

SIGNATURE STYLE –

A special aspect of this handcrafted log home is the carved eagle, at right. Also noteworthy: This builder maintains the flare on the bottom of many of the cedar logs.

A Cabin BUILT for



PEEK INSIDE
A LOG CABIN
WITH RUSTIC,
UP-NORTH
FLAIR

STORY BY CHRISTY HEITGER-EWING
PHOTOS BY GREG PAGE STUDIOS

Relaxation



RUSTIC STYLE –

Log-style barstools, chiseled-edge granite countertops, and a copper farm sink give touches of rustic elegance to the kitchen. (All of the cabin's rustic-style sinks are from de la Frontera.)

OUTDOOR TIME –

By night, Tom and Sue like to relax by the fire pit. By day, you might catch Tom out fishing on his ¾-acre spring-fed pond, which he keeps stocked with fish like perch and bass. A fountain aerates the pond.

WHEN TOM AND SUE JELLISON first bought land in Three Rivers, Mich., Tom had a simple plan, you might even say a “manly” plan: Build a log cabin and outfit it with a fireplace, bar, loft, and bunk beds. Period. Sue, Tom’s wife, had a vision for a log *home*, one that included nice amenities.

“Yes, I wanted heat with running water!” Sue says with a smile. “I also envisioned bedrooms upstairs with bathrooms. I just wanted to make sure it felt more like a home than a hunting lodge.”

Ultimately, the couple installed granite countertops and pine cabinets, as well as several crafted features, such as the copper sink basins and intricate wood carvings. She also wanted to outfit the entire cabin with log furniture, including headboards, dressers, nightstands, tables and chairs, stools, end tables, lamp stands, flower vases, and more.

In the end, the two minds came together on a plan. “We wanted to make the cabin unique

and rustic but also comfortable and inviting,” says Tom.

Love at first sight — on TV

Tom and Sue began researching the log-home industry and talking to different log-home builders. Then one night, Tom was channel surfing when something on

HGTV caught his eye. It was a cabin built out of old-growth, tight-grained, western red cedar logs. And with no caulking or chinking in between the logs, each airtight structure was reported to be impervious to mold, mildew, and insect infestation. Tom and Sue also learned that the homes promised great acoustic ability for extra peace and quiet.

It was the striking look of the structure, however, that kept their eyes fixated on the television screen. The couple was mesmerized by the mammoth cedar logs, the tongue-and-groove construction, and the carefully hand-craft-





WOOD EVERYWHERE – (Above) Tom and Sue didn't want drywall in their cabin. Instead, they used tongue-and-groove cedar paneling for the walls and walnut and stone floors throughout.

FUNCTIONAL ART – This bathroom's custom wood sink is hand-crafted. All the faucets in the cabin are from Moen's Showhouse collection.

ed detail afforded to each log. "It was just what we wanted," says Tom. "We were so impressed with the quality of the product and the master craftsmanship."

The cabin featured was built by Pioneer Log Homes Midwest. The Jellisons' search was over.

Just a chain saw & hand tools

Pioneer – along with John Howard, the local carpenter the Jellisons hired – erected a 2,300-square-foot structure using nothing but a chain saw and hand tools. The end result is a rustic, hand-crafted log home with a master suite, two guest bedrooms, 2½ baths, a large wet bar, and a loft with two sitting areas.

The cabin also includes two decks that wrap together as well as several interior and exterior hand-carved doors made of Douglas fir. The intricate carvings – one of an elk surrounded by tall pines, one of a moose in a meadow, another of a bear in a stream with a fish in its mouth –



THE LODGE FEEL – Tom wanted a lodge-style cabin to comfortably host business clients and associates. The open floor plan helps to provide that lodge-like feel.



LOVING THE LOG LOOK –

Sue decked out the cabin with log furniture made by Country Log Furniture, an Amish company in Shipshewana, Ind.

PRETTY AS A PENNY –

As in the kitchen, these sinks are copper.

COZY BY THE FIRE –

In the dining area, the Jellisons use two small wooden tables rather than one large one to make the room more spacious. When they host larger groups, they push the tables together. The fireplace is made of natural river-rock fieldstone, and the fireplace screen was custom-ordered from Woodland Direct.



add charming, rustic appeal. Other special touches include bear tracks that appear on select logs and a hand-carved bathroom sink.

A place to unwind & de-stress

Tom, who owns and runs five companies, wanted a nice retreat where he could regularly host customers and vendors. He got his wish. “The place is ideal for entertaining business contacts. But it has also turned out to be a fantastic place for me to de-stress and decompress,” says Tom.

