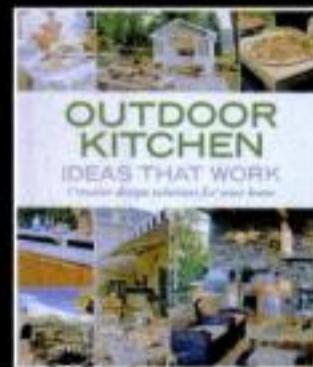
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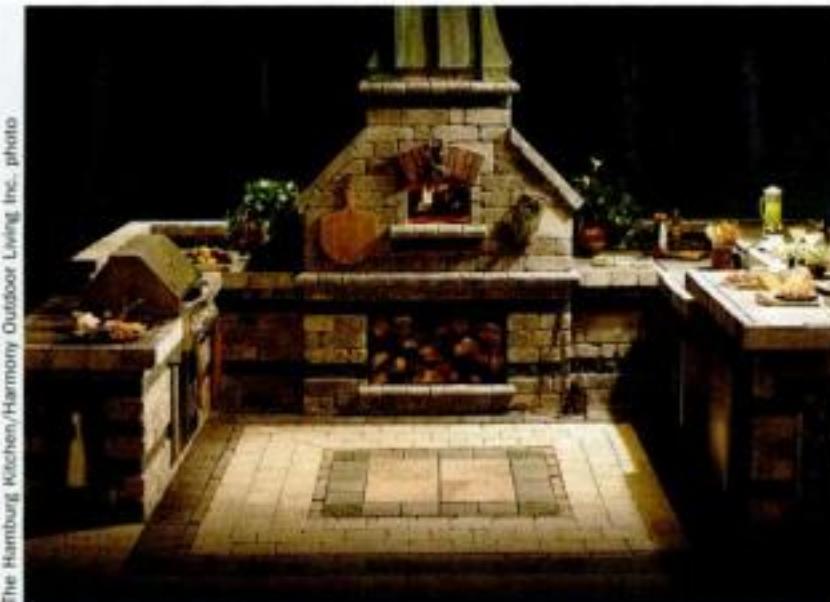
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The Hamburg Kitchen/Harmony Outdoor Living, Inc. photo

To make the most of your second kitchen, here are a few do's and don'ts:

**DO** pay attention to whether the materials and appliances you've selected come with warranties. Consider that the outdoor kitchen is going to take a beating from the elements, even if it's covered. That should make you ask for 10-to-15-year warranties on absolutely everything. Without it, you are flirting with (natural) disaster.

**DON'T** feel that you have to place the kitchen close by the house. If you have a perfect setting that emphasizes the sense of rustic beauty, by all means add underground gas, electrical and water lines to service the appliances, not to mention lots of storage so you don't have to practice a half-marathon bringing food, dishes and cleaning supplies back and forth.

**DO** think about the prevailing wind direction and whether there is a natural depression in the land that will trap odors. Plan the layout to avoid breezes blowing smoke from a grill, stovetop or fireplace into the conversational seating area. It will happen at times anyway, but with some planning you can avoid most ground clouds. Also try to avoid food odors blowing to your air-conditioning condenser unit or doors that will be opening and closing. After all, you went outdoors, in part, to keep the house clean and smelling like a house — not a barbecue pit.

**DON'T** skimp on workspace. The more room you have, the more help you're likely to get — and the more socializing will take place as cooking proceeds.

**Today's outdoor kitchens include appliances and ample workspace.**

**A fireplace adds charm and extends the seasons you can enjoy outdoor cooking.**

Additional countertops can double as eating areas, too. And while you're at it, pay close attention to the materials you choose. Your contractor can help guide you, but it's always a good idea to go for the most durable, lowest-maintenance materials you can afford. Five or 10 years from now,

you'll be glad you spent extra time making the best selection.

**DO** add some charm with a fireplace or fire pit. In addition to providing aesthetic appeal, you can extend the seasons in which to enjoy the setting. With a fire pit, you can actually move the ambience around to different locations as well.

**DON'T** ignore flooring or buy on the cheap. You don't want feet flying as you bring a tray of steaks and burgers to your guests. Any smooth surface might make traction iffy even on a dry day, but add a little rainwater to smooth tiles or marble, and your decorative base could become impossible to navigate easily. Stay away from typical wood decking, too, if you're creating an elaborate outdoor kitchen, as the wood may not be able to support the weight of the appliances and cabinets. Over time, it may sag, allowing rain to run down and stand against cabinets, hastening damage.

There are many other considerations before breaking ground, so if you want your second kitchen to be a hit, take time to think through the many ways to make dining al fresco at your log home as big as all outdoors. ■

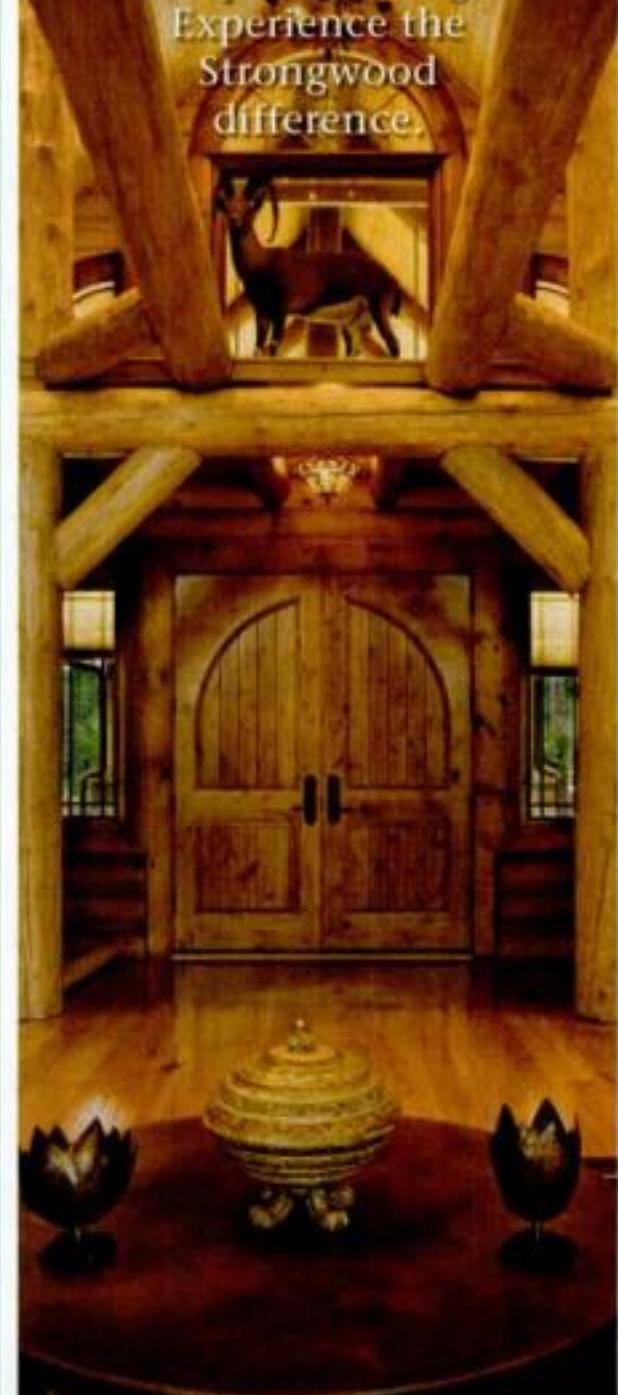


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# *Transforming* TRADITION

*A Minnesota couple uses log accents to replace a family cabin with a North Woods lodge.*

STORY BY TERESA L. WOLFF | PHOTOS BY JON P. JANZEN





**T**im and Liz Amdahl were sad when they realized their summer cabin on Minnesota's Horseshoe Lake no longer met their family's needs, but they were reluctant to leave. "Liz's father has owned property on the lake since Liz was a child," Tim says. "A special plus for me is that my brother, who is also my best friend, has a cabin for his family here. When we are at Horseshoe Lake, we are surrounded by family members who contribute to the joy of the occasion."

Their first thought was to renovate the cabin. They'd just completed a two-story garage with sufficient space on the lower level to store their boat and other recreational toys. They finished the second level into a guest apartment and hired an interior designer to decorate it in a North Woods theme. Because the apartment turned out so well, the Amdahls told John Dotty, whose Dotty Brothers Construction had built the guesthouse, that they wanted him to jack up the cabin to dig a basement and then add a screened porch. Dotty told them their plans would be quite costly and still not give them the home they wanted. He urged them to start over from the ground up. As difficult as parting with their cabin would be, they knew it was the right decision.

They also knew they didn't want full-log construction, although Tim admits he and Liz had long admired the look and feel of the old log lodges in northern Minnesota. "So," he says, "we decided to incorporate logs as accents."

They looked for plans they liked until Liz spotted a rendering by architect Donald A. Gardner that suited them. They purchased the plans on Gardner's web site and began modifying them. Dotty, whom they hired as their general contractor, completed the interior design to meet their specifications, including the shapes of all the windows. Gary Severson, the owner of Structures International, who has been designing lakefront homes for more than 30 years, redrafted all of the home's elevations and planned the locations of the Norway red pine accent logs from Whitefish Log Works, which also provided handcrafted, random-width white pine siding to give the exterior its log look.

**A pine tongue-and-groove ceiling and red-pine log accents mounted on faux-painted walls convey the look and feel of an old log lodge. The custom-built dining table seats 12, with extra room at the breakfast bar. The screened-in porch lies beyond.**





Faux-painted walls combine with multi-colored stone to enhance the warmth of the Norway red pine log trusses and pine tongue-and-groove ceiling in the great room. A local blacksmith shaped the fireplace door, which sustains the illusion that the gas-burning fireplace burns wood.





**ABOVE:** The guesthouse is visible through the expansive windows in the master bath, which features a power shade for privacy and in-floor radiant heating under the porcelain tile. Gary Severson designed the log-accent detail, draw-knifed white cedar vanity and dresser.

**LEFT:** Severson designed the stylish kitchen, using drawknifed white cedar to create granite-topped cabinets with character. Booted cedar posts add personality to the island. A blacksmith fashioned the baker's rack and brackets supporting the banded hood vent from aged metal for a copper-like appearance.

"In order to create the look and feel of log construction, the roof system had to be designed to hold the weight of the log trusses," Dotty explains. "Once the trusses are assembled and bolted into place, they have the appearance of a structural truss. We also added full-round logs in the ceiling and at strategic places on the walls."

