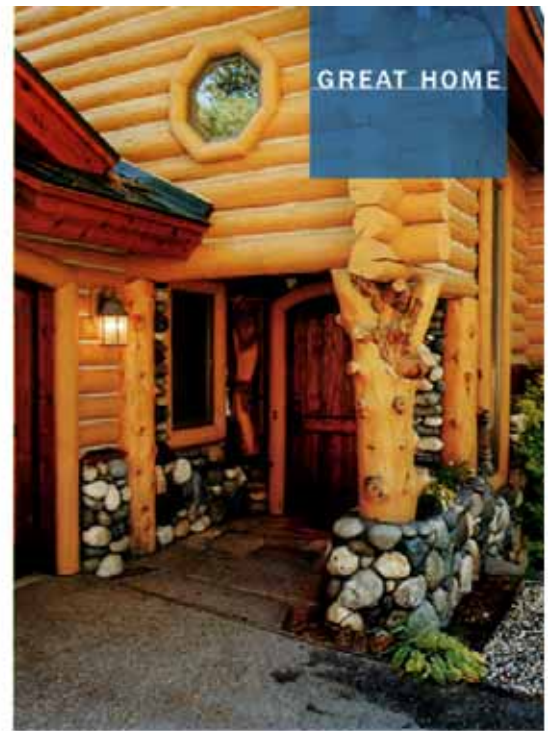


In Love
WITH
Logs

BY LINNEA SMITH JESSUP ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEN PERKINS



While early settlers in the West did their best to separate the wild outdoors from the warmth of a cabin's interior, today's homes in Lake Tahoe celebrate a union of outdoor grandeur and interior comfort. No longer are windows small and shuttered, with narrow views of the alpine surroundings. Instead, homes of all sizes are embracing the outdoors — the views, the light and the natural elements — and welcoming them as integral to a home's interior.

A glorious example of this marriage of nature and luxurious comfort is the grand home set firmly into a steep setting in Incline Village, on the Nevada side of the state line at the north end of Lake Tahoe. Constructed of lodge pole pine logs, the multi-level, nearly 4,000-square-foot home features huge windows. This brings the outdoors in — providing natural light, passive solar benefits and, of course, framing breathtaking views of the lake and its ring of granite peaks. Yet with all this openness, there is an elegant coziness to the interior, a sense of privacy and family comfort.

The Walnut Creek couple who recently bought the house, built in 1996, say they have "been looking for our Lake Tahoe home for 40 years." That's an acknowledgment of their long-time love affair with the region and their desire to find the perfect setting in which they could enjoy many outdoor activities with family and friends. Their Sierras getaway home blends the best of the region with excellent building features. The result is a home that's visually pleasing to the eye, reflects the natural beauty of the region and abounds with spaces that invite conversation.

Lodge pole pine logs, some as long as 40 feet, were carefully stacked one by one to form the walls, then chinked. Harvested in Canada, Montana and Wyoming, these logs are extremely dense and provide excellent insulation, according to Sherry Guzzi, the architect who designed the home.

"No matter the size of the home, logs give it a cozy feel," she said, and "logs add character to even the simplest design."

Builder Alan Richards added even more natural visual interest by his integration of "character logs" as posts, lintels, banisters and mantels. "These are mostly pine, logs I have found in the region, and used in their natural state," added Richards. The result: unique elements throughout the house enhance the design.

Richards, who spent three years after college working on Yosemite trails and bridges, developed a never-ending relationship with nature. "I lived in the back country, sleeping under the stars, working in some of the most beautiful places in the world. When I moved to this area I decided I liked log houses. It was like living outside," keeping nature as the focal point, he says.

The comfort, of course, is also appealing. A huge fireplace, built of carefully selected river rock and accented with hand-carved logs, projects warmth into the great room. The Douglas fir floors, sealed with eight coats of polyurethane, show off the wood grain but are smooth to the touch. "I love making things beautiful," he adds.

This great room features a cathedral ceiling with exposed beams and clerestory windows. An open dining area adjoins the large

Continued on page 19



PAGE 16: Carefully selected rocks were used in the construction of the great room fireplace, augmented with hand-carved pillars beneath the log mantel. PAGE 17 (left): Distressed wood cabinets and a breakfast bar add charm and functionality to the kitchen. (right): The entry to the home atop an Incline Village hillside has a deep overhang and large wooden door. THIS PAGE (above): An exposed beam ceiling makes the great room both light filled and elegant. Douglas fir floors are laid in opposite directions, making a subtle delineation between the different areas of the room. (right): Morning light fills the master bedroom which has a cathedral ceiling and private balcony.



Continued from page 17

kitchen with a long island for informal seating. Distressed wood cabinets augment the natural theme. Even the family cat finds plenty to purr about here.

Outdoors, a wide deck provides yet another vantage point for enjoying the wide views of the lake. A lower deck has stairs that access the backyard where youngsters can clamber over boulders and between trees and hardy shrubs. Even the balconies show Richards' creativity, with natural wood branches forming diamond patterns in the railings. These and other touches reflect Adirondack homes features, a style Richards has studied in his over 30 years as a construction worker and builder.

The front entry, accessed by a driveway with heated coils, promises a warm welcome even in the midst of a Sierra snowstorm. River rock and stocky logs lead to a hefty front door, with an ample overhang for protection from the elements.

The master suite, on the main floor, has a lake view and private balcony, and basks in morning sunshine. The cathedral ceiling slants dramatically upward, forming an angled wall with several niches cut into it. There is room for a desk and a ladder leads to a loft — a great spot for curling up with a good book. Southwest touches distinguish the bathroom tile that features a diamond pattern.

The lower level has three bedrooms and a second family room with fireplace, making this a perfect getaway for multiple generations. A pool table in this room provides entertainment, and an outdoor hot tub tempts tired skiers or hikers at the end of the day or on a moonlit summer night.

The hilltop setting, with a wide view of the lake, provides the quiet and privacy the owners wanted when they started searching for an address in Incline. After an extensive search, they have happily settled into this idyllic locale that lets them get away from it all. At the same time, they are enjoying the many benefits of the Incline community, including golf and lakeside recreation facilities, local activities and clubs. They love Lake Tahoe's wealth of outdoor activities, including hiking, cross country skiing and water sports at the lake, along with coming home to their own log castle. It's a home — and a respite — they plan to savor for years to come. ■

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