The Jellisons’ year-round home is just 25 miles away in Elkhart, Ind. “I can leave the office and be to the cabin in less than 30 minutes. It’s wonderful!” says Tom.

The Jellisons spend weekends and holidays at the cabin with family and friends and their 8-year-old shih apso dog, Emma. Their grown children, BJ and Paige, also relish



cabin time. And who can blame them? It sits on 50 acres of alfalfa fields with ATV trails that surround the property.

The cabin also has a great view of their ¾-acre pond, which Tom keeps stocked with bluegill, largemouth bass, and perch. “My patience level is pretty short,” says Tom with a chuckle. “So I want to always have enough fish in there so that I can cast out and catch something within 2 or 3 minutes.”

Tom and Sue like to sit outside, relax, and sip coffee as they watch the hummingbirds flutter by and listen to the wild turkeys gobbling and yelping. The property also offers a shooting range and plenty of woods for hunting. Sue’s fondness for wildlife, however, has put a little kink in Tom’s hunting.

“My wife will say, ‘Don’t shoot Albert!’” notes Tom. “I must admit, it’s hard to hunt when she’s

named most of the deer!”

In lieu of grabbing his gun, Tom often grabs a drink and unwinds on the porch. “I’m not a person who can sit still for too long,” says Tom. “But when I’m at the cabin, it’s a different story.”

The pull of a cozy rocking chair, a breathtaking sunset, a refreshing drink and the gentle whisper of an afternoon breeze certainly make for guilt-free

downtime. And that’s something Tom, for one, never used to have enough of – until now.

“Building this place is the best thing I’ve ever done,” says Tom. “Honestly, it has totally changed my life.”

Christy Heitger-Ewing would like to introduce Sue’s friend Albert the deer to her pals Sheryl the squirrel and Wonton the chipmunk.

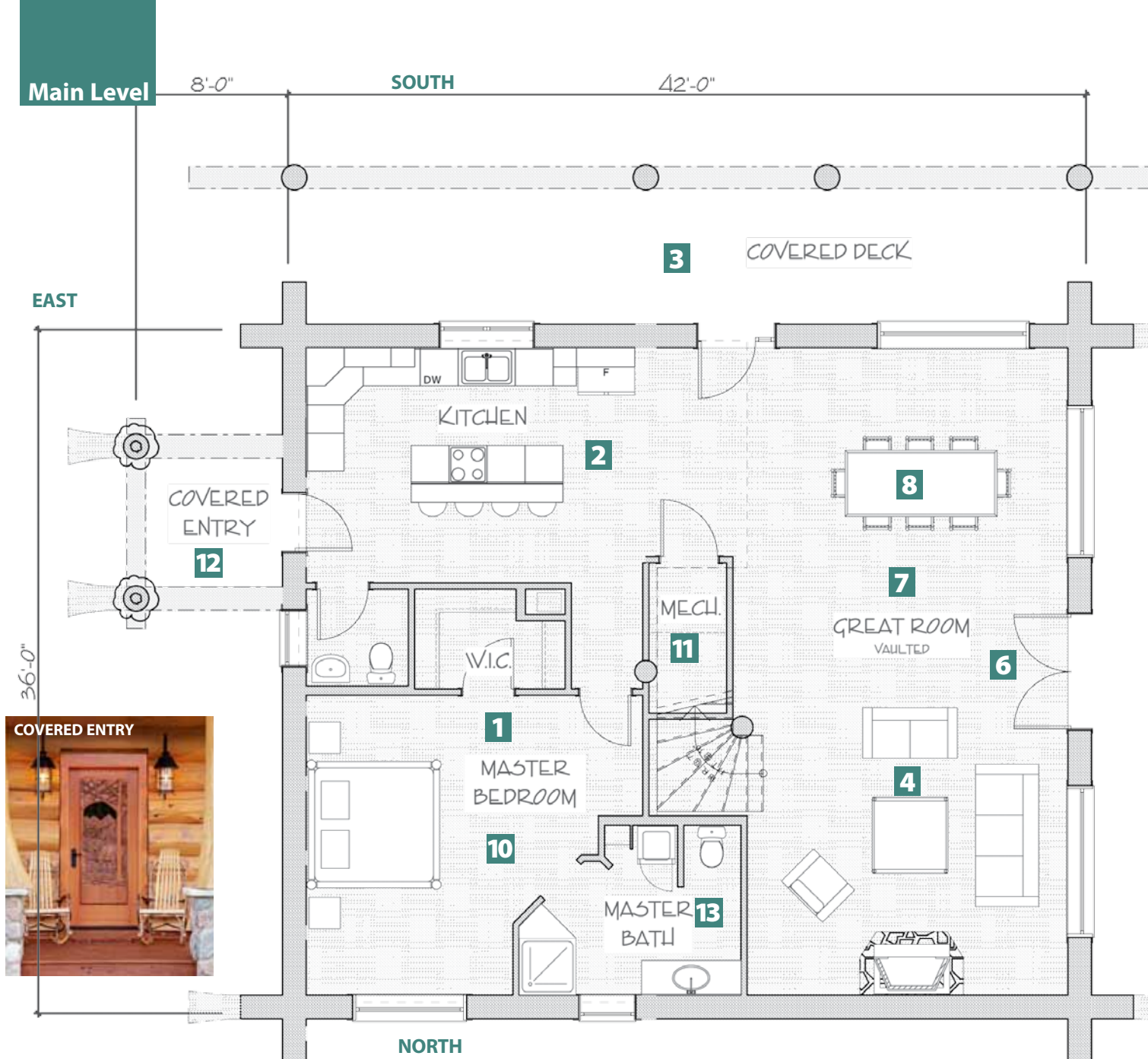
THE COLOR SCHEME – Sue planned a red and gold color scheme, so she found fabrics she liked and then special-ordered the furniture, including the leather-topped ottoman, which stores blankets and throws.