The finished home boasts 7,000

square feet, highlighted by a view of the lake through floor-to-ceiling windows in the great room. To one side of the great room are the kitchen and a casual dining area that seats 12 people comfortably. Attached to the kitchen is the screened porch that prompted the initial overhaul that led to the new home. A mudroom connects the house to the three-car garage. Also on the main level are the master suite, Tim's office and a guest wing featuring two bedrooms and a shared bath. The lower, walkout level includes a second master suite, a family room and a workout area.

In addition to determining the log placement, Structures International played a key role in designing the kitchen and fashioning all of the cabinets in the home. Kathleen Frances Interiors, which decorated the Amdahls' guesthouse, chose all of the home's interior finishes, including flooring, stain, stone, lighting and fixtures. Frances chose furnishings to

establish a casual yet elegant Old-World style and created an old textured look by faux-painting the walls to highlight their texture and add depth.

Because the home's two-acre lot enjoys 225 feet of lakefront, the family spends a great deal of time outdoors, so exterior finishes were important. Local landscape designer Jens Back blended the home into the surrounding native vegetation, signaling a rustic feel by interspersing boulders, shrubs and foundation plants. He also created pathways down to the lake.

Having built a new family summer home, the Amdahls make the most of their time at Horseshoe Lake. Fishing for walleye and largemouth bass and swimming are favorite activities. Their son, Mitch, likes to wakeboard, and Tim favors the area's premier golfing. Joined by home-from-college daughter Tiffany, the family also enjoys trail riding



Pine logs provide the framework for the screened porch, which features natural slate flooring, weather-resistant wicker furniture and a wood-burning fireplace, which allows the Amdahls to use the room year-round.

through the woods or going for a run on the nearby Paul Bunyan Trail, which stretches 100 miles through northern Minnesota. "When evening comes and everyone is ready to relax, we often set up a portable outdoor movie theater next to the fire pit and take in the beauty of our surroundings," Tim notes.

He and Liz agree their lakeside home turned out to be a far more suit-

able summer home than the cabin it replaced. It quickly established itself as an Amdahl family legacy, especially now that older daughter Jessica and her husband, Rick, have presented Liz and Tim with their first grandchild. "Out of all the places we have traveled to, this is our favorite," Tim says. "We never intend to sell. This will be a home for our children and their children." ■

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**Random white pine siding and multicolored manufactured stone form the home's exterior finish. Landscape designer Jens Bach installed brick pavers to create a path to Horseshoe Lake.**

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### SPRING 2011

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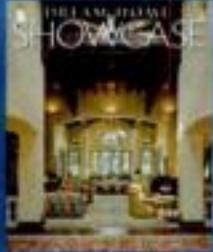
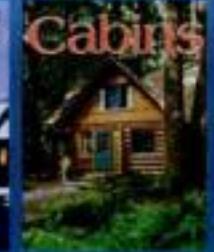
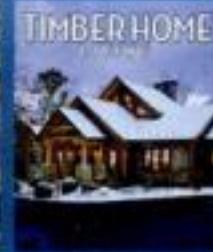
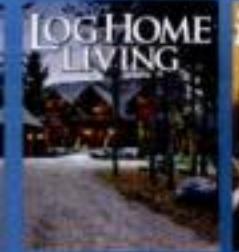
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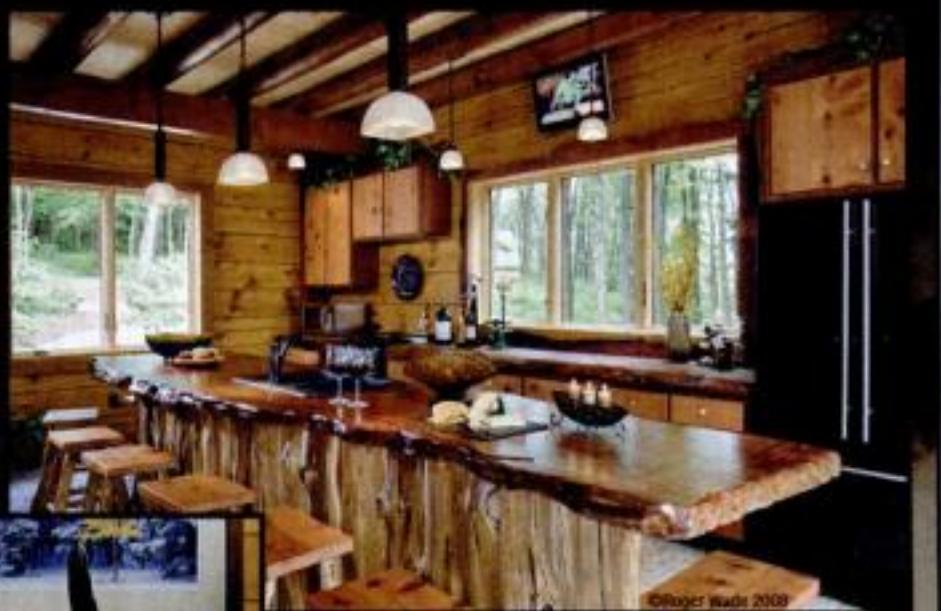
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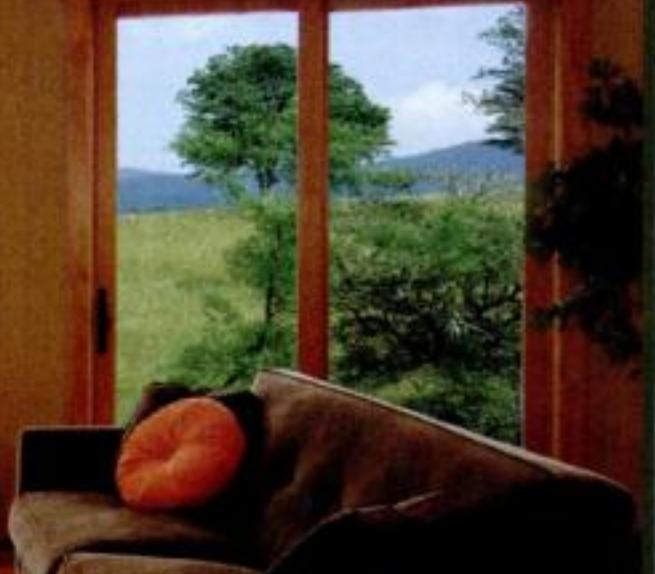


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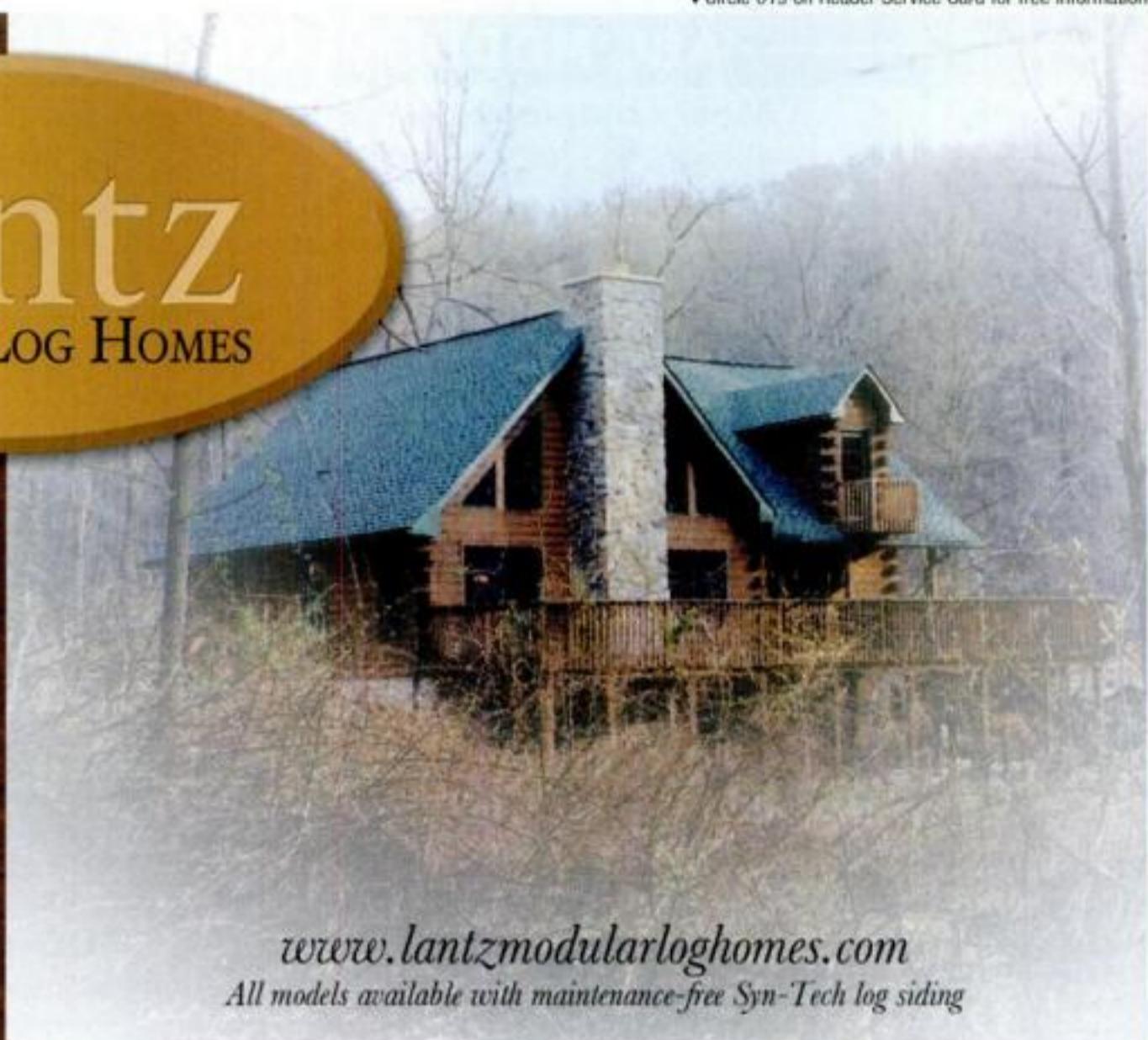
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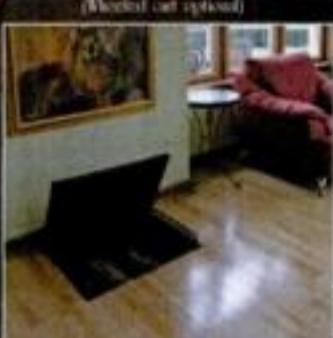
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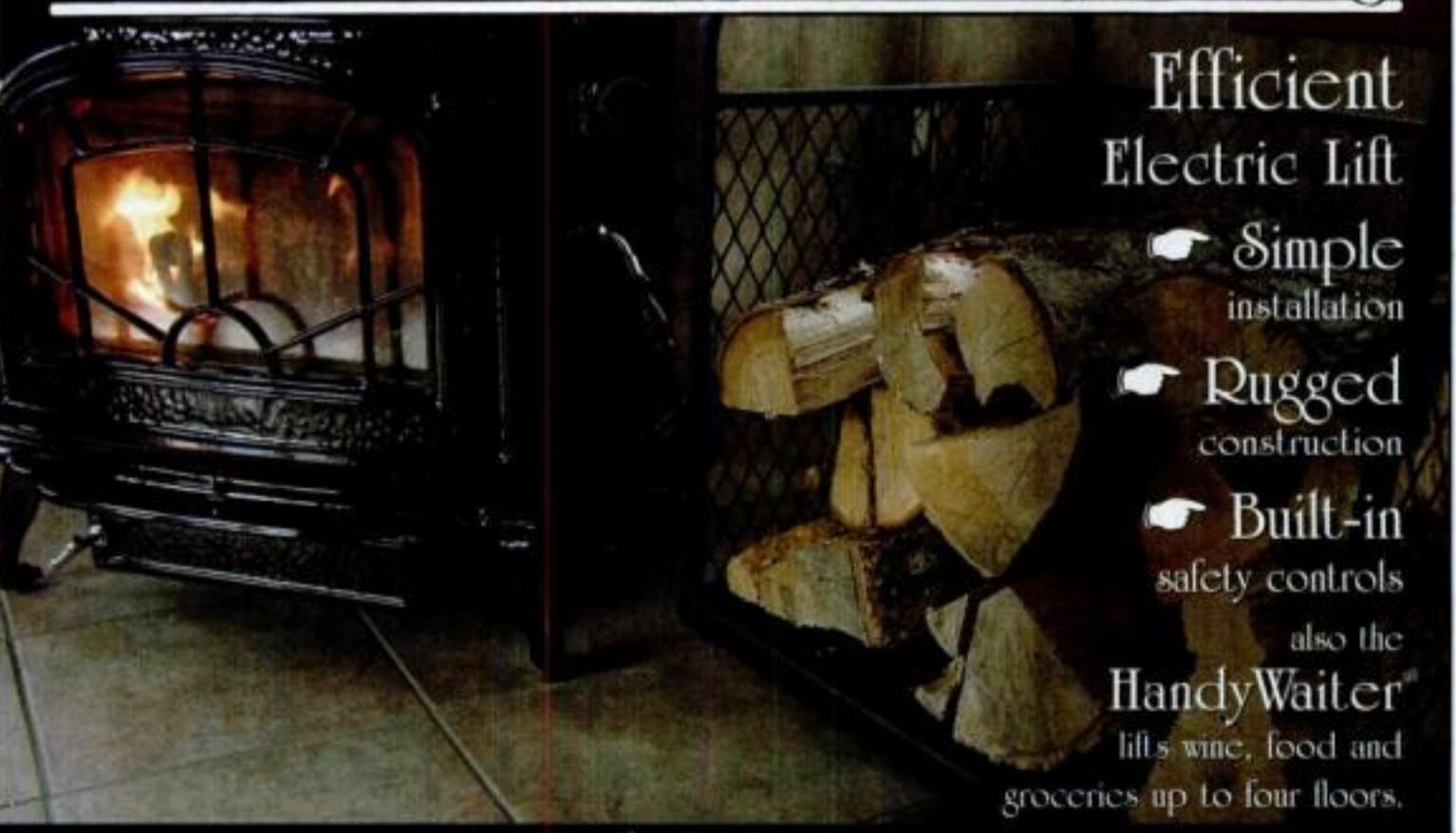


