

Nestled at 4,000 feet in North Carolina's Smoky Mountains, this 4,800-square-foot vacation home is crafted from indigenous eastern white pine logs.

A CAMP of Their OWN

MEMORIES OF SUMMER CAMP INSPIRE A WARM FAMILY GETAWAY IN THE NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS.

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For home owner Marie Culbreth, the most exciting part about a mountain home is having three fireplaces. "Living in Florida my whole life, I never had a fireplace before," she laughs.

Roasting marshmallows to browned perfection over a crackling fire, frolicking in crisp blue lake waters, hiking through nature's pristine flora and forming friendships that last a lifetime—the carefree days of summer camp are the stuff of life. And the nostalgia is enough to make anyone want to re-create that perfect simplicity into a year-round lifestyle.

Florida native Gil Culbreth felt the same way. He'd spent his boyhood summers at Camp Rockmont set deep in Black Mountain, North Carolina. It was no place like home, and Gil was awestruck by the lush, natural surroundings that set the stage for his physical and spiritual growth. Indeed, his five summers there left a lasting impression, and one that he was able to relive again through his kids' eyes.

Eventually, with his children grown, Gil's excuse to visit the mountain retreat vanished. But his craving for the soothing elements of nature and the calm, simple pleasures of life always stayed with him. The desire to keep that feeling alive inspired Gil and his wife, Marie, to head back to the mountains—this time, in search of a locale that would be ideal for a family vacation home.

Finding Home

After months of exploring, the Culbreths stumbled upon Eagle's Nest, a new log home community in Maggie Valley, North Carolina. Set in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, about 35 miles west of Asheville, they staked their claim on two adjacent lots for a combined 3 acres of wooded property. The parcel offered relatively level terrain on its mountainside locale and included a stream that runs across the back of the property. It was the perfect setting for their new home, though they hadn't even thought about building with logs until then.



OPPOSITE AND BELOW: Gil and Marie Culbreth wanted a vacation getaway big enough for the whole family. That meant lots of food-preparation and eating space. The counter in the kitchen is just the kind of casual spot kids enjoy, while the elegant dining room with a view speaks to an adult aesthetic. BOTTOM: A creative ceiling in the master bedroom is the best of both worlds: low and cozy above the sleep space and high and mighty over the sitting area.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

When asked about his favorite feature of the house, home owner Gil Culbreth doesn't hesitate: He loves the bar crafted from the logs of a 250-year-old cabin that builder Scott Campbell dismantled and redesigned as the focal point of the game room. "I told him

to use his imagination, and that's just what he did," says Gil with a laugh. (The mantels built for each of the home's three fireplaces also were crafted from the old logs.)

Gil used his own imagination when he designed the barstools with the logo from his Florida-based business. —L.M.J



"It wasn't what we were set on at first," recalls Gil. "But we loved the community. We appreciated the fact that everything was going to be left in its natural state, and we just liked the idea that everything was going to be log homes."

Fitting the Pieces

After buying the land, the couple, who was in no hurry to build, decided to put the area to one final test before beginning construction. Over the course of many months, they rented several homes in the area for a week at a time and got to know the surroundings, people, shops and builders. "We spent a lot of time exploring the area and decided it was perfect for us," Gil remembers. "During our adventures, we admired several homes in the area and eventually learned they were

all by the same builder."

So Gil and Marie tracked down the man behind the homes and found Scott Campbell of J. Scott Campbell Construction, who was a wealth of information about log construction. Based on the style the couple admired, Scott recommended local log provider Top Notch, a division of Pioneer Log Systems based in Kingston Springs, Tennessee.

Working from one of the company's stock plans, the couple teamed up with Scott to customize their 4,800-square-foot home. Boasting three levels of finished living space, the four-bedroom structure boasts abundant glass for a bright and open view of the natural surroundings. And the wraparound, covered porches tack on an additional 2,000 feet of living space close to nature.

The chilly mountain air surrounding the Culbreth's vacation home makes it the perfect escape from scorching Florida summers. But the family also nestles into their retreat—named Mountain Stream—during the winter months. Although they don't ever see themselves retiring to live full-time in the mountains, both Gil and Marie are thrilled to finally have a place to host their children and grandchildren in any season.