CREATIVE CARVING

ONE OF THE trademarks of the Pioneer Log Homes is an eagle carving, which is often positioned on a structure’s ridge beam. The Jellison’s eagle, however, is on the back porch/pond side of the cabin, placed under the overhang to protect the carving.

Pioneer Log Homes’ John Leszczynski also presented the couple with an unexpected treat. In addition to the eagle carving, Leszczynski included a built-in carved bench on the back porch. The Jellisons were thrilled. “Tom and Sue said that they planned to spend a lot of time on their porch,” said Leszczynski. “So I figured they would appreciate the bench.”





THE FLOOR PLAN: Smart Design for a Small Layout

WE ASKED award-winning architect and *Cabin Life* contributor Nathan Good to tell us why this floor plan – for the Jellison cabin, featured on the previous pages – is a good design for a modest-size log cabin.

Smart design overall

- The square perimeter of the floor plan is the most basic and cost-effective to build, especially for log homes, because the exterior walls are a large portion of the cost. The square offers the most cost-effective ratio between the floor area and the exterior wall area.

- The floor plan is compact and well laid out. The size of each room is adequate for its function without using excess floor space.
- For the most part, circulation is integrated into the rooms so there's no need for separate hallways and corridors; this makes for an overall smaller footprint.

Smart design room by room

(Note: The Jellisons worked with their builder to tweak this original floor plan. So you may see some differences between this plan and the cabin as shown in the preceding photos.)

1&2} The cabin is nicely laid out to the path of the sun. By placing the **master bedroom** and the **kitchen** on the NE and SE corners, respectively, they are well-positioned to welcome morning light.

3} The **covered deck** provides shade during the summer months.

4} The **living room** is well-positioned to view the treasured light of early evening and sunsets.

5} This plan reveals a few tricks on how to make a small home seem larger inside. For example, the **open rail to the stair and balcony** – coupled with the **vaulted ceiling**