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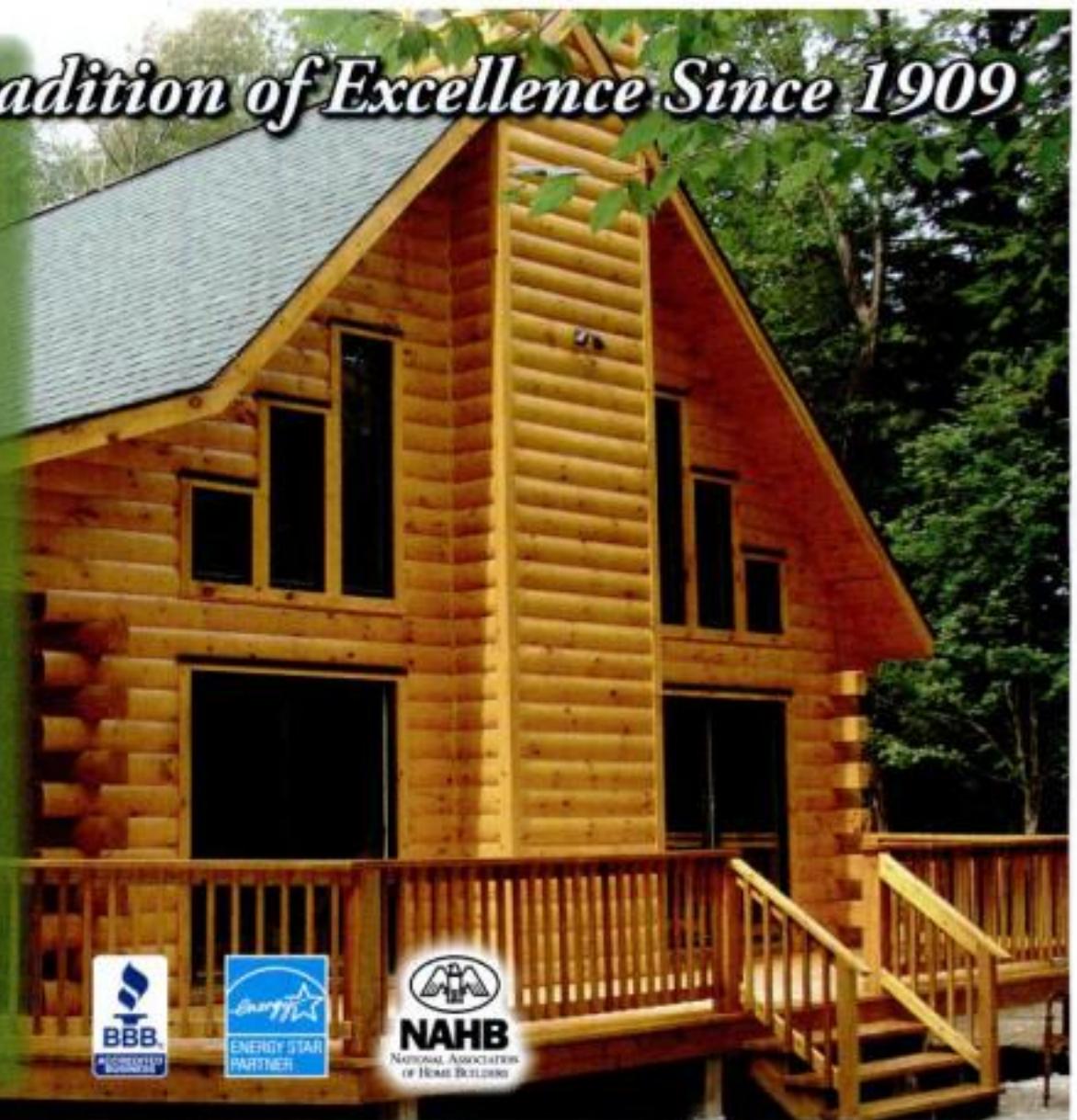


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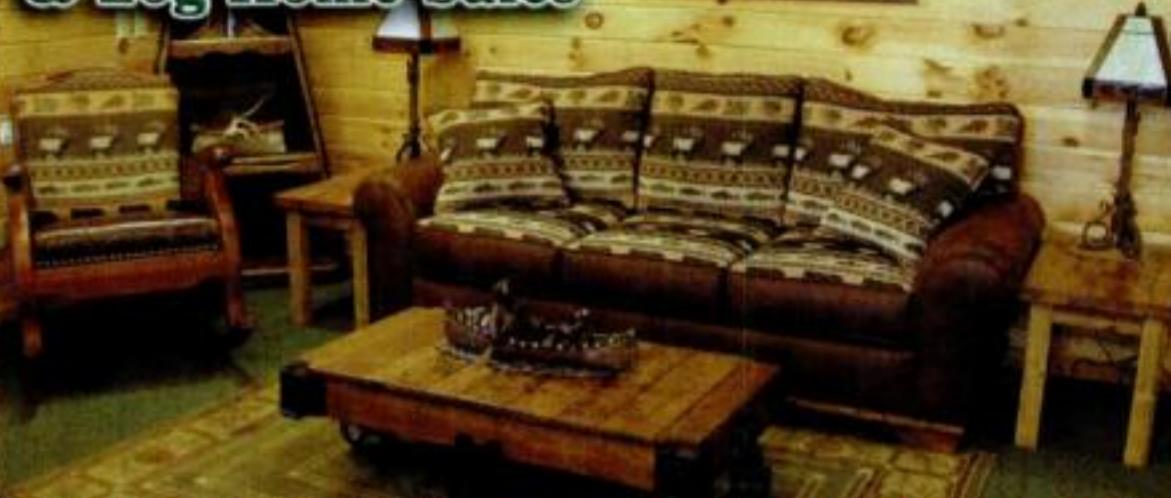
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#### continued from page 47

grew up in a household where cooking was done with no running water and no electricity. "Just look at saffron," the world's most expensive spice, costing \$100 per ounce. Spices need to be kept out of the light, so do away with the old glass bottles in the wooden rack that sits on the counter. The best storage for spices is within tins in the cupboard or pantry. Spice drawers are equally protective and space saving as well.

To complement an artisanal cheese or a fresh loaf of rosemary bread, nothing compares to a glass of fine wine. Smaller artisanal and boutique wineries are providing wine enthusiasts with a wider array of choices. While wine may have a significantly longer shelf life than most food items, it does have its frailties when it comes to storage. Just because you may lack the space or budget for an actual wine cellar, however, doesn't mean you have to forgo your gusto for the grape. Kitchen appliance and cabinet makers offer a number of storage options specifically designed to protect

wine's integrity and fit perfectly within the kitchen design.

