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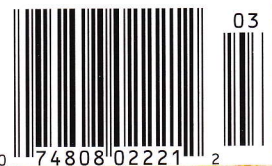
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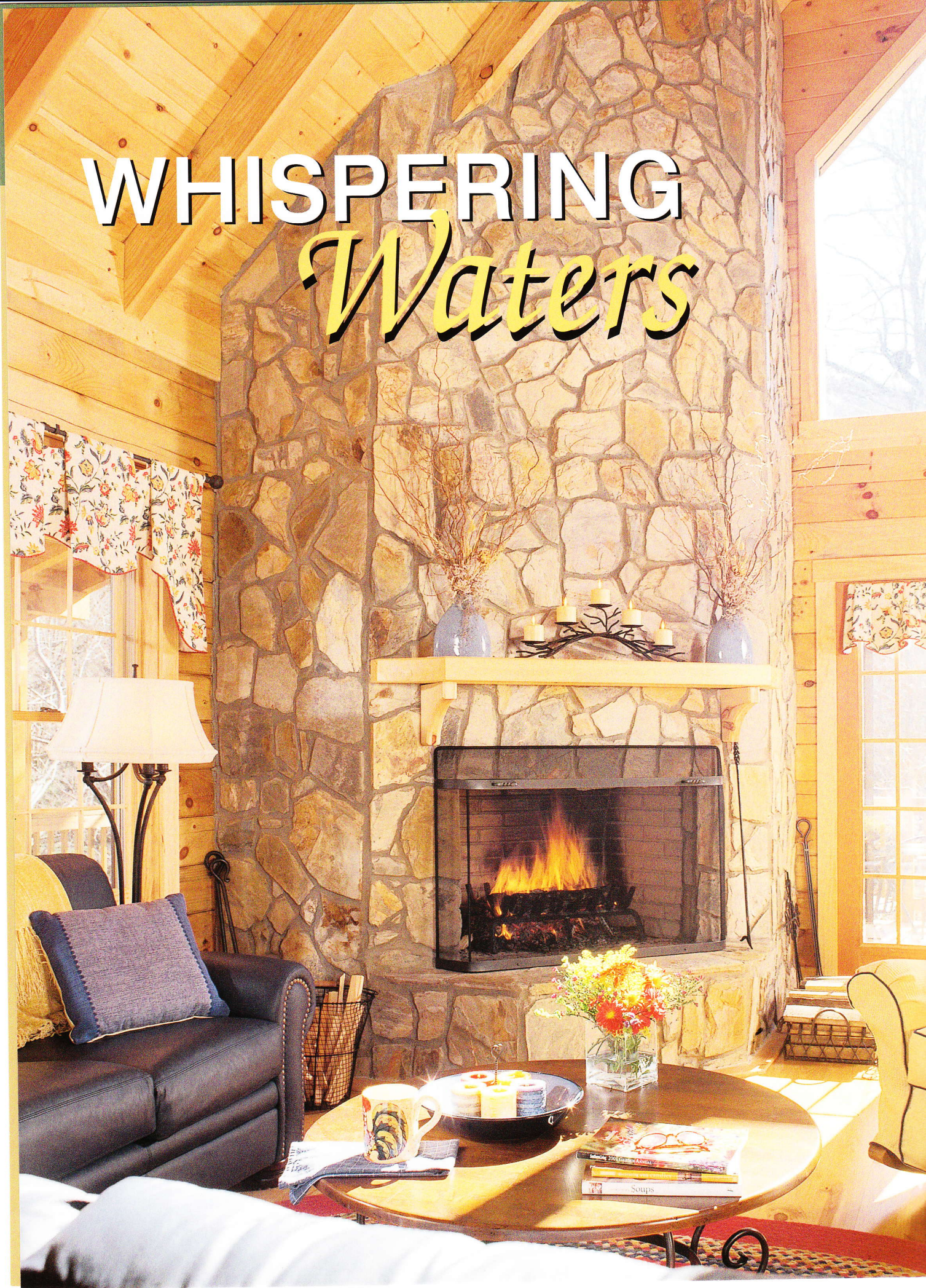
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# WHISPERING *Waters*





The Smiths modified the original plan by repositioning the fireplace from the center of the home to a corner of the great room, allowing for a more spacious gathering and kitchen area.

