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Home
OF THE
Month



Putting Down Roots

An owner's clear vision creates a rustic retreat on the Wisconsin River.

Woods and water flavor central Wisconsin, beckoning visitors, especially in the region's refreshing summer. So it's no surprise that Joe jumped at the opportunity to buy riverfront property there: the perfect spot, he realized, to build a family retreat. A loghome was a foregone conclusion. He once rented one and ever since longed to build his own. Now he'd found the right place.

Besides favoring logs, Joe had very precise ideas about the home's look, layout and special features. Among his top goals: big logs, root-flare posts, distinctive carvings to amplify the home's rustic theme and plenty of room for all. "He wanted the best of the best," recalls Dave Janczak, the founder-owner of Wisconsin Log Homes (WLH), which designed and built the home.

story by **ROLAND SWEET** photography by **KCJ STUDIOS**

LEFT: Overseen by a hand-carved bear, massive log root-flare posts frame the covered entry to this Wisconsin home. Dry-stacked stone surrounds the custom door and window unit.



A massive, double-sided fireplace in the great room displays two handcrafted, twisted juniper mantels.

Joe also intended taking an active role in the project. He had spent years gathering ideas and planning his dream home. He wound up envisioning a place that reflects the spirit and character of the surrounding countryside while meeting his family's

specific needs. When he and WLH teamed up, he presented preliminary drawings to indicate what he had in mind. "Joe came to us with a clear vision, and we helped interpret that and also provided the needed technical expertise," WLH home consultant Ehren Graf

says. "He wanted something that would stand out rather than be just another waterfront home."

WLH made some necessary adjustments to Joe's design and provided engineering for construction to take full advantage of the



Log ceiling beams, a curved breakfast bar with stone facade and hickory cabinets highlight the roomy kitchen.

riverside site. "This home is truly built around the land it sits on," Graf explains. "It's strategically tucked into the hillside and maximizes views from every room."

Beyond looks and layout, energy efficiency was a necessary consideration for

central Wisconsin. "We were definitely able to achieve that goal with our hybrid building system," Graf says. WLH's Thermal-Log system, which Janczak developed in the 1970s with harsh weather in mind, applies logs — 14-inch cedar ones in this case

— to conventional insulated framework by splitting them and then attaching half to the outside and half inside. The result is a full-log look, down to the saddle-notched corners, but with "insulation to the max," as Janczak puts it, noting this home's walls



ABOVE: Large windows and patio doors outline the towering great room and frame spectacular views of the surrounding woods and water.

LEFT: Hand-carved, painted black walnut bears guard the custom dining table. Root flares projecting from the loft add artistry.

achieve R-60. The roof system boasts 12 inches of foam. “It’s tight enough to heat the home with just the fireplace,” which, he points out, is large enough for a person to stand up inside.

Building the home took just over a year. Joe visited regularly to check on progress. The site posed some initial challenges. “It’s on a steep hill down to the river, so we had to reinforce the footings and use tie-backs to keep it from sliding

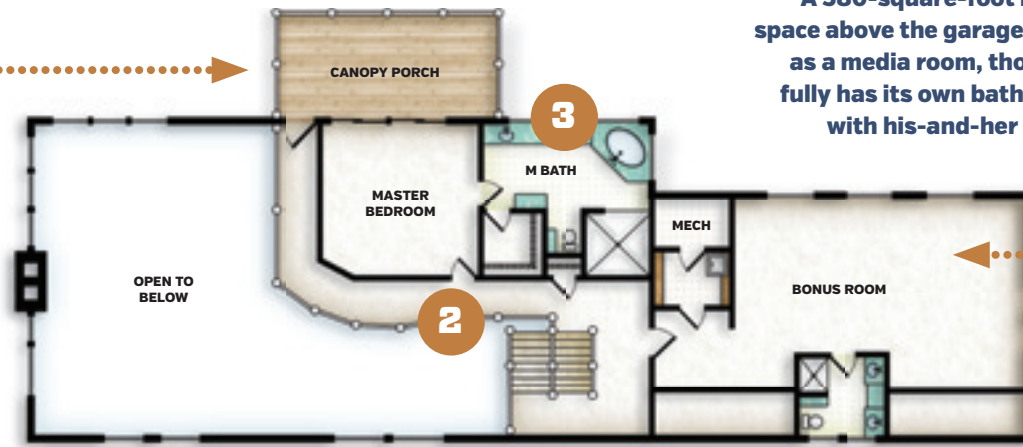
downhill,” Janczak explains. The resulting 6,390-square-foot family lodge mixes engineering and aesthetics to create a home that Janczak terms “a work of art.” Several months and hundreds of man-hours were needed just to hand peel, clean and notch the root flares — logs cut low on the trunk — used to embellish the home’s look. Some are as big as 3 feet in diameter and required steel reinforcement, which was achieved by cutting the log in half,