Many a fine wine has been unnecessarily damaged due simply to incorrect storage. The cork in the wine bottle must stay moist; otherwise it may dry out, crack and let air in, thus ruining the wine. Keeping the bottle horizontal on a rack ensures that the cork stays moist. Storage temperature for wines is even more crucial, with reds requiring 52 to 65 degrees F and whites 45 to 50 degrees F. As with food-storage refrigerators, wine refrigerators run the gamut in quality, price and options, from under-the-counter glass door wine refrigerators to wooden-door insulated wine cabinets. You'll even find wine refrigerators within a refrigerator available in a number of sizes and price ranges to suit an avid, or even rabid, oenophile.

#### Planning Your Artisanal Kitchen

The artisanal food movement is driven by the desire for locally grown, sustainable items that taste great and benefit the environment. How better to follow through

with this healthy body and earth endeavor than by creating a kitchen that is itself created from sustainable materials.

Fast-growing bamboo and soft cork flooring beautifully complement a log-home kitchen. Countertops crafted from recycled aluminum, recycled lumber, bamboo and even Terrazzo counters made from chips of glass bottles, shells or stones can be artful yet earth-friendly tops to your multiple work islands. Of course, choosing appliances with the best energy ratings reduces power usage, especially for those who regularly use all their kitchen accoutrements.

When meals are done and it's clean-up time, don't forget about recycling. Plan ahead in your kitchen design, and you can easily sort glass, paper and plastics in separate bins in a pullout drawer or pantry bin.

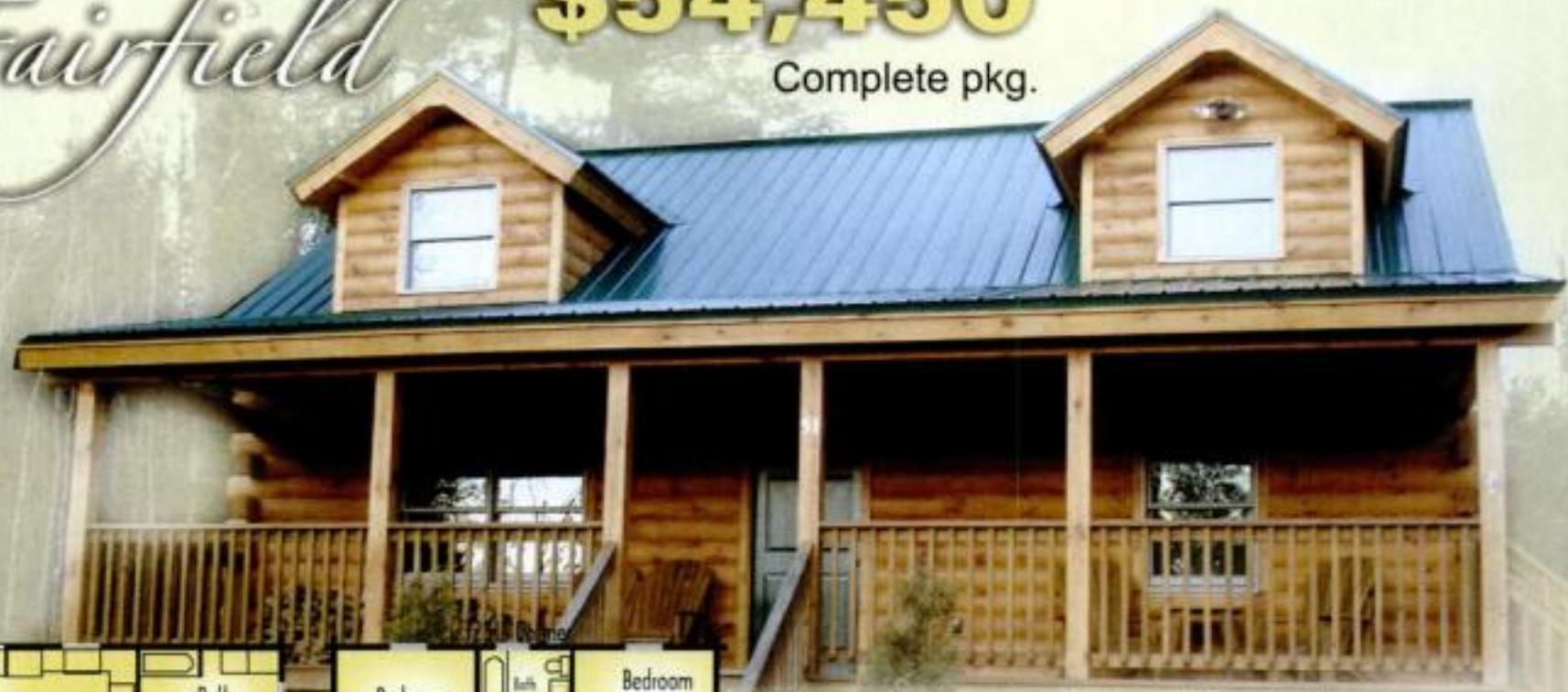
By planning an artisanal kitchen, you'll be embracing an ethic that lies at the heart of owning a log home. You'll also find yourself enjoying your kitchen even more because the food you prepare and serve will taste so much better. ■

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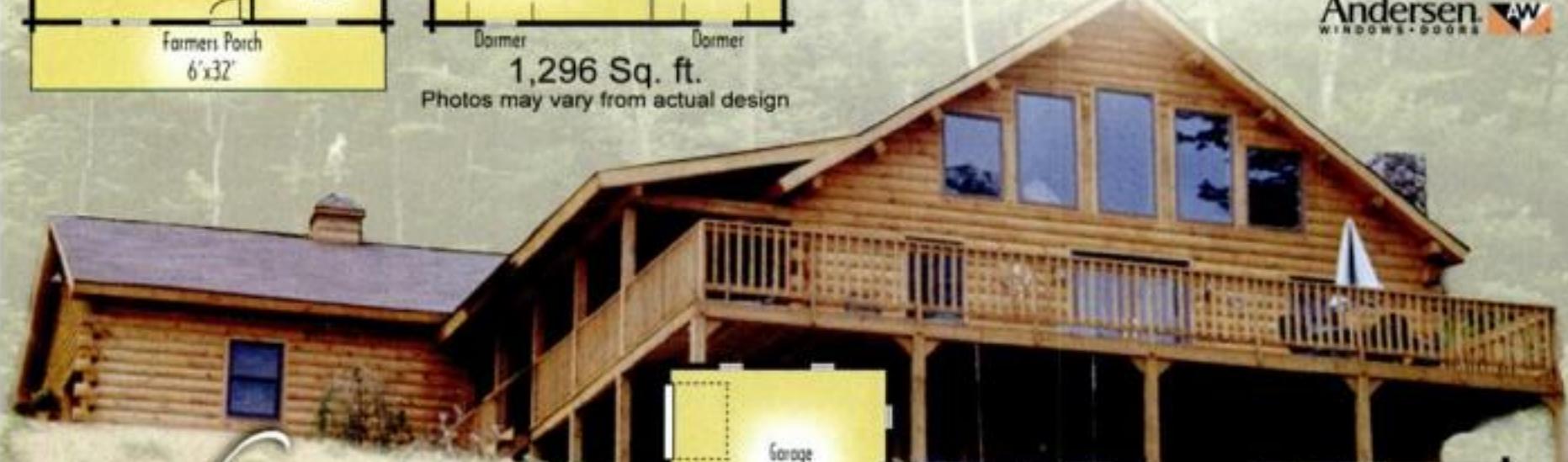
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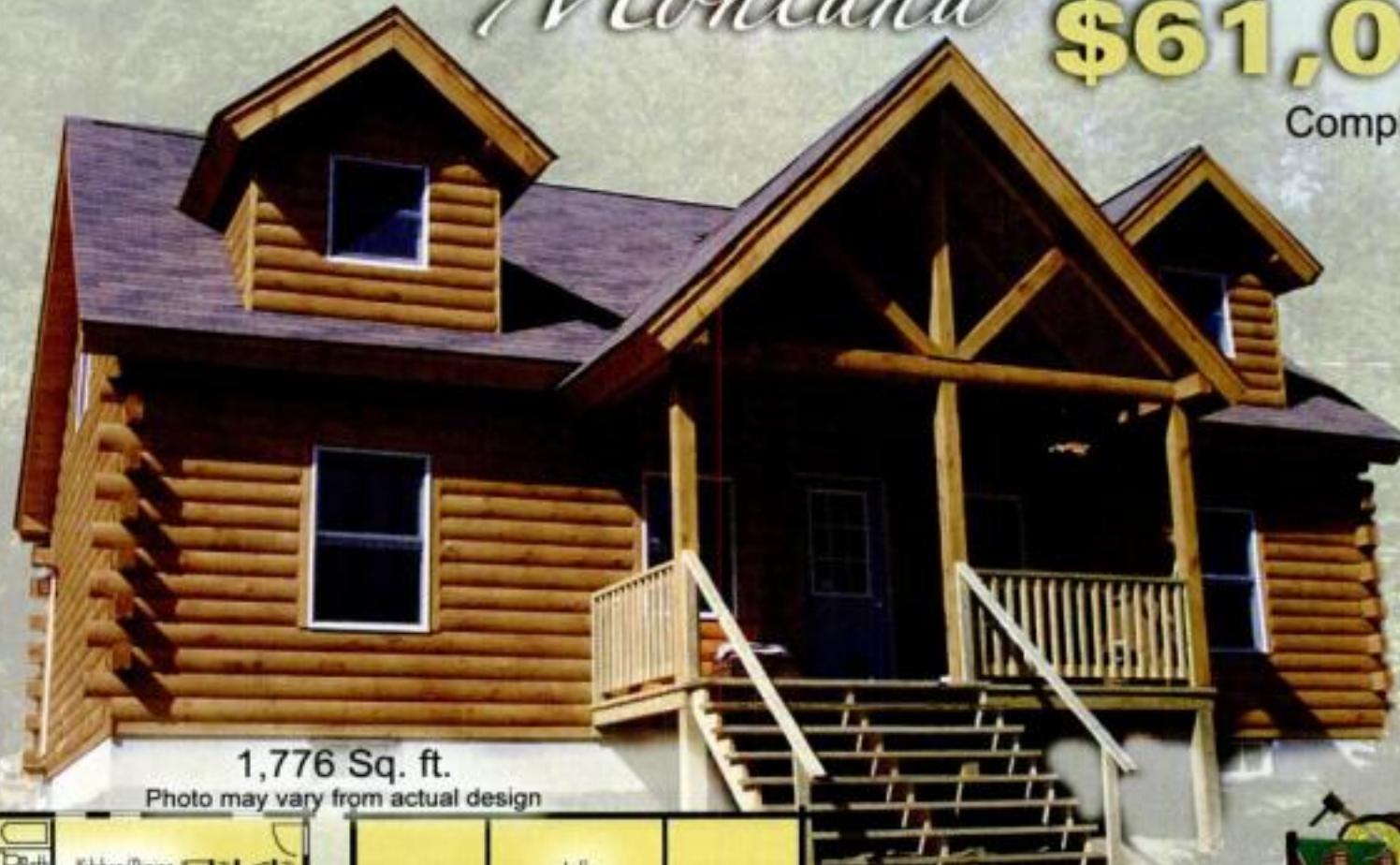
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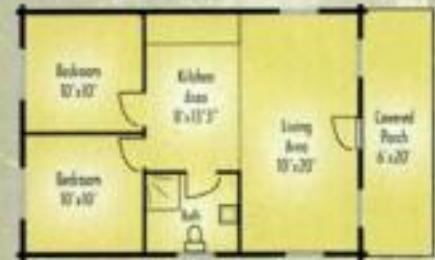
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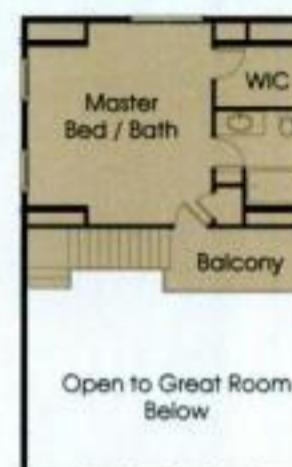
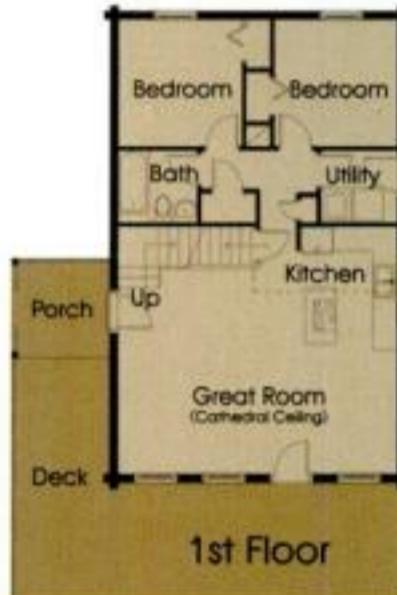
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Baths: 2  
Square Footage: 1,320  
Package Price: Call for Pricing

