



Midwestern Masterpiece



A lakefront plot in America's heartland provides the ideal backdrop for a remarkable log home retreat.

story by **Janice Brewster** | photography by **Joseph Hilliard**

In Donna and Michael's majestic log home, the attached garage sits at an angle to follow the contours of the site, forming a point out into the private lake beyond.

Donna and Michael had a head start when it came to building their legacy home. With a generous tract of wooded land that had been in Donna's family, the couple had the perfect spot to make their dream of a lakeside log home come true.

"We always had a vision of a log home there," Donna says. With a family that includes two grown sons and crowds of relatives, friends and business associates to entertain, the couple knew that the small fishing cabin that was on the site would have to be replaced. "We needed a bigger place," Donna says.

Donna and Michael began searching for a log home company to produce a rustic-yet-elegant home they could enjoy with their family now and eventually pass on to future generations. After discovering Wisconsin Log Homes, the couple made the trip to Green Bay to see the company's work in person and meet the staff. "We had great rapport, and we fell in love with the product," Donna says.

That product is an insulated log wall system that Wisconsin Log Homes pioneered. Every exterior wall is framed with a 6-inch-thick insulated core that can be faced with half logs inside and out. This system creates the company's air-tight and draft-free homes. The couple chose a 12-inch-round half-log profile for the home's exterior and a mix of logs and

TOP: The cozy reading loft not only provides a little solitude for enjoying a good novel, it provides a place to truly appreciate the warmth of the wood-enclosed environment.



The half-log home features a steeply pitched double roofline over the front entrance. This design decision helps shed snow and gives the house storybook charm.



The manufactured stone that lines the soaring chimney sets the color scheme for the interior. Distressed-leather sectionals provide plenty of seating for friends and family around the fireplace.



drywall for the interior walls. Conventionally framed walls make it easy to wire the home for sound and a security system, hang art and install wall-mounted televisions.

Plus, the insulated log building system allows for large expanses of glass, like the soaring two-story wall of windows that overlooks the lake.

To turn their ideas into solid, buildable plans, Donna and Michael worked with Nate Janczak. After listening to the couple's personal needs and wants for this home, Nate and his design team at Wisconsin Log Homes cre-

ated a one-of-a-kind home that would cater to Donna and Michael's lifestyle and suit their unique property.

Following a recommendation from Wisconsin Log Homes, the couple hired Dave Lipovsky of Lipovsky Building Company in Harrison, Michigan, to build the house. He and his crew made the daily hour-long trek to the site for the entire construction process.

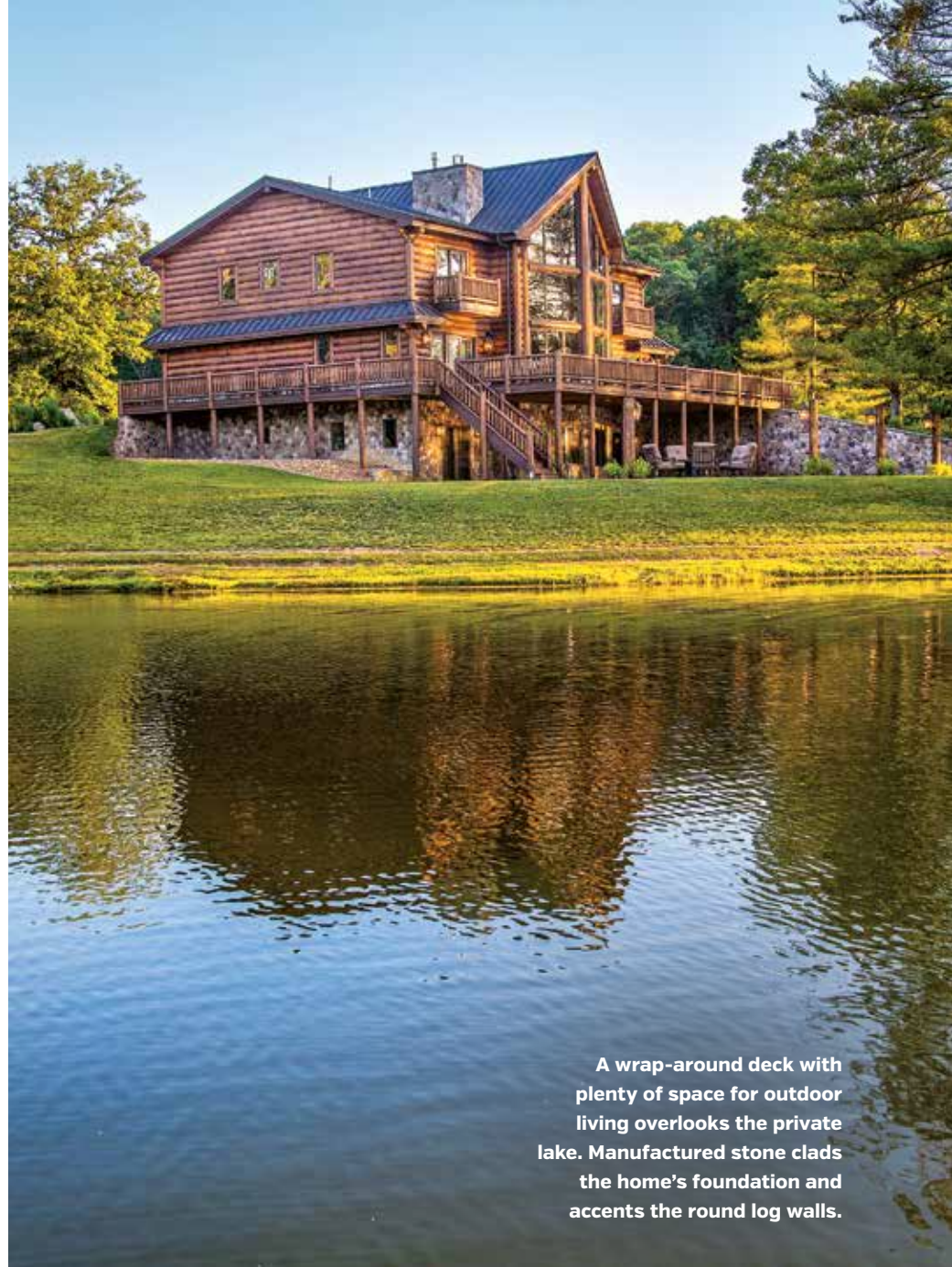
With their team in place, Donna and Michael's plans centered on matching the home's elements — from the fireplace to the front door — to its large scale. "The home was