inserting the steel beam and then putting the log back together.

Steel and laminated beams were used elsewhere to tie everything together because of the size of the logs and the scale of the home. The advantage of half-log construction is that you’re able to carve the logs to fit over the beams and preserve the full-log look. The home also features lots of glass, which required adjusting the upper roof portion to accom-

Floor Plan

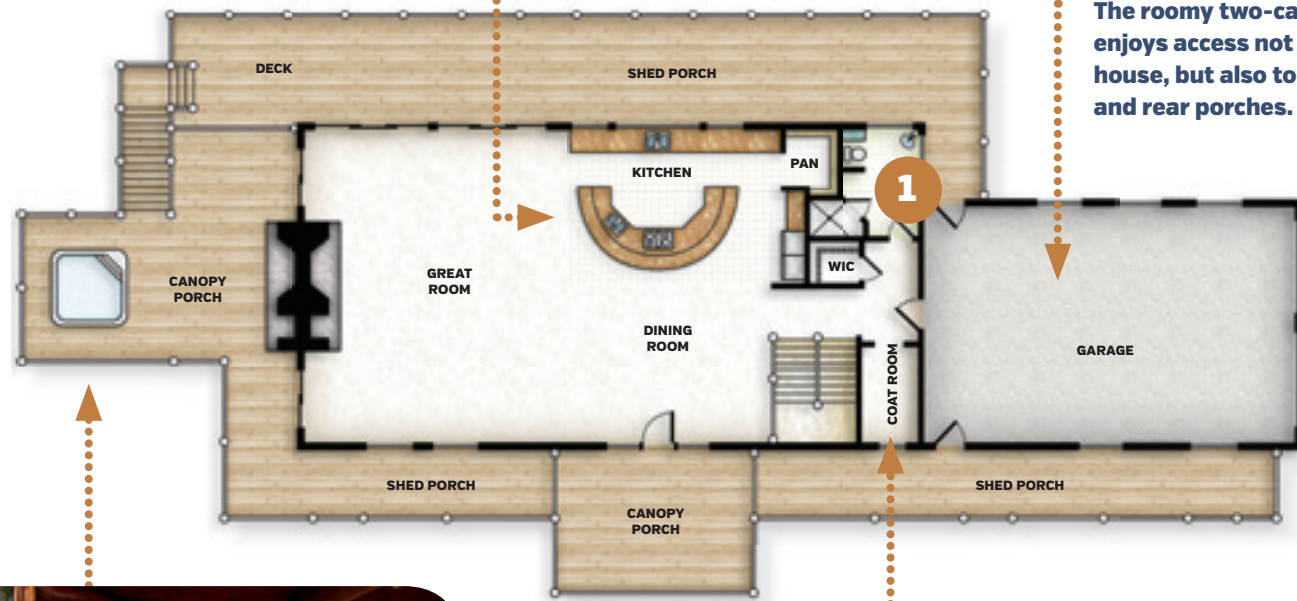
A private porch off the master bedroom is accessible from the catwalk that extends from the stairs with close-up views of the ceiling.



A 580-square-foot bonus space above the garage, used as a media room, thoughtfully has its own bathroom, with his-and-her sinks.

UPPER LEVEL

The centrally positioned kitchen is the command post of the open great room, promoting conversation while meals are being prepared. Conveniently tucked away beside it is the pantry.



The roomy two-car garage enjoys access not just into the house, but also to the front and rear porches.

MAIN LEVEL

A walk-in coatroom between the stairs and garage makes a convenient transition to and from the outdoors.