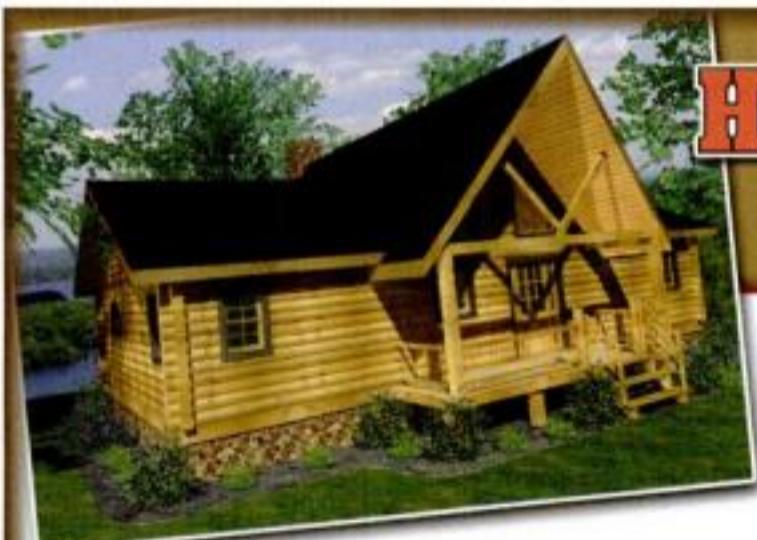
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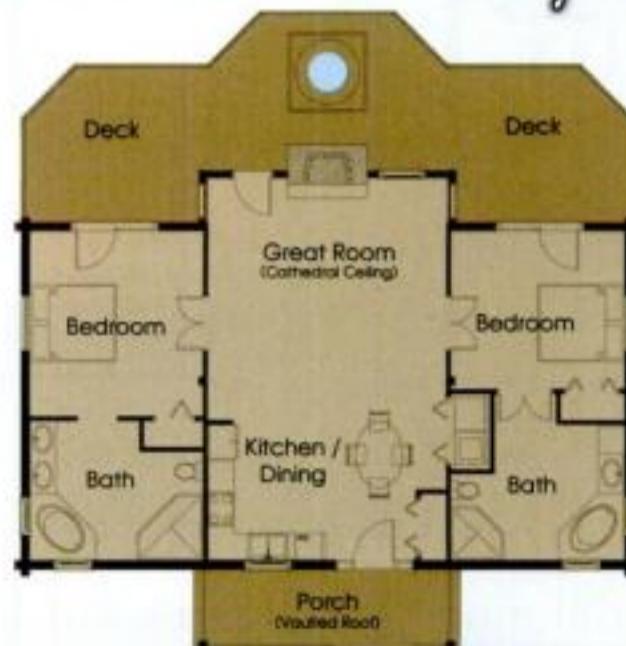
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## Swiftwater

Bedrooms: 2  
Baths: 2  
Square Footage: 1,276  
Package Price: Call for Pricing

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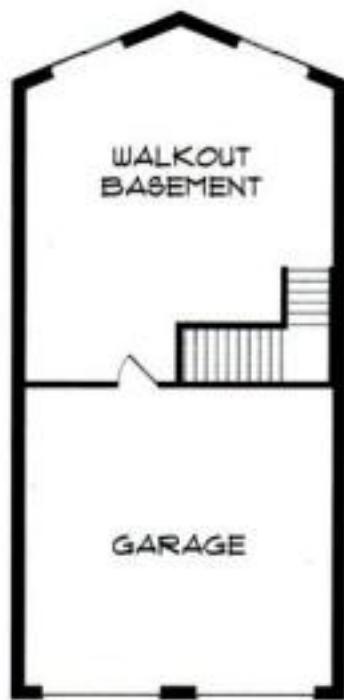


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**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2 1/2

**Square Footage:** 1,791

**Package Price:** Call for prices

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## Elk River II

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**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2 1/2

**Square Footage:** 2,234

**Package Price:** Call for prices

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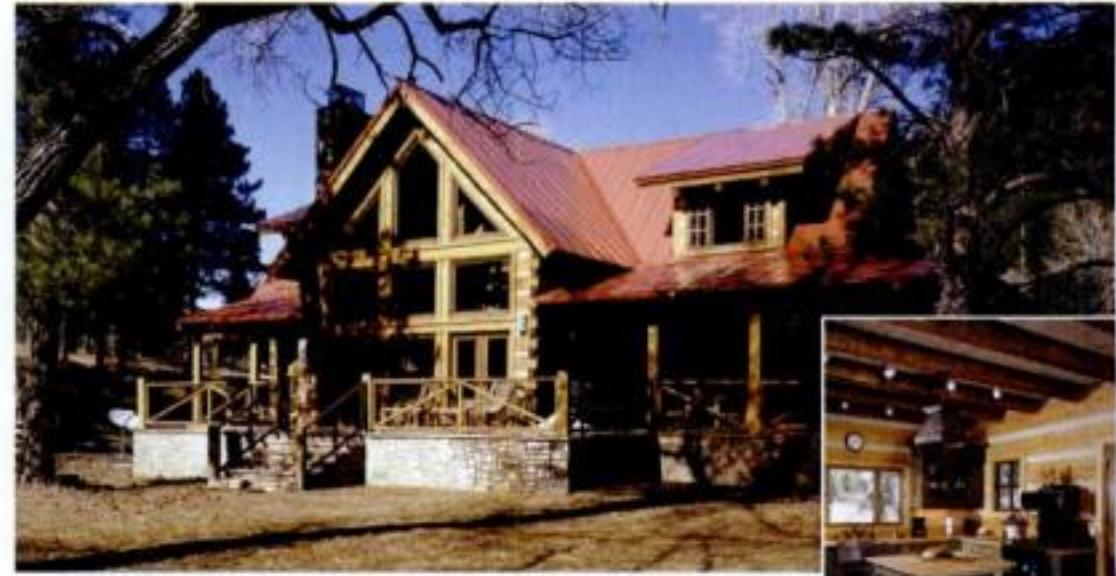
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## Muirfield I

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**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2

**Square Footage:** 1,777

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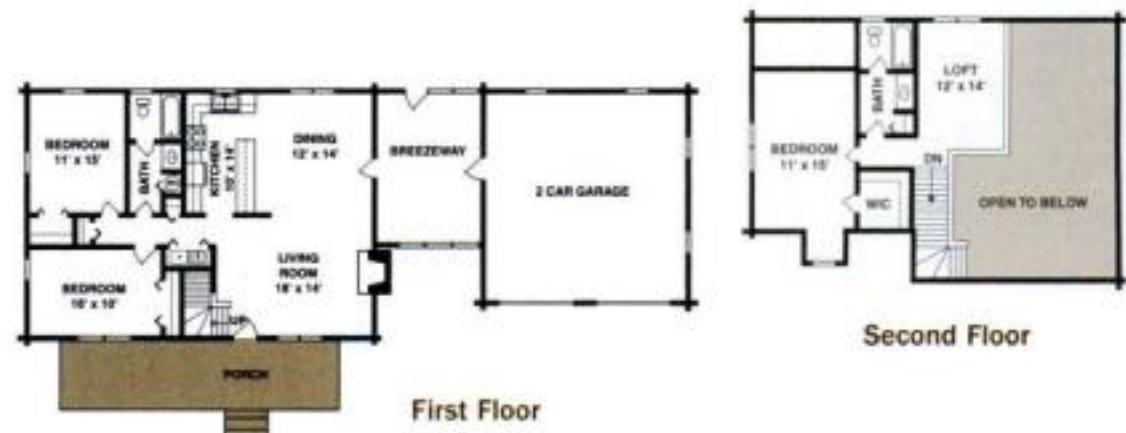
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**Bedrooms:** 5

