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DESIGN BONUS: Entry Excitement

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Log artistry creates a dramatic first impression from the entry of this handcrafted home by log builder Bryan Reid.

California Dreaming

Big logs create a work of art that's built to stand 500 years.

STORY BY TERESA L. WOLFF | PHOTOS BY RUSS MCCONNELL



Bryan Reid spent winter weekends as a lad trapping with his dad in the Canadian wilderness. At the end of the day, they'd bunk in a small, rustic log cabin. They would light a fire, and within 30 minutes, they would be warm and cozy. Bryan recalls his experience felt like a dream.

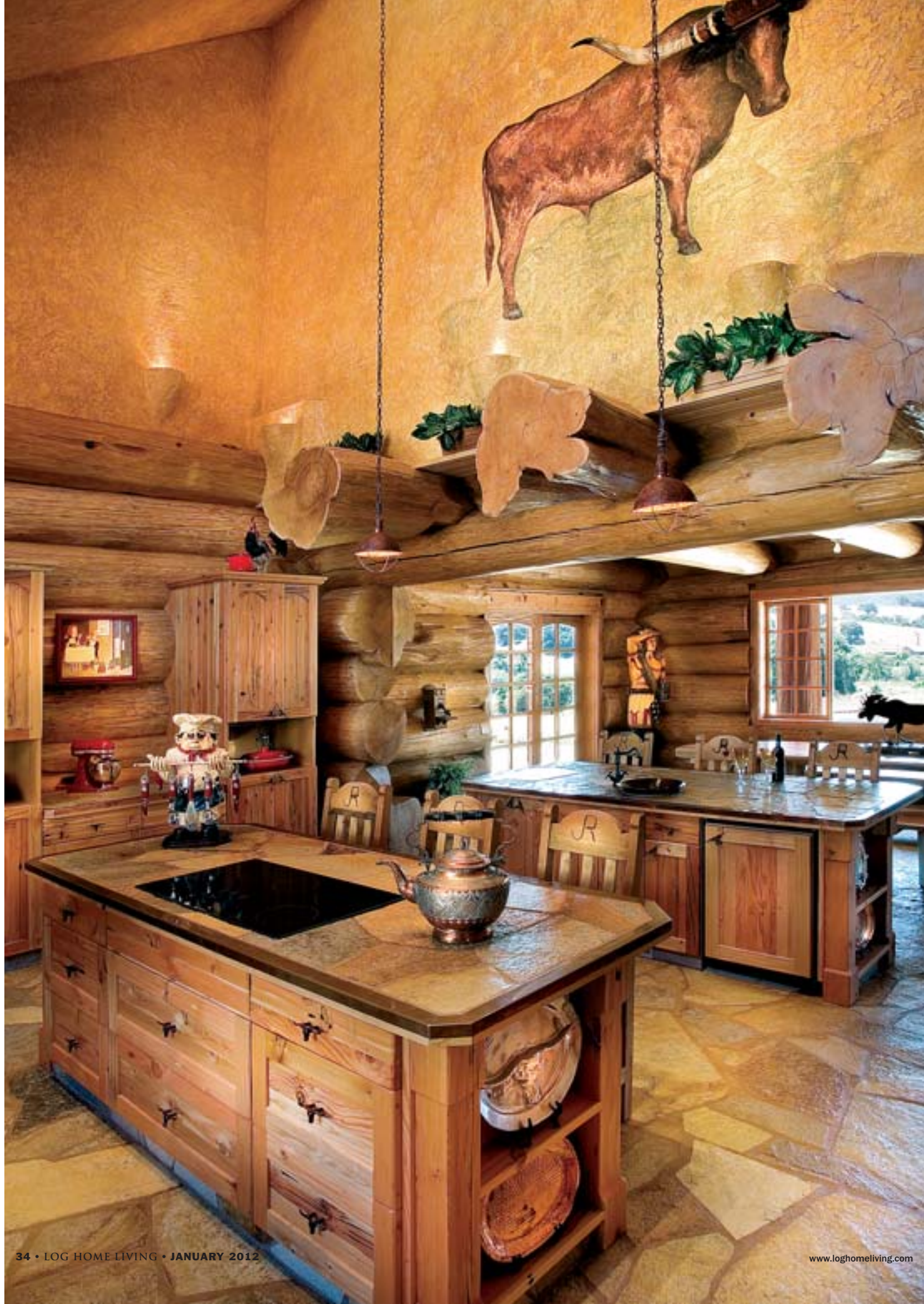
he wanted a log home for himself but encountered a problem. "During the 1940s, when the sawmills opened in the area, people had stopped building log homes in favor of the conventional stick-built residences," he says. "The art of log-home construction had almost died out in North America."

Fortunately, Bryan became acquainted with Samson Jack, who had helped

When he graduated from high school,

RIGHT: Nature inspires the look of the living room, from the large logs to the cowhide-covered chairs. Two mantels of recycled Douglas fir complement the manufactured river rock fireplace.

ABOVE: Four identical archways line up to form a passageway linking the garage, kitchen atrium and entry, where western red cedar benches flank the door. Idaho quartz flooring recalls stone floors found in adobe homes common to California's warm climate.



Norwegian immigrants construct their log homes during the Great Depression. Together, they felled native trees and hand-scribed them to create Bryan's first log home.

A Vancouver couple noticed their work and requested a log home for themselves. "In the late 1970s, people who desired log homes generally wanted them hidden away back in the woods," Bryan explains. "They wanted privacy and to be alone with nature. Because of this, we initially didn't get much exposure for our work."

Later, though, Bryan was commissioned

ABOVE: Rustic kitchen cabinets are crafted from recycled Douglas fir. A copper band trims the Idaho quartz countertops.

