Walk on the Wild Side

Glorious lake views remind guests that the home's setting is worth the trek from the city. Half logs top the windows, giving the space a rustic grandiosity. A local artisan created the laser-cut elk chandelier topped with naturally shed antlers.

With two teenagers clamoring for a more exciting weekend retreat, an Illinois couple finds the perfect spot to build a thrill-seeking getaway.

story by Lucinda Michell | photography by James Ray Spahn

styling by Colleen Macomber

Small but functional, the corner kitchen is ideally situated and allows the chef du jour to participate in all the social gatherings while still enjoying views of the lake. Select hickory cabinets complement the matching floor and pine beams.

Just outside of Chicago, Rob and Tina Davidson were content with their small weekend home near a quiet lake. Their teenage sons, however, weren't exactly on the same wavelength. They yawned at paddleboats and old canoes, so the Davidson family began the search for a new home with enough action (think wakeboards and speed boats) to satisfy boys but enough peace for the adults to relax. Fitting all their criteria, they set their sites on a lakeside community in Central Wisconsin. It was an easy weekend drive, the setting was beautiful and, perhaps most important, the lake was big enough for motorboats. "We came upon our lot by accident," says Tina. "While traveling down a very long, secluded gravel road, I remember thinking, 'Why would anyone buy out here with all these trees and no view?' Then we came to the end of the 8-acre lot, and a gorgeous, sparkling lake opened up in front of us. We were hooked."

When it came to choosing a home style, the Davidsons knew they wanted it to reflect the natural surroundings. As luck would have it, the man who sold them the lot also was a representative for Wisconsin Log Homes. "It was the furthest thing from our minds," says Rob, "But after looking at a number of log homes in the area, we knew this style would be a perfect fit for our lot and our lifestyle."

ABOVE: A beveled-glass front door, Indian gold slate tiles and sweetly scented candles welcome guests to the Davidson's lake house.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Both rustic and romantic, the master bedroom boasts a French Country aesthetic, complete with an elegantly crafted wrought-iron bed and natural-hued pillows and spreads.

Classic and timeless, Travertine tile lines the bathroom. Modern amenities, such as a soaking tub and separate steam shower, make the space feel more like a spa retreat.

A flexible dining space allows the family to host supper as well as convivial dinner parties. Spring, summer and early fall play host to alfresco dining on the side porch.

A whimsical rock garden and accompanying path hint at the rustic beauty guests will find inside the Davidson's home.

Modern Rustic

With a background in design, Tina decided to try something she'd never done before—decorating a log home. "Instead of an old-fashioned look, I wanted more of a contemporary feel with a few touches of rustic—just enough to honor the heritage of a log home," she says.

Her first purchase was the wheat-colored wicker sectional on the screened-in porch. "Then I started building on that," Tina says. "Some items were from used furniture stores, others were bought new." Echoing the outdoors, various textures are found throughout the house: sea-grass chairs, wrought-iron beds, smooth granite counters, soft patterned carpets and a rough stone fireplace. Instead of appearing mismatched, the design is anchored by the warm amber wood tones in each room. The effect makes the place feel like a peaceful retreat and reminds guests that, even if they want to get a little radical wakeboarding on the lake, stepping back inside will deliver nothing but calm.

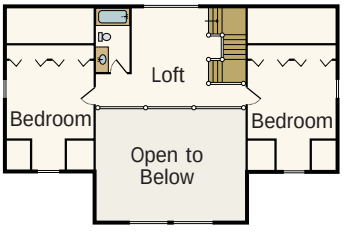
home details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 4,300

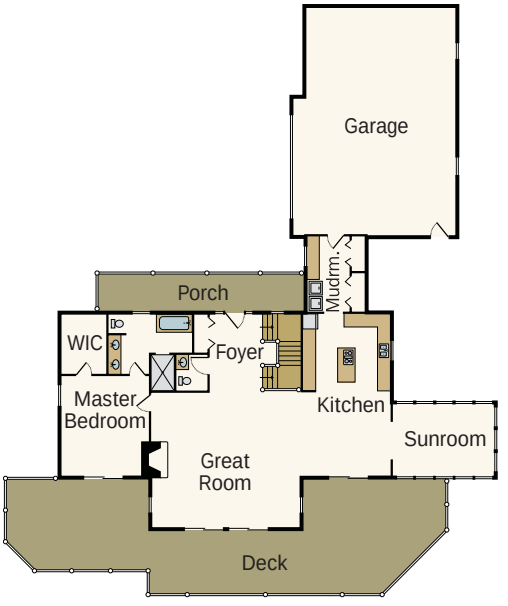
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: TCP CONSTRUCTION INC.

LOG PRODUCER: WISCONSIN LOG HOMES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 162



Upper Level



Main Level