**Baths:** 3 1/2

**Square Footage:** 3,586 (includes lower level)

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**Baths:** 6 1/2

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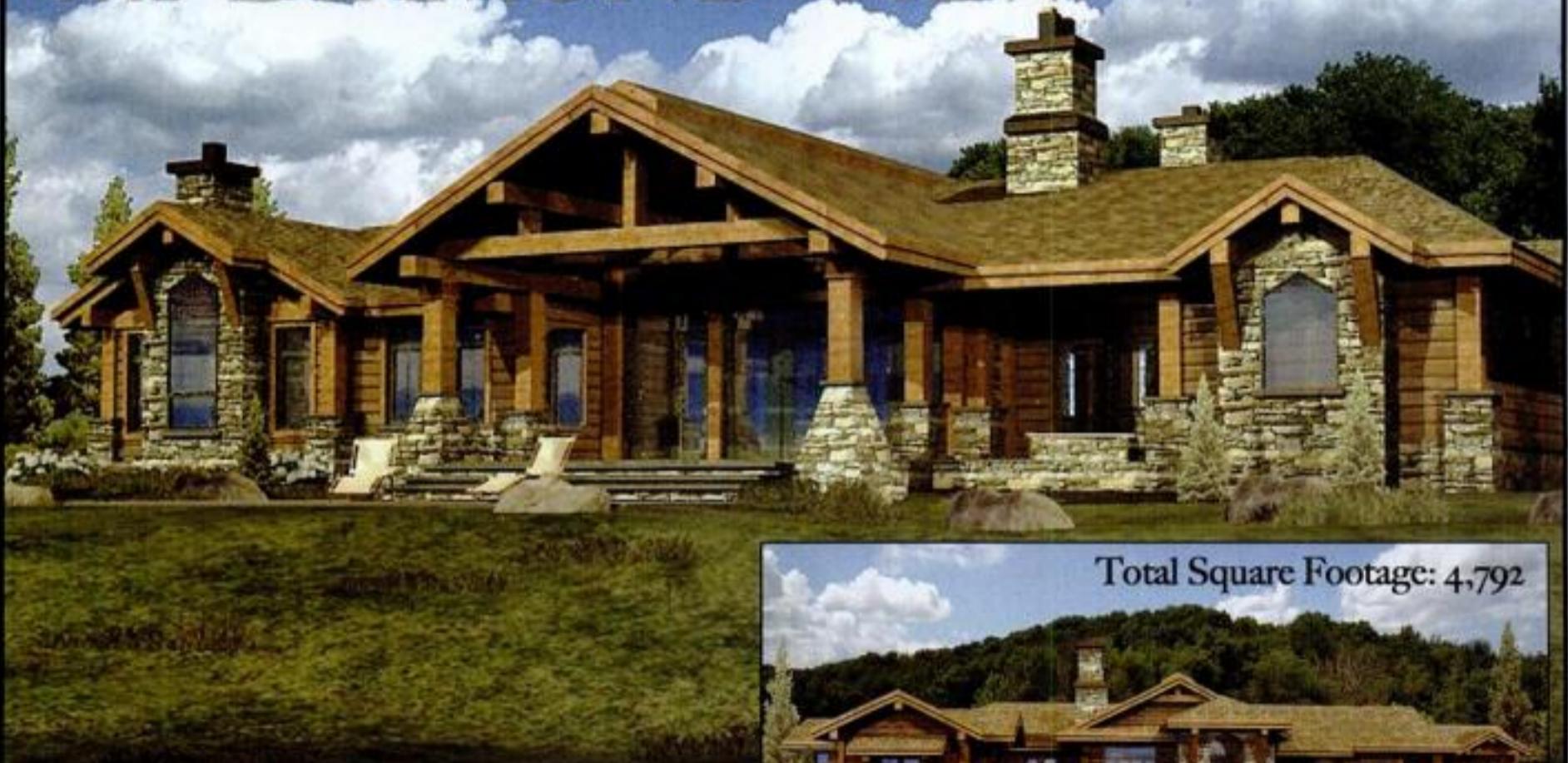
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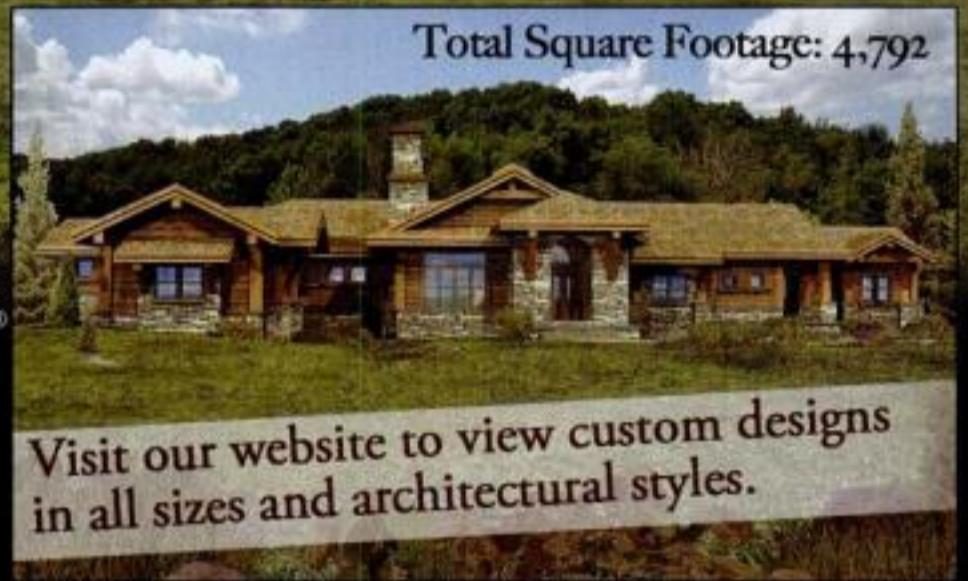
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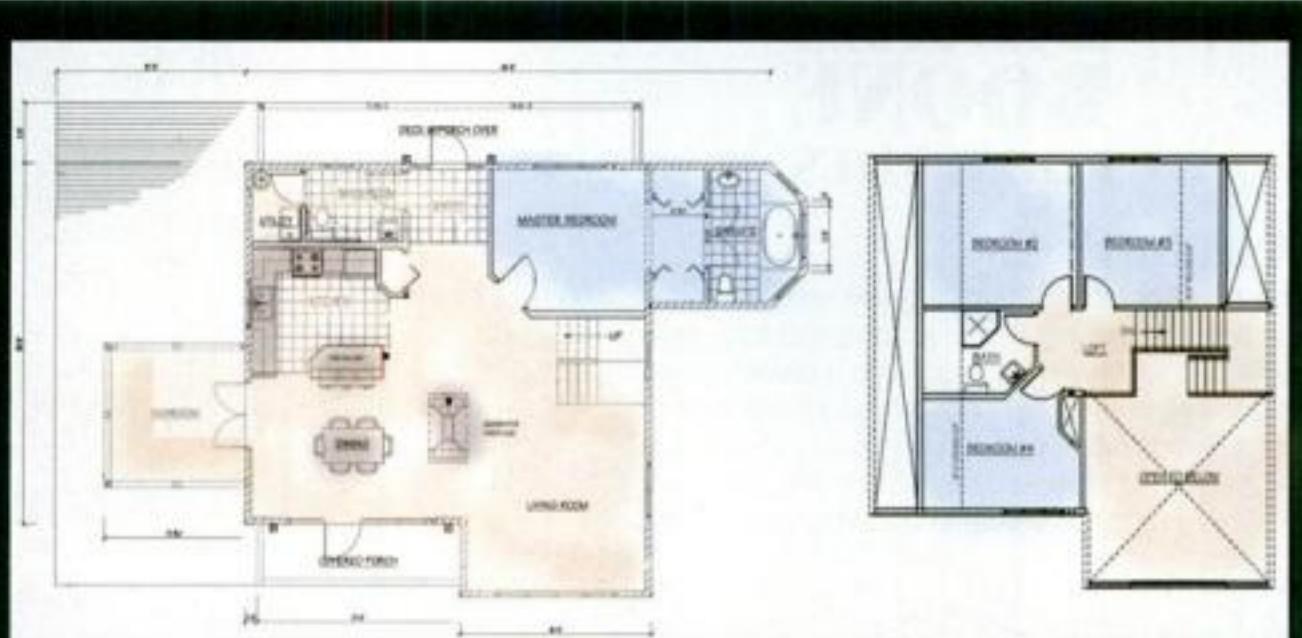
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This is a great lake front home with a wall of windows and glass that will bring the outdoors into perfect view. A large great room with a timber frame cathedral ceiling is the focal point for those weekend gatherings. Three bedrooms provide plenty of space for friends and family to visit and enjoy the experience of log home living. Surrounded by porches and decks this home is great for a family cabin to be enjoyed anywhere.



**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2

**Square Footage:** 1,946

**Package Price:** Call for prices

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This home has it all. Plenty of gable windows accent the beautiful cathedral ceilings throughout the great room and kitchen/dining room. The master bedroom at one end of this home has a large private bathroom. Two bedrooms on the opposite end offer space for guests and privacy. Heavy timber front and back porches add to this dream home. Imagine the possibilities.

**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2

**Square Footage:** 1,650

**Package Price:** Call for prices

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## The McKay

The McKay features the popular open-concept great room with exposed timber ceiling and large fireplace; kitchen with adjoining laundry and half bath and dining room leading out to the sunroom with cathedral ceiling. The master bath has a separate dressing area plus room for a hot tub. And, since you are buying mill-direct, it's affordably priced.

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**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2 1/2

**Square Footage:** 2,041

**Deluxe Package:** \$33,865

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## Rainbow Cabin

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**Bedrooms: 2**

**Baths: 2**

**Square Footage: 1,498**

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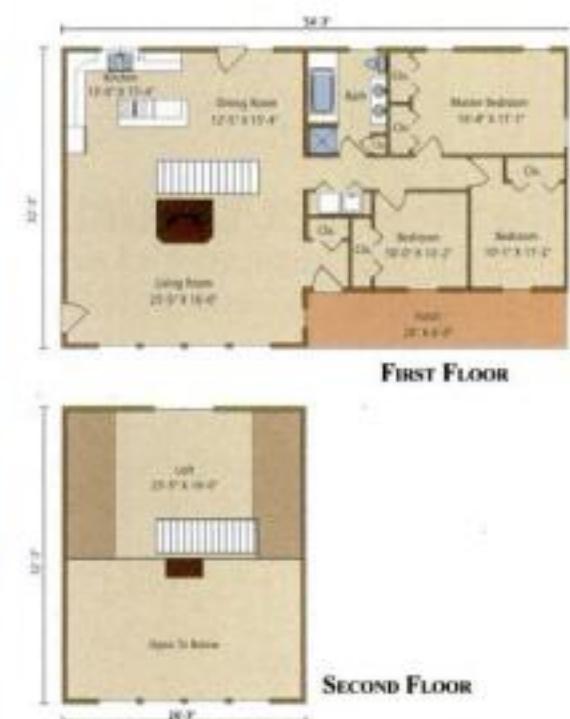
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**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 2