OPPOSITE: The kitchen features two islands: one for food preparation and cooking, the other for entertaining. Kay created the long-horn steer on the faux-painted plaster wall.

to construct a large, prominent log home near Williams Lake, British Columbia. It proved to be the beginning of Pioneer Log Homes of British Columbia, which Bryan and his three brothers run. Bryan not only oversees company operations, but also plays a major role in erecting the handcrafted-log

shells on homeowners' property. "I am on the road all the time, whether it is at the construction sites or attending log home shows. I just love working in the field," he says.

While on a project in California several years ago, he met his future wife, Kay. After their marriage, they decided to build their own dream home there in Santa Barbara County, which had a rural feel but was near a regional airport. They purchased a 360-acre working ranch just four miles from the ocean and designed their 7,665-square-foot, western red cedar home to take full



The shape of the beehive oven used for the master bedroom fireplace harmonizes with the round logs. Bryan Jr. built the bed as a Christmas present.

INSET: Blue ceramic tile brightens the master bath. A traditional Mexican sunburst design accents the two arched openings.



advantage of views of the Santa Ynez Mountains.

Noting that he “endeavors to create homes that are as energy efficient as possible,” Bryan explains, “When we build in the northern climates, we naturally are concerned with heating. In southern California, keeping cool is the issue. However, because this home faces east, we incorporated large overhanging eaves to prevent direct sunshine through the windows during the summer. During the day, we close the windows and open them again in the evening to capitalize on the cooling breeze from the coast. In this way, we are able to keep the home in the

low 70s without air conditioning.”

The county building code required that they install a heating system, but because they capture the natural solar warmth from the low sun in the winter, their propane bills have been less than \$100 per year. Their double-sided fireplace between the living room and atrium-game room provides additional heat if required. It is economically fueled by fallen branches from their property’s abundant oak trees.

Kay decreed that the home be completely symmetrical. Thus, the central core housing the entry, double staircase and living room is flanked by identical wings designed



primarily for living and entertaining. On the second level, a bridge links the master bedroom suite and a guest suite. The Reids planned for when they might not be able to climb the stairs by installing a full bath and closet in the den so they could convert this space to a first-floor master bedroom.

The home’s interior takes into consideration the heritage of the land upon which it is built. To honor Mexican and Spanish settlers, the Reids installed colorful Mexican

ABOVE: A claw-foot tub in the main-level bath nestles against the log walls. The floor and walk-in shower are finished with Idaho quartz.

tiles in the master bath and finished the drywall with faux-painted, heavy-textured plaster. A copper gold mining pan on the bar in the kitchen recalls the gold miners who flocked to California in the 1800s. The couple celebrated the cattle-raising history by choosing cowhide-covered furnishings and rugs.

Kay drew on her experience as a former decorator to purchase three-fourths of the home’s decor off the Internet. “Once I had acquired everything I wanted for the home, I put it all in one room,” she says. “I spent the next three months finding exactly the place where I wanted each piece to be.”

One of Bryan’s former clients sent his lighting expert to help the Reids select light fixtures. “This gentleman toured the home and said, ‘Garages are down-lit, castles are



up-lit. Which would you prefer? Naturally, we went with his suggestions for wall sconces and floor lighting to softly illuminate the logs and plaster walls,” Bryan notes. “It creates such a beautiful effect.”

Bryan believes in salvaging and reusing as much as possible. All of the kitchen cabinets, windows, doors, and flooring on the second level are made from recycled Douglas fir decking that once formed a bridge. The living room coffee table came from a 6-foot-diameter post that had to be squared off before it could be installed in a home he was building. “The tree from which it came was over a thousand years old, and we just couldn’t imagine turning this piece into pulp,” he says. “Now it will continue to live in our home.”

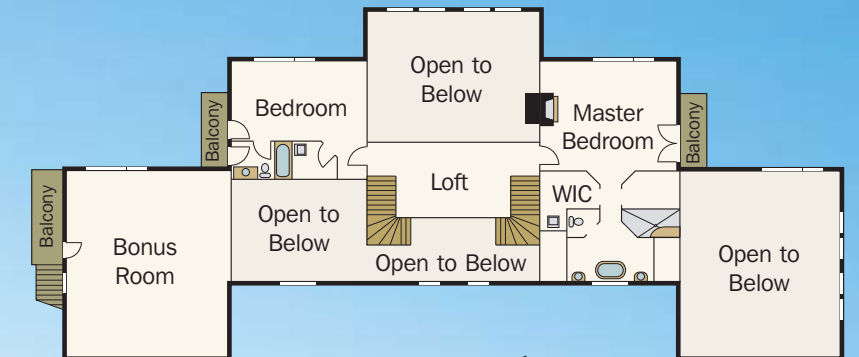
In an area renowned for wildfires, keeping the tall grass under control is a must. It might be a time-consuming task if not for the Reids’ natural approach to yard work. They depend on a herd of a hundred leased cows to keep the property groomed and the fire danger low.

Both Kay and Bryan marvel at their home’s sturdiness. “This home is made to last for 500 years,” he says. “Who knows what its life will be after we are gone. But for now, this is ours.

“I have lived in log homes since I graduated from high school. For me, a log home is as peaceful and mellow as driving down a country lane. Now I truly am living in a dream world.”



Main Level



Upper Level

home details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 7,665

LOG PROVIDER: Pioneer Log Homes of British Columbia

The long symmetrical layout maximizes views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Despite the home’s size, the space is apportioned for bigger rooms, not more of them. There are only two bedrooms on the main and upper levels, for instance.



ABOVE: Large roof overhangs limit solar gain to keep the home naturally cool, even on 100-degree days. The imposing home often attracts curious motorists who spot it driving by on Highway 101.

INSET: Bryan chose logs for their individual character as much as for their imposing strength.