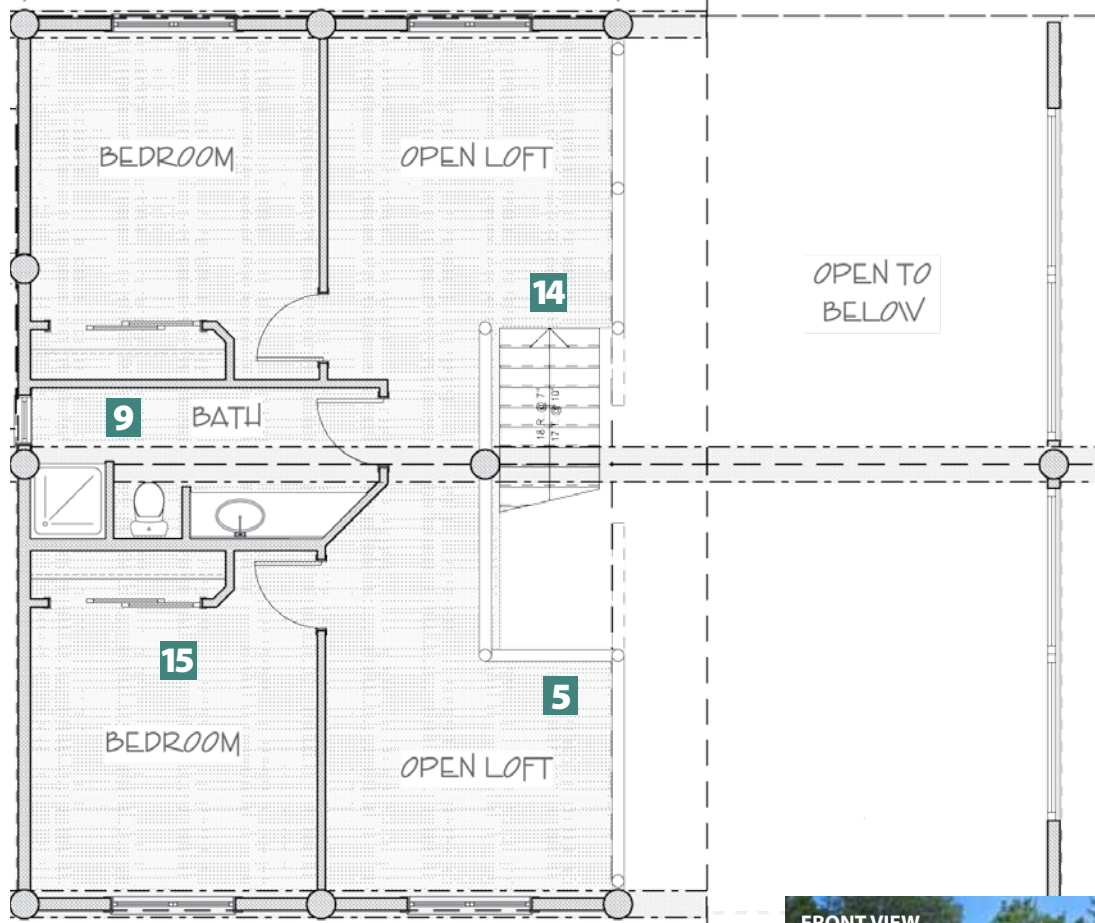
over the living and dining room – combine to make the small spaces appear larger.

6} **Doors and windows** are well-placed at the end of rooms and are viewable from traffic paths so you can see the outdoors, which further helps a small space appear larger than it actually is.

7} The L shape of the **main living area** is perfect for those who like an informal connection between rooms. Yet, the L shape provides some separation between the utility of the kitchen and the chill space of the living room.

8} The **dining room** effectively serves as the connector between

Loft Level



ON THE WEB ► Web-exclusive bonus photos

To see more photos of the Jellison cabin, visit www.CabinLife.com/gallery/

Log bench DIY project
Subscribers, go to www.CabinLife.com/projects to check out our DIY project on how to build a bench from leftover logs.

Not a subscriber? You can order the back issue the article appeared in (May 2010) or subscribe at www.CabinLife.com/store.



Resource:
Floor plan by Pioneer Log Homes Midwest, www.pioneerloghomesmidwest.com

FRONT VIEW



the kitchen and the living area.

9} These two **bedrooms** are smartly separated by the **bathroom** and the closets, providing a good acoustic separation between the two bedrooms and also between the bedrooms and the bathrooms.

10} The **master bedroom** is well-positioned. First, all new and remodeled homes should consider a bedroom on the main level of a home, if not for the convenience of the owners, then to thoughtfully accommodate their aging or potentially disabled guests. In this case, placing the master bedroom on the main level also provides a nice degree of privacy between the

owners and their guests, which is also an enhanced comfort for the guests. Secondly, it's nicely nestled on the main floor, with the ½ bath, walk-in closet, stairway, and master bath serving as acoustic and psychological buffers between the master and the rest of the main floor for enhanced sleep and intimacy.

11} Locating the **mechanical room** in the center of the cabin reduces the need for, or length of, air-supply ducts. This has the potential to save energy and enhance comfort.

12} It may catch some by surprise that the **main entry** is through the kitchen. For cabins, which are usually much less formal than

primary residences, this is not that uncommon, and it's quite fitting. To welcome guests to a home at the edge of the kitchen is akin to friends and family arriving through a side or back door; it's a casual and friendly way to enter a home.

13} Locating the **washer and dryer** in the master bathroom puts this utilitarian area in a central location where the vast majority of dirty laundry will be located.

14} The **two open loft areas** on the second level outside the guest bedrooms provide the opportunity for the owners and guests to retreat from the more social spaces below to an area for peaceful relaxation

and refuge. These spaces can also serve as overflow for sleeping a crowd, with sofa beds or even sleeping bags.

15} Adequate **storage space** is always important, even at the cabin. The closets upstairs in the guest bedrooms are a good source for storing guest bedding, seasonal clothing, paper goods, and more. ■

*Nathan Good, a leader in sustainable design, has been honored as one of the **Top 50 Architects in the Northwest**. Read more of his articles at www.CabinLife.com, and check out his firm and design portfolio at www.nathangoodarchitects.com.*