**Square Footage:** 2,232

**Package Price:** Call for prices

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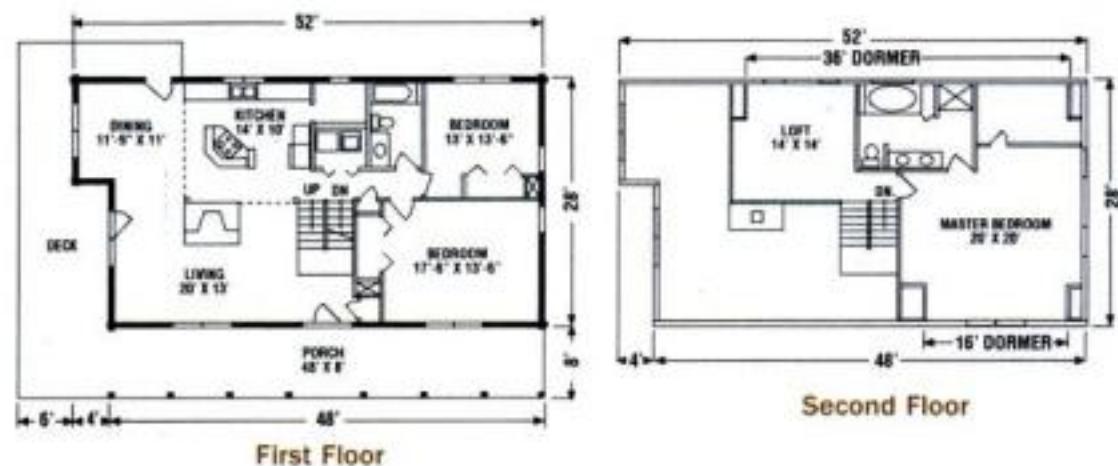
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## Eagle River Lofted 2

The Eagle River Lofted is perfect for those needing a little more space for bedrooms, a master suite or a state of the art dream kitchen. The 16-by-29 foot wing allows for the space you need to host all the friends and family or that reading room off the master bedroom you've always dreamed of. Visit our website to view more floor plan configurations for this model.

**Bedrooms:** 3

**Baths:** 3 1/2

**Square Footage:** 2,640

**Package Price:** Call for pricing in your area



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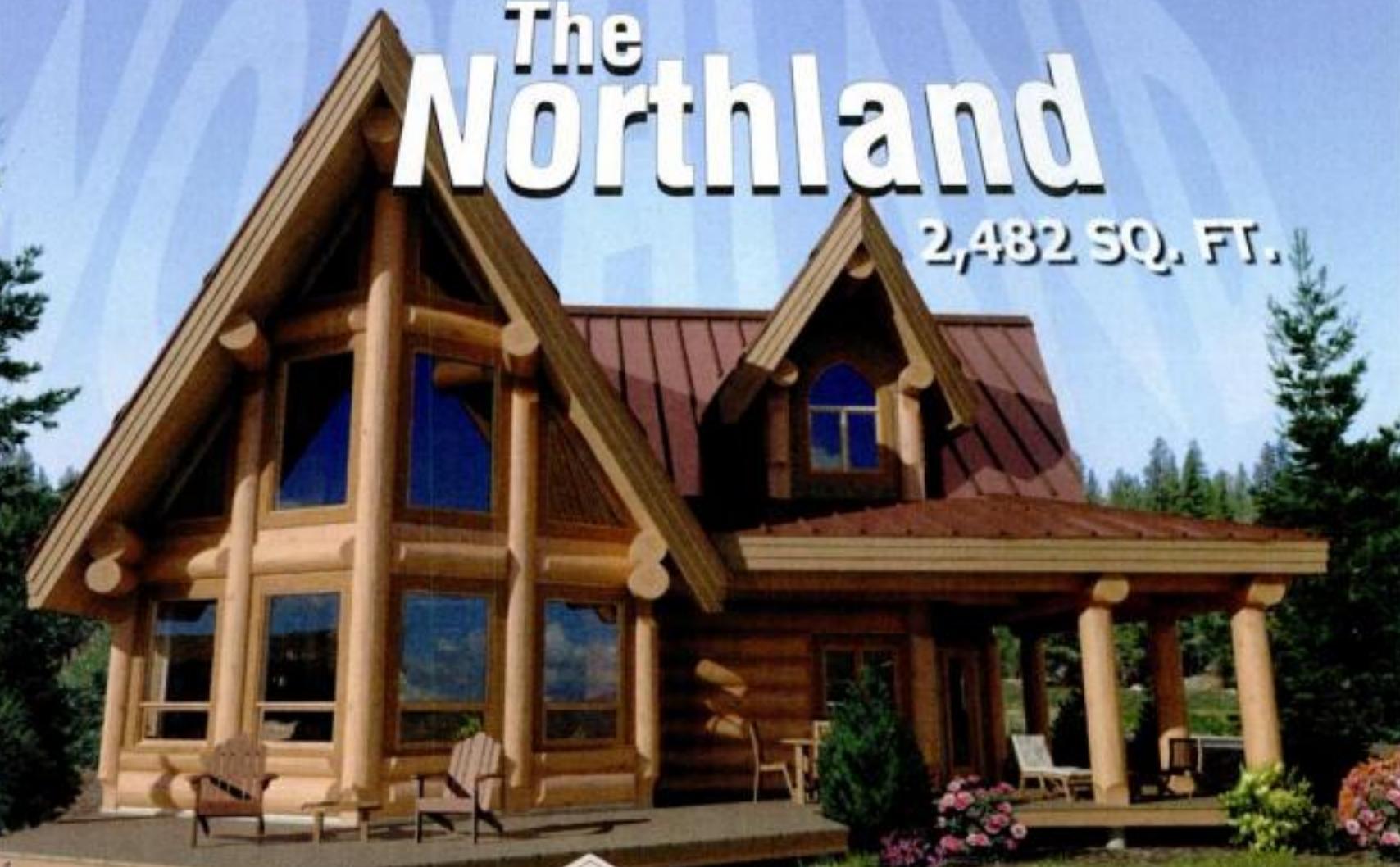
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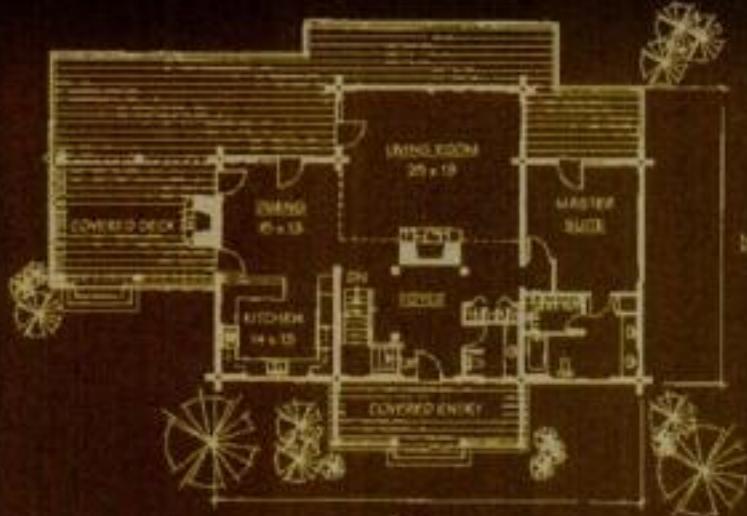
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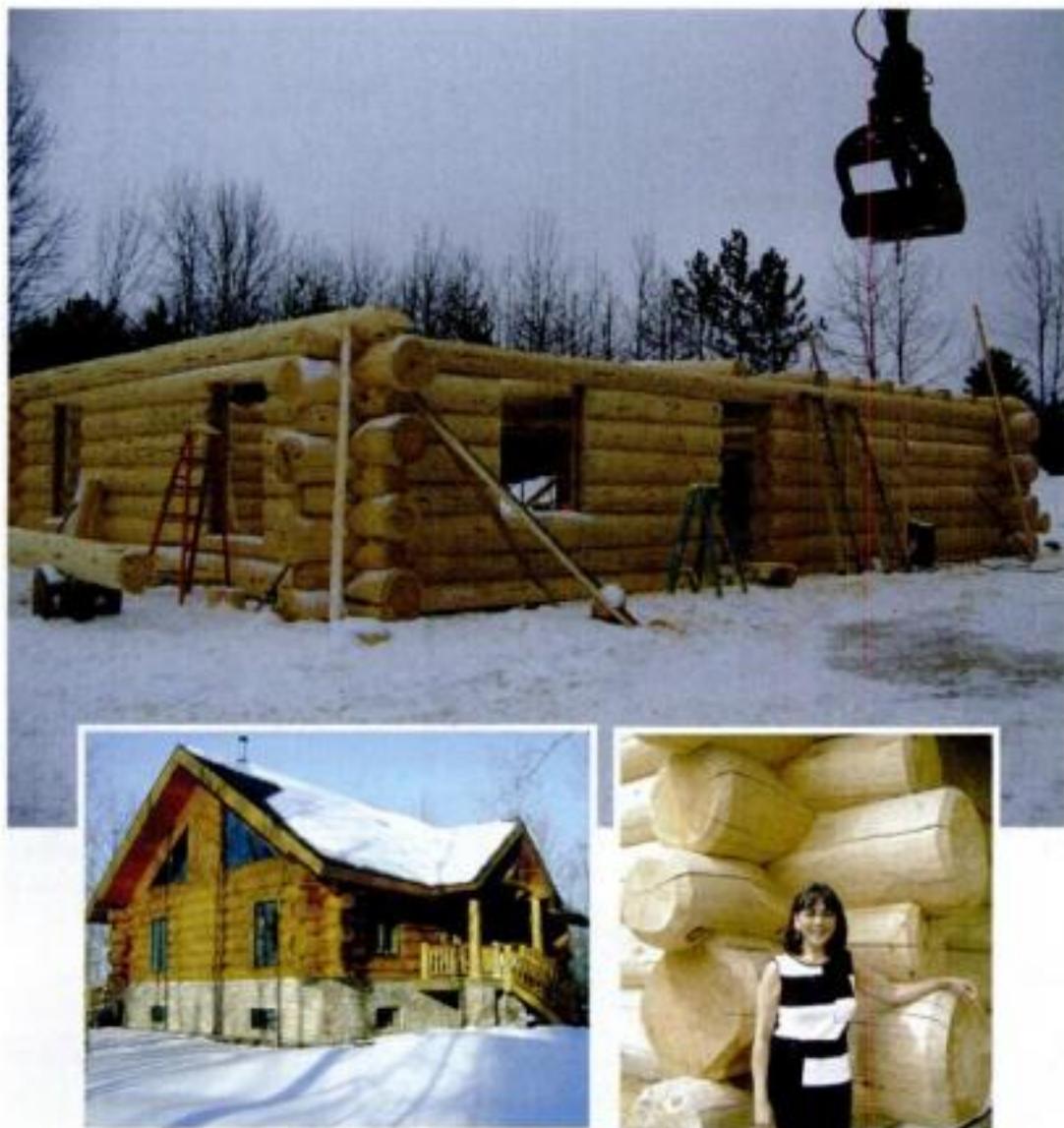
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## cabin fever

*continued from page 27*

created a timeless masterpiece. He drew up rough plans on rolled-up poster board and took them to Estemerwalt Log Homes to cut the logs. Because there's only an old logging road into the cabin site, the company delivered the logs on tractor-trailers to Reynolds's shop, about 45 minutes from the site. The builder hauled them into the woods a few at a time.

