

A three-level vacation home has a bird's-eye view of nature's magic.



Living High In NORTH CAROLINA

WHEN LYNN GASTINEAU DECIDED TO BUILD A SECOND home, she had a spectacular setting in mind. In the scenic mountains bordering Asheville (site of the famous Biltmore Estate), she found a community composed exclusively of log houses. On an eight-acre site, she would build a dream leisure home, a place that might also serve for future retirement.

To realize that dream, she had plenty going for her. For one thing, she'd lived in log homes most of her adult life and knew all their features. In fact, she says, "My son and daughter grew up in log homes, something their friends find cool."

More importantly, log homes are Lynn's business. As president of Gastineau Log Homes in New Bloomfield, Missouri (and possibly the only woman to found such a company), she was familiar with construction and materials. Knowledge had begun early with the family's sawmill business and, since 1977, Gastineau Log Homes has developed new designs and building techniques to satisfy the growing demand for log homes.

BY LORETTA NOVICK
PHOTOS BY PAUL JEREMIAS/STYLING BY SUSAN KINNEY



In Lynn's vacation house, logs would be oak, her company's specialty and a wood noted for its color, grain, strength, and durability. Another plus: the prevalence of oak in Missouri is sufficient to put its cost on a par with pine, which Gastineau Log Homes also offers.

Lynn selected a D-profile log, beveled for added interest. The side facing the interior of the home, the flat side, makes it easier to hang pictures, mirrors, and so forth. This side was also given a polyurethane satin finish both for looks and easy maintenance.

"The house is on a steep slope with gorgeous views of the Smoky Mountains, so I took advantage of every perspective," Lynn reports. In the great room, enormous prow windows and a deck overlook the

valley below and distant peaks. Completed in the spring of 2003, the three-level house has 3,800 square feet of living space and another 1,800 square feet of decks and porches.

"I started with one of our standard layouts," says Lynn, "and kept expanding from there. Optimum daylight was one of my priorities. I think log houses are at their best when plenty of natural light comes in to balance the solid wood look." Protection from excessive UV exposure comes from porch roofs, overhangs, and a special coating for exterior surfaces.

An outside stone staircase rises to a main-level deck, with entry to the dining room and a striking view through the great room windows opposite. Adjoining is the handsome kitchen and, steps away, a half-bath-



ABOVE: Opening to a private porch in the treetops, this elegantly furnished bedroom is a place to relax.

RIGHT TOP: For an appealing country look, this bathroom features a sink set into a hand-painted bureau.

RIGHT BOTTOM: Glass doors and tall windows bring the outdoors into a cozy, carpeted bedroom.

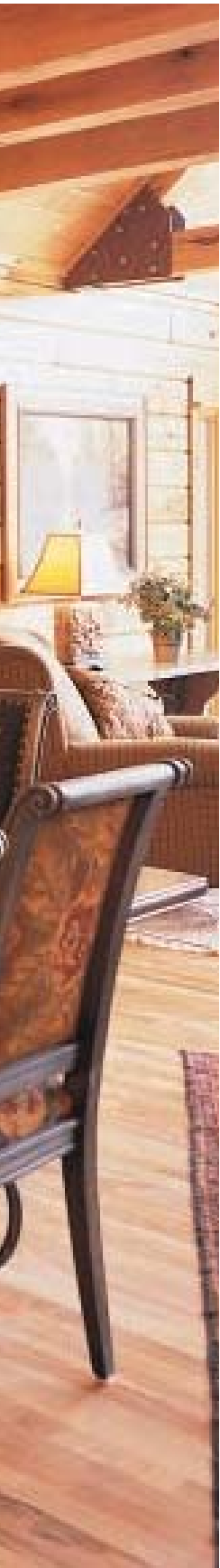
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ABOVE: In the well-planned kitchen, a granite counter and white tiles contrast with warm-toned oak. **LEFT:** An antique Russian textile on the chairs adds a touch of luxury to the dining room.



room and utility room. Two large bedrooms flank the great room, each with access to a private porch and panoramic views. Both have bathrooms equipped with his-and-her sinks and a Jacuzzi tub. Lynn had one bathroom raised six inches so a relaxing bather can look directly out the window into the treetops.