"My son and his wife now have children of their own, and I expect that someday they'll go to a camp as well," says Gil. But even if those plans never come to pass, the family's future generations are sure to experience the natural beauty and serenity of Camp Culbreth. And, in the process, fall in love with the mountains. ■

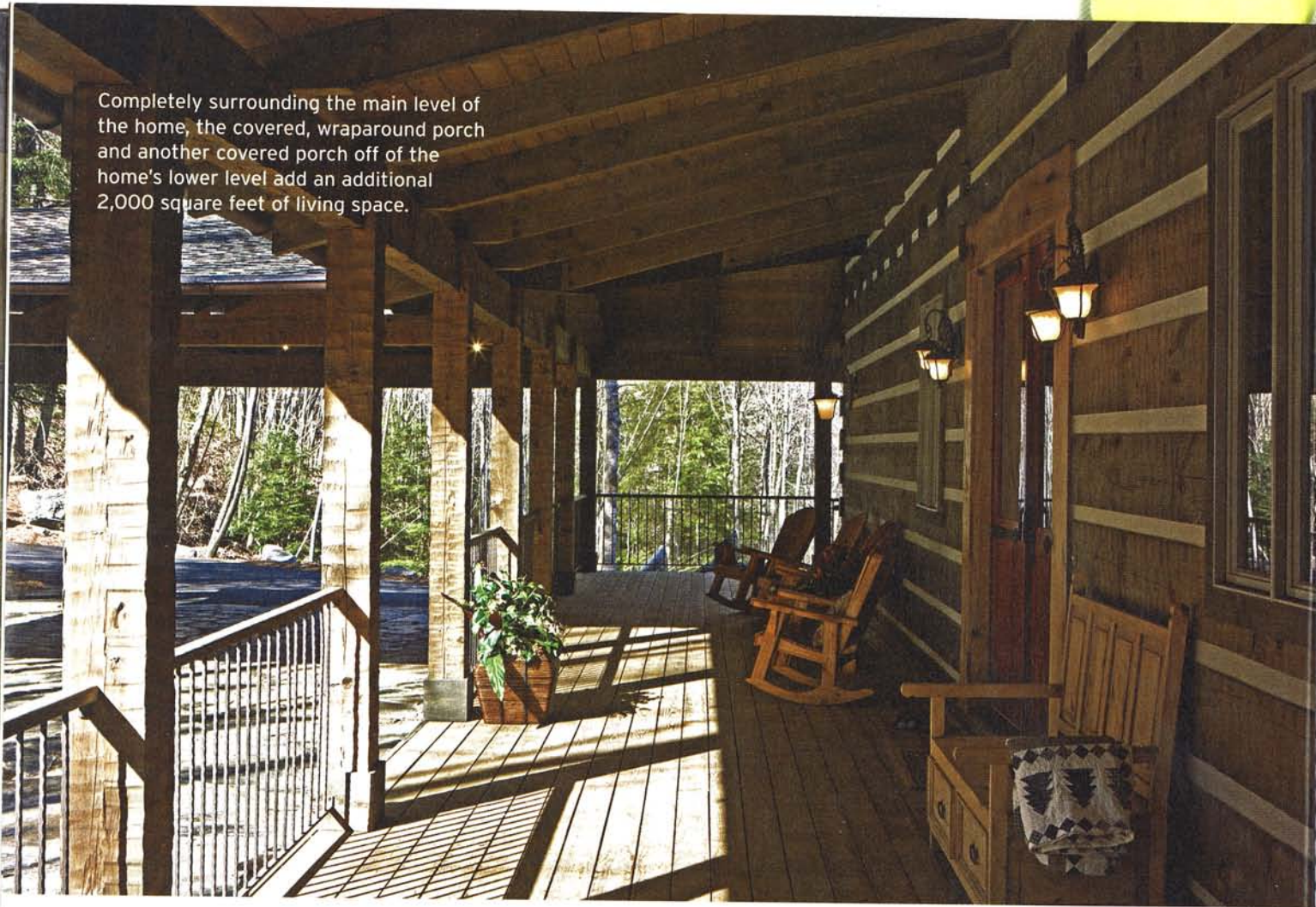
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A private spot for outdoor dining overlooks the Culbreth's three acres of wooded property set in a community just for log homes.

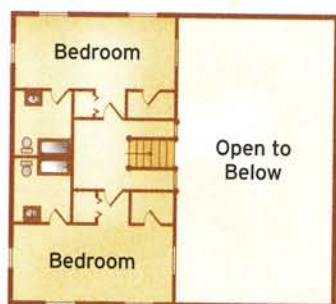
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Completely surrounding the main level of the home, the covered, wraparound porch and another covered porch off of the home's lower level add an additional 2,000 square feet of living space.



HOME DETAILS

- Square footage: 4,800
 - Builder: J. Scott Campbell Construction
 - Log dealer: Top Notch Log Homes
 - Log producer and designer: Pioneer Log Systems
- For more information, see Resources on page 106.*



Upper Level



Main Level



Lower Level