OPPOSITE: The Smith home is set on a mountain ridge amid a canopy of trees where the owners can lie in their hammock, read a book, or enjoy eavesdropping on the babbling stream nearby.

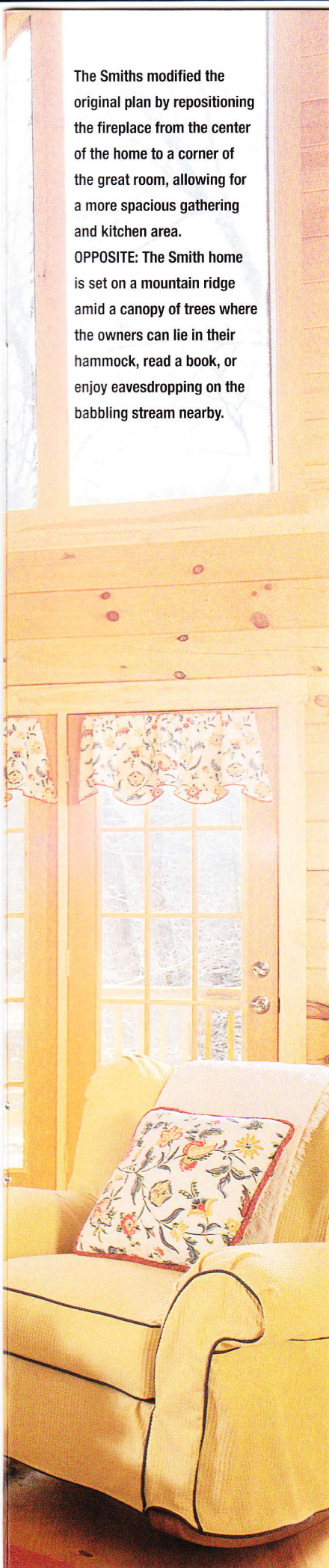


## A SERENE ATMOSPHERE AND A CARING COMMUNITY MAKE FOR AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR THIS NORTH CAROLINA FAMILY'S LOG HOME.

**I**N THE CHEROKEE LANGUAGE "WATAUGA" MEANS "WHISPERING waters," and nestled in the heart of Watauga County, NC, lies Boone, a small town cherished for its abundant wildlife, crystal streams, and breathtaking mountain views. It is also the location of David and Leigh Smith's secondary residence, a log home designed and constructed by Log Homes of America.

It is no coincidence that the Smiths chose to build their home in this quaint county. David Smith loves the sound of rushing water and the home is close enough to the stream on their property that they can hear the bubbling water as it cascades just below. Situated a quarter of the way up a mountainous ridge amid a canopy of trees, the home sits on 19 acres of pristine rustic terrain where the Smiths enjoy fishing, hiking, and exploring nature with their daughter and three sons. The family enjoys long weekends away from their primary residence in Winston-Salem as often as they can, but also invite family and friends to make use of their log home when they are unable to travel. The Smiths have always treasured the Boone/Blowing Rock region, but when they decided they wanted a permanent retreat there, they had no idea that it would come in the form of a log home.

BY KRISTA PETERS  
PHOTOS BY FRANKLIN & ESTHER SCHMIDT





**"WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT ONE DAY MAKING THE LOG HOME OUR  
PRIMARY RESIDENCE. AND IT REALLY FEELS LIKE IT COULD BE THAT."**







**ABOVE:** "Leigh has said she would rather cook in the kitchen here than in the one of our primary residence," David says with a laugh. **LEFT:** The pine flooring and white pine walls give the home a warmth that is accentuated by sunshine pouring in from the eastward-facing wall of windows.