A final custom touch: in one bathroom, sinks were set into colonial-style bureaus hand painted with a fish motif.

But the award for originality should go to the top-level entry, where a bridge was constructed to connect the high ground with the loft deck. Visitors are greeted by a dramatic visual interplay of angles and beams, wood and glass that frame both deck and inside loft. Balusters for the bridge railing are of strong, lightweight aluminum, which arrived pre-painted. These narrower balusters allow a clearer look at the landscape on either side of the bridge. As a finishing accent, acorn finials ornament the newel posts.

Lynn put much thought into the cheery kitchen, with its granite counters, task lighting, and state-of-the-art appliances. A microwave oven was installed at eye level and a wine rack inserted at counter's end. A so-called farmer sink—one that's partially free of the counter—adds a coun-

try note, as does a colorful rug set on the oak floor.

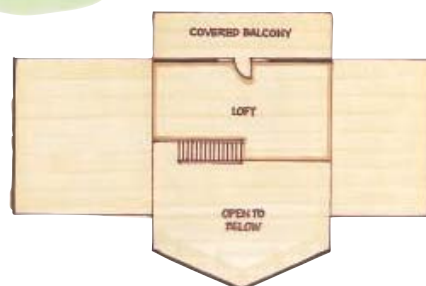
With her busy schedule, Lynn entrusted much of the decorating to a local specialist, who achieved a remarkable blend of country comfort and contemporary style. In nearby Maggie Valley, the High Country store proved an excellent source of attractive pieces. For a touch of luxury, the dining room chairs were covered with an antique Russian textile. Although oak floors predominate, the bedrooms were carpeted and all bathrooms have ceramic tile.

The loft level was designed to accommodate a range of activities, or just quiet repose. Oak walls and ceiling are balanced by a boldly patterned carpet; a Chinese "root" chair blends with traditional furnishings.

Hurd aluminum-clad low-E windows offer energy efficiency throughout the house. Between the great room deck doors, a gas fireplace was ingeniously vented to leave the gable above untouched. Heating and air-conditioning needs are fully met by two propane-fueled systems. If weather turns moderately cool, the two gas fireplaces can swiftly take the chill off. Lynn confesses to enjoying the convenience of a remote-controlled flick-on hearth. For the roof, she chose fireproof fiberglass shingles in a dark red that also matches the window trim.

As with many vacation houses, electric power provides

On the steeply sloped property, an artfully constructed bridge connects the high ground with the home's top level.



quick on-off usage while minimizing energy waste in the owner's absence. Here, the hot water heater and kitchen oven are electric but, with her preference for cooking with gas, Lynn selected a gas range top.

Landscaping comes largely courtesy of the natural environment. "We put in some ivy," Lynn reports, "and there's mountain laurel and rhododendron, but the community has a rule against mowing." No loss, apparently.

For decades, the region has been a vacation retreat. One lure for Lynn was the access to golf courses. White-water rafting is also popular locally and, for history buffs, Civil War sites, such as Gatlinburg, are an easy drive. For cultural events, there's Asheville itself, so close that "on a clear night, you can see its lights from the deck."

Mornings on the deck present another bit of nature's magic. "Mist can be so thick that you barely see in front of you. Then slowly, it rises and reveals this breathtaking beauty." In its ideal setting, Lynn's dream house works exactly according to plan. 🏡

LOG HOME PRODUCER: Gastineau Log Homes, New Bloomfield, Missouri; **BUILDER:** Carolina Log Homes, Inc., Maggie Valley, North Carolina.



An oak staircase leads to the roomy loft overlooking the great room's inviting conversation center.