The wall logs are milled 10-inch round eastern white pine. Reynolds embellished them with debarked logs that he fashioned and fitted by hand.

The cabin has about 1,500 square feet of open space that relies on nooks to delineate space functionally. It has two small sleeping lofts that meet at a spiral staircase and three more beds on the main level. Reynolds crafted the kitchen cabinets, and a mason built the fireplace with stone from the site.

Furnished sparsely to reinforce its rusticity, the woodsy retreat offers simple pleasures in true log-cabin fashion. ■

## resources

### For Love of Logs

Pages 28-35

**Log provider:** Maple Island Log Homes (800-748-0137, [mapleisland.com](http://mapleisland.com))

**Woodwork & specialties:** Sawmill Creek Woodworking (517-349-2299)

**Stonework:** Staytrue Construction (616-735-4474)

**Dining chairs:** Old Hickory (800-232-2275, [oldhickory.com](http://oldhickory.com))

**Windows:** Marvin Windows and Doors (888-537-7828, [marvin.com](http://marvin.com))

### Room and a View

Pages 36-43

**Log provider:** Kuhns Bros. Log Homes (800-326-9614, [kuhnsbros.com](http://kuhnsbros.com))

**Builder:** Cedar Mountain Builders (828-506-8181)

**Porch rockers, living room chairs and sofa:** Watauga Creek Home Furnishings (800-443-1131, [wataugacreek.com](http://wataugacreek.com))

**Lighting fixtures:** Rustic Lighting and Fans (800-275-5482, [rusticlightingandfans.com](http://rusticlightingandfans.com))

**Kitchen appliances:** General Electric ([geappliances.com](http://geappliances.com))

**Kitchen cabinets:** Omega Cabinetry ([omegacab.com](http://omegacab.com))

**Dining room table and chairs, kitchen bar stools:** The Rustic Cabin (864-638-3673, [therusticcabin.com](http://therusticcabin.com))

**Windows and sliding doors:** Andersen Windows (800-426-4261, [andersenwindows.com](http://andersenwindows.com))

### Transforming Tradition

Pages 56-63

**Log provider:** Whitefish Log Works (218-692-2997, [justlogit.com](http://justlogit.com))

**Builder:** Dotty Brothers Construction (218-568-6160, [dottibrothers.com](http://dottibrothers.com))

**Designer:** Structures International (218-963-3401, [sinisswa.com](http://sinisswa.com))

**Interior designer:** Kathleen Frances Interiors (218-454-0810, [kathleenfrancesinteriors.com](http://kathleenfrancesinteriors.com))

**Landscape designer:** J&B Outdoor Creations (218-821-5577, [jboclandscaping.com](http://jboclandscaping.com))

**Dining room table:** Century Furniture ([centuryfurniture.com](http://centuryfurniture.com))

**Breakfast bar stools:** Lorts Furniture (623-936-1437, [lorts.com](http://lorts.com))

**Dining room chandelier:** Fine Art Lamps (305-821-3850, [fineartlamps.com](http://fineartlamps.com))

**Windows:** Loewen (800-563-9367, [loewen.com](http://loewen.com))

**Wicker porch furniture:** Designer Wicker by Tribor (803-531-1615, [designerwicker.com](http://designerwicker.com))

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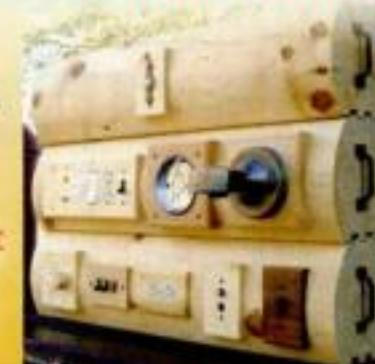
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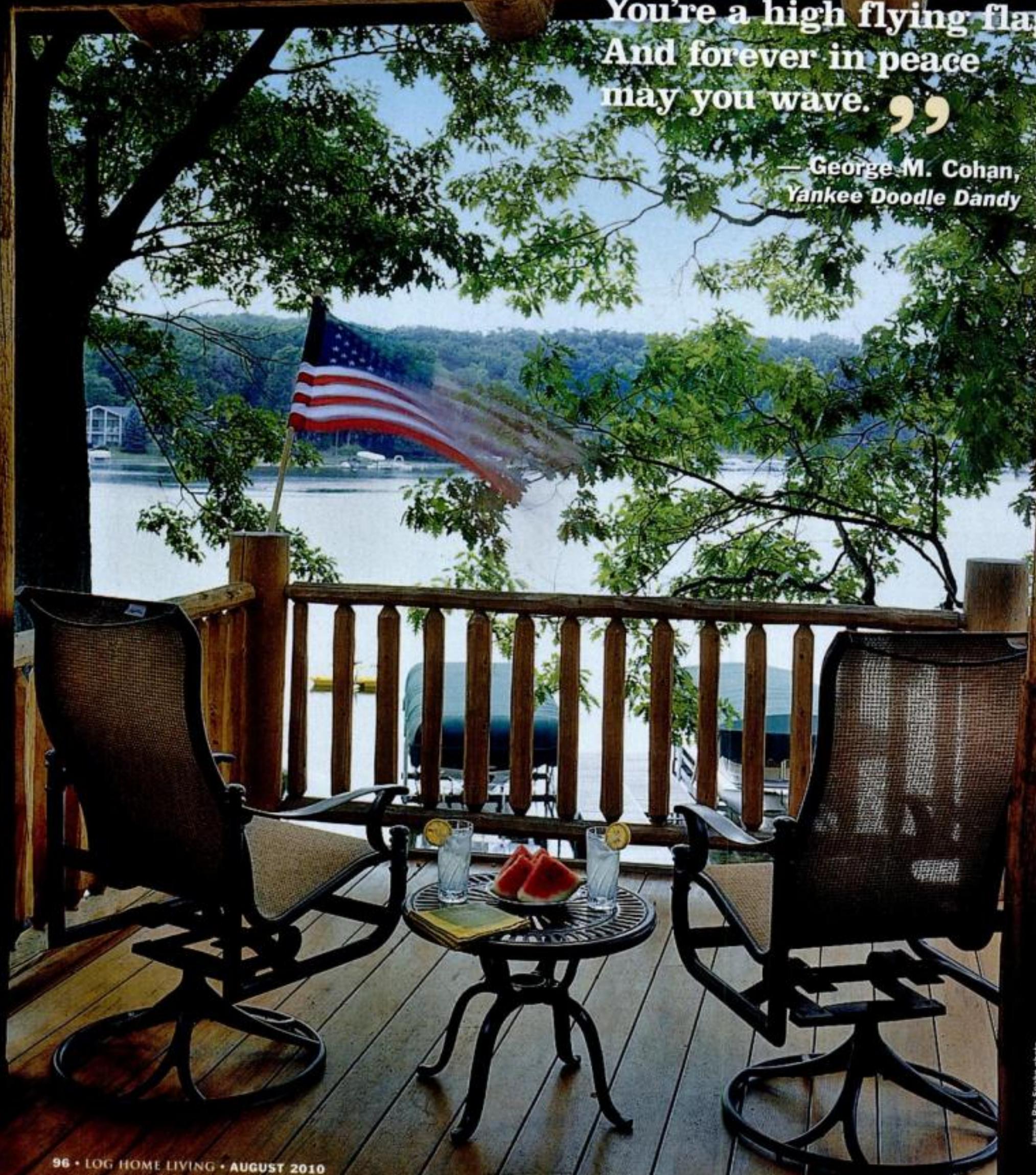
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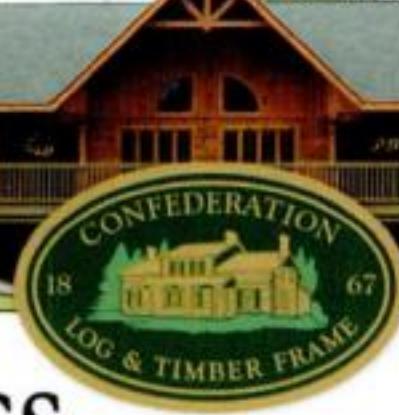
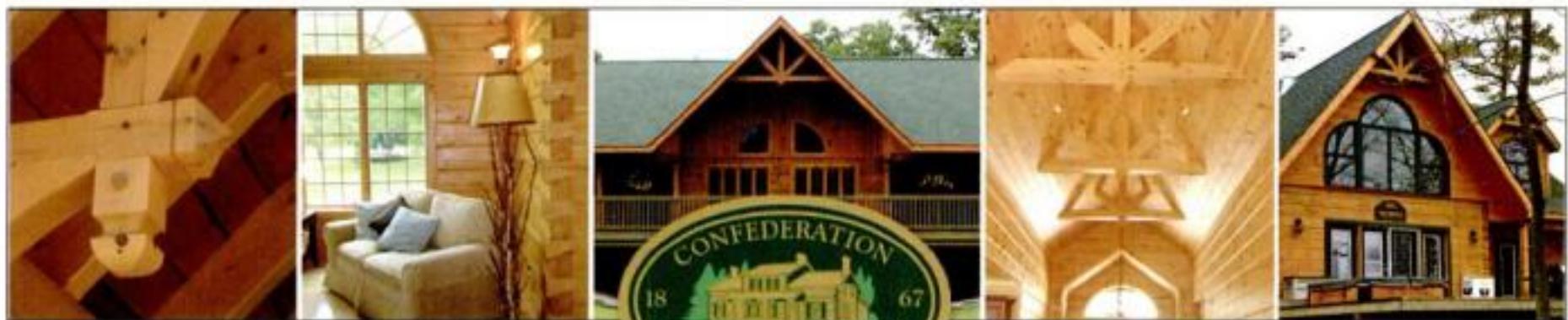
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