purposely designed to be tall," Nate says. "It takes advantage of the views." In fact, you can see the lake from almost every room in the home. Most important for Donna, the kitchen, with its oversized island that seats 12, has a view of both the great room and the lake.

Donna's overarching vision was to create a home with rustic elegance; a look epitomized by the distressed-leather sectional sofas around the fireplace and the aged wood-and-iron chandelier that hangs above the dining room table. "It's not country. It's upscale without being pretentious," she says. "It has a little bit



Donna searched for a long light fixture that would be a focal point in the spacious, open-concept dining room. The table extends to seat 18.



A wrap-around deck with plenty of space for outdoor living overlooks the private lake. Manufactured stone clads the home's foundation and accents the round log walls.

of Western style, but I didn't want it to be kitschy or cliché."

To begin outfitting the five-bedroom home, Donna and Michael partnered with Wisconsin Log Homes' interior designer Cassie Christianson to choose the retreat's finishes. Knotty alder cabinetry is used throughout the 4 1/2 baths, two laundry rooms and kitchen. A consistent color scheme and uniform flooring choices give the 6,000-square-foot home an even flow.

The cladding for the fireplace, a manufactured stone that features oversized rocks, set the

tone for the color scheme. From there, Donna worked with a local interior designer to help her choose furnishings, decor and lighting.

The two traveled to the Dallas furniture market to spend several days choosing just the right pieces for each room. There they were able to see and touch the items, and make sure each piece would fit the scale of the home. In such a large interior, bigger was always better. The furniture pieces are oversized to suit the scale of the structure. The dining table, for example, stretches to seat 18.

To match Donna's aesthetic, they looked

for pieces that combined aged patinas with polished elements. Worn-looking leather and distressed wood mixes with refined pieces, while some of the more tailored items have a slightly rustic edge.

As beautiful as the home is inside, the family spends most of their time enjoying the outdoors. They've cut miles of trails through the woods for running or walking the family dogs. Michael and the boys hunt for deer or turkey on the property. In warm weather, they swim in the lake or motor around on their electric pontoon boats. Fishing is another



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1: A lowered, beamed ceiling makes the open kitchen feel cozy. Granite tops the oversized island and the counters. Comfortable cushioned stools allow guests to linger over good food and lively conversation.

2: In the master bedroom, log walls and warm neutral colors make for a soothing mix. Patio doors open onto the deck overlooking the lake.

3: A double vanity is surrounded by knotty alder cabinetry in the master bath, providing plenty of storage.

favorite pastime on the lake, which is stocked with bass and bluegill.

A huge deck spans the front of the house and allows the family the outdoor living they crave. They share the home with guests frequently — whether it's 35 of their sons' young-adult friends for a July 4th barbecue, or 12 friends of Donna's for a girls' getaway, the doors are always open. Because the lake house is just a short distance from the couple's primary residence, they spend time there often and in every season.

To help ease the transition from outdoor activities to the indoors, the couple took advantage of the sloped site to create a walkout lower level living area. One side of the space is dedicated to a mudroom that allows them to come in from the lake or after walking the dogs but leave dirt behind.