"We looked at buying a home but couldn't find anything that met our family's needs on a property that suited us," explains Leigh. The search ended, however, when the Smiths toured the home of Nicole and Joel Robinson, who had placed their log home on the market in Banner Elk, NC. David elaborates, "We were originally looking for a house and a few acres somewhere off the beaten path. We looked at Nicole and Joel's home and loved the house but not where it was located. We didn't know they owned a log home company."

**T**he Smiths gained more than a model for their future home when they entered the Robinson residence; they also acquired an exceptional supplier and a reliable builder. Together the couples began laying the foundation for the Smiths' new home as well as for a genuine relationship that would last throughout the building process and beyond.

"It was such a beautiful house that it didn't really need a whole lot of new ideas," David Smith says when describ-

ing the modifications they made to the original Log Homes of America plan. The Smiths acknowledge how fortunate they were to have previewed the model of their home plan in the Robinson household—it allowed them the opportunity to make changes to suit their own family needs. One such change was transforming one side of the two-car garage in the original plan into additional basement area. "That gave us a fourth bedroom where we could put our boys. To do it, we made a full bath downstairs and shifted the furnace," Leigh explains.

On the main level the Smiths relocated what had been a central fireplace dividing the living and kitchen areas into a corner of the great room. This not only created a more spacious great room, but also allowed Leigh and David to place an angled fireplace directly beneath the main floor in the basement. Further alterations to the main level included combining the autonomous laundry closet and butler's pantry into one larger laundry room adjacent to the kitchen and adding a pocket door from the guest bedroom into the main floor bathroom. Outside





LEFT: Leigh used bright colors like blues, reds, golds, and greens painted on drywall to offset wood elsewhere.

the main body of the home, the Smiths converted a patio terrace to a deck and expanded all decks to 10 feet wide.

Aside from making these changes, the Smiths were open to and relied primarily on the suggestions and advice of the Robinsons. “We had options, such as what type of stone to use on the inside or the outside, how to peel the logs, and what colors we preferred. Joel and Nicole asked us a lot of questions. We in turn asked, ‘What would you do?’ We pretty much followed their advice. It made for a very easy process.” With the Robinsons’ expertise guiding the way, the Smiths decided on D-shaped double tongue-and-groove logs with full dovetail corners. Heavy timber structural Western Douglas fir beams were used in the roofing system. The exterior is stained in a color called Natural Oak.

Although the Smiths relied on the Robinsons for specific

log home construction details, Leigh embraced decorating the interior of their new sanctuary. “Leigh has an amazing decorator’s touch,” lauds Nicole Robinson. In fact, the entire décor of the interior was conceptualized and implemented by Leigh. The D-shaped logs allow for flat surfaces on the interior walls and Leigh decided to use occasional drywall painted in bright colors such as blues, reds, and golds rather than all wood or the dark, earthy colors generally associated with cabin retreats. Hand-forged iron furniture from the Charleston Forge outlet in Boone completes the mountain feel that Leigh envisioned.

Leigh finds it difficult to distinguish a specific room as her favorite. “I love all of the rooms. It would be hard for me to pick a favorite. We really like the loft area where we can sit and work puzzles, play games, and read books. I like that feature because it is another space that can be used but it is still open to the rest of the house.” Then Leigh





laughs, "There's also a small guest room I really like. It's cozy and stays clean most of the time, so I really enjoy it as well."

Although Leigh remains ambiguous about her preferred area of the home, the children quickly adopted the lower level as their esteemed territory. David says, "The basement is the most cabin-like room in the home and the children hang out down there. It's where the ping-pong table