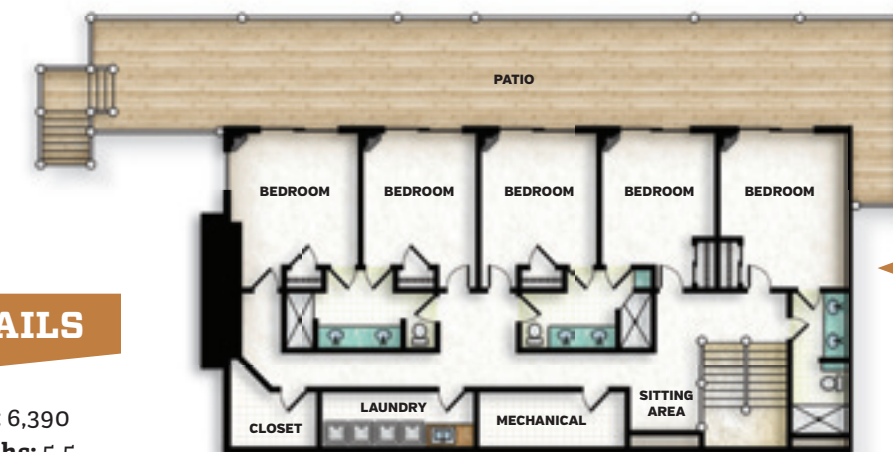
Hand-peeled logs, root flares and an outdoor fireplace surround the sheltered spa, creating the perfect spot for enjoying the riverside setting.



HOME DETAILS

Square Footage: 6,390
Bedrooms: 6 Baths: 5.5

Log Provider, Designer,
Builder: Wisconsin Log Homes
(800-678-9107, wisconsinloghomes.com)



LOWER LEVEL

The 2,185-square-foot lower level is designed to accommodate family and friends, with five side-by-side bedrooms and three bathrooms. Each bedroom has its own view of the river and plenty of closet space.

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From Start to Finish



LOGS WITH CHARACTER. The homeowner insisted on adding pine log posts and beams with flared root bases inside and outside the home, both for structural support and enhanced looks. Normally, the flares are cut off so that the logs have more uniform thickness, but by leaving them on the posts, they resemble the trees the logs came from. What's more, they create the impression that the finished home grew up among the trees – a true tree house.

BUILDING A HALF-LOG HOME. The finished home has a full-log look, but it's initially built like any conventional home. The stud-framed walls are positioned on the foundation, then insulated and wrapped. Next, the split logs are attached to the shell, in this case leaving full-log corners. Bigger, full logs are used to support exterior features, such as the covered spa and entry canopy.



BEWARE THE BEAR. The homeowner wanted a hand-carved bear cut into the entry king post, so Joe Hintz, who has traveled the world to create his wood sculptures, obliged. Hintz then carved other bears to top the inside staircase posts.



moderate Wisconsin snow loads. Joe Hintz, a woodcarver in nearby Adams County whose work has been showcased worldwide, crafted the bears. After Hintz carved the first one into the king post of the log gable porch, Joe liked it so much that he asked Hintz to carve bears into the stair posts and railings. Handcrafted root flares line the front porch and outdoor spa. Exterior lighting showcases the home by creating design drama as the lights flood the many gables and corners. Inside, the open-concept great room, kitchen and dining space are filled with lots

of natural light and gorgeous views. More massive root flares were used wherever vertical log structural supports were needed, creating the illusion that the house grew among the trees. Two handcrafted mantels on the great room fireplace were crafted from twisted juniper to add another artistic element. Logs at the base of the fireplace were shaped into bears with a chain saw on-site. Off the great room, a covered terrace features the open back of the fireplace, glass railings and a large sunken hot tub. A media room and the spacious master suite are located on

the 1,963-square-foot upper level to maximize privacy. The 2,183-square-foot walkout lower level is a sleepers' sanctuary, with five bedrooms, each providing convenient access to the patio. Surrounded by a landscape that was left largely in its natural condition, this captivating retreat fits perfectly with this scenic country. It invites the family to put down roots and establish new traditions of their own. In that regard, the home is everything Joe imagined and intended – and more. Best of all, it is a home that welcomes one and all. **L**

The cedar-log home is perfectly positioned on its sloping site to maximize views of the Wisconsin River, especially from the sheltered spa. Root-flare posts support the multiple roofs.