A large rec room on the walkout level, the wide open great room area and the huge deck accommodate visitors. With overnight guests in mind, the couple planned for four bedrooms upstairs that share a pair of Jack-and-Jill bathrooms. Two of the bedrooms have balconies overlooking the water. Donna and Michael's domain is on the first floor, with a master bedroom suite that opens onto the deck.

For Donna, the home is just delightful. "When I wake up, I'm looking at these magnificent logs, and through the glass doors I see the log railings. Everywhere you look you see gorgeous logs. Taken all together, the warmth of the home is magical and enveloping," she says. "You just fall in and you don't ever want to leave." **L**



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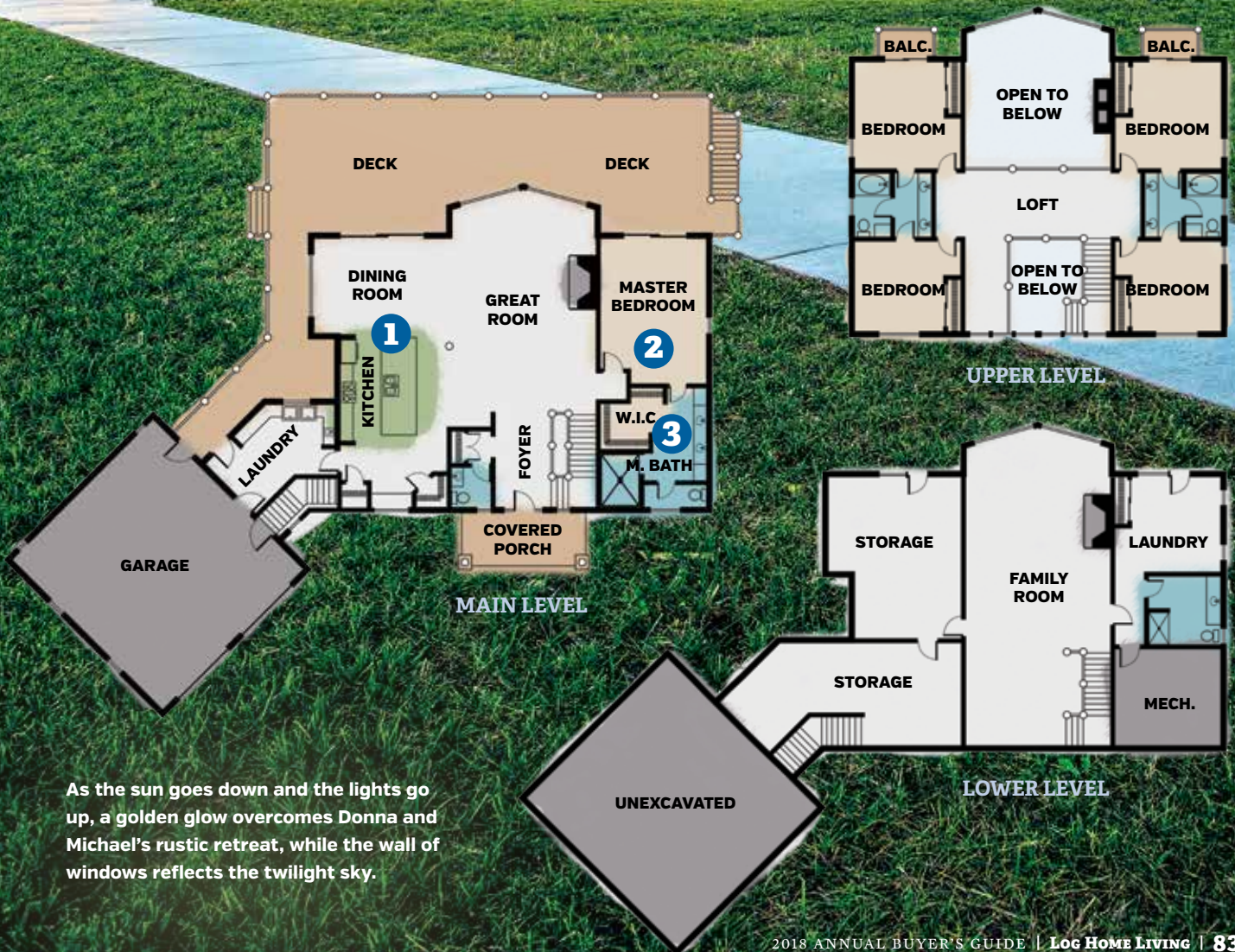


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Square Footage: 6,000

Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 4 full, 1 half

Log Home Provider:
Wisconsin Log Homes



As the sun goes down and the lights go up, a golden glow overcomes Donna and Michael's rustic retreat, while the wall of windows reflects the twilight sky.