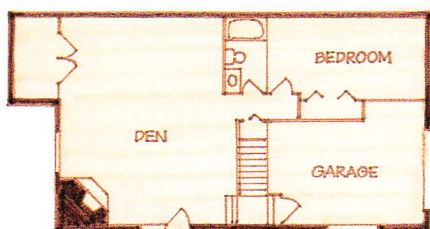
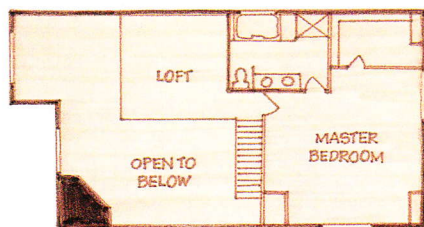
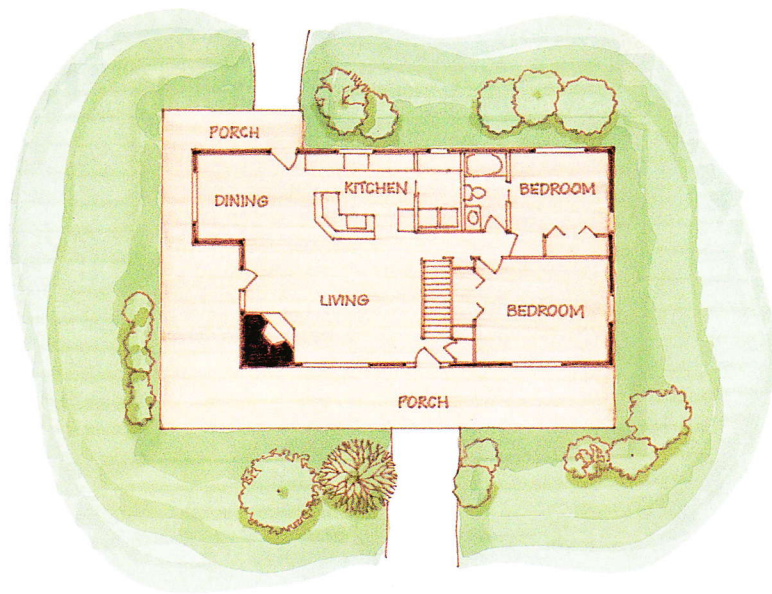
is. The room is decorated with buffalo plaids, deer heads, a bearskin, and a grouse on the mantel. The outside hot tub is also on that level. The kids eat upstairs, but the rest of the time they spend down there. They love it."

Through it all the Smiths cannot articulate enough their satisfaction with the relationship they have cultivated with the Robinsons. Over a year after the construction of their home was complete, a random act of vandalism

**BELOW:** Hand-forged iron furniture from the Charleston Forge outlet in Boone "really gave the house the mountain atmosphere we wanted," says Leigh.







occurred at their new residence. David recalls, "We had a window knocked out and a door kicked in. Since we live an hour away from Boone, I called the Robinsons from my car around 11 AM and told them I needed some help. I had had some vandalism and I didn't know what exactly to expect. But I needed the house locked back up and water tight." Nicole and Joel had the plans and arrived at 7 PM.

"When they left at 8:15, I had a new window and a door with an operating lock. I thought that was great because I really did not have the time to spend the night. They said

nothing about being too busy or that they had other plans after hours," David says.

While the Smiths praise the quality of the materials used and are thoroughly impressed with the craftsmanship that went into the construction of their residence, little can compare to the reliability and trustworthiness they have experienced in their partnership with the Robinsons. David Smith extols, "We had built houses before, and I have always told Leigh, 'You just can't get everything you want.' But I would say that





this house is as close to being just exactly what I would want as I could get. If I had a hundred tries I don't think I would change anything. I really couldn't be happier. They did a great job."

The Smiths have one regret concerning the long awaited realization of their mountain getaway: They would like to spend more time there. Leigh sighs, "Sometimes we can go for the whole weekend. We are there usually twice a month and I am known to go up there sometimes for one night during the week. We wish we could get there more often."

The Smiths suspect that their log home may not endure secondary status forever. "We have talked about one day making the log home our primary residence. And it really feels like it could be that." Considering the beauty of nature and community that exists as the foundation of Boone's appeal, it is no surprise the Smiths anticipate many seasons to come resting beside Watauga's "whispering waters." ❧

**LOG HOME PRODUCER AND BUILDER:** Log Homes of America, Banner Elk, North Carolina.

**The Smiths advise,** "Make your decks large enough to serve as an extension of your house, especially if you are considering having a covered deck area. The fact that we made the decks wide really allows us to use that space."