

**DREAM KITCHENS:
TOP 10 DESIGN SECRETS**

**BONUS PULL-OUT:
DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE**

**BUILD WITH SUCCESS:
7 ESSENTIAL PLANNING TIPS**

LOG HOME LIVING[®]

Plan, Build
& Live
the Dream

*Showcase
of Homes*

**100+ GORGEOUS
PHOTOS & FLOORPLANS!**

Dazzling Log Home Makeovers

20 AFFORDABLE IDEAS FROM THE PROS

www.loghomeliving.com



Improving on *Perfection*

A COUPLE DISCOVERS THAT ADDING ON TO THEIR NORTH CAROLINA CABIN IS TRICKY, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

Blending old with new is a lot easier with furnishings than permanent log walls. Rush through the process and you may face years of cracked and warped joints caused when the old and new woods expand and contract at different rates.

The Angels built their original cabin in 1995 after spending a weekend with two other couples in a log cabin in the North Carolina mountains. “We had the perfect weekend: great company, a great cabin and it even snowed,” says David.

STORY BY Lore Postman
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Franklin & Esther Schmidt

With almost 1,100 square feet of deck and patio space, outdoor living is just as important to the home owners as the space inside. And with majestic views like this, who could blame them.



Although the home was constructed within the confines of a budget, there are some areas the owners splurged on, such as the fieldstone for the fireplace. The skis above the mantel, however, are a rummage-sale find.



Overstuffed coffee bean-brown leather recliners are the perfect place to snooze on a Sunday afternoon.

THE BENEFITS OF STYLE

When it comes to log home construction styles, most aficionados have their favorites. StoneMill Log Homes specializes in construction featuring dovetail corners and wide bands of chinking—a style it has perfected throughout its 30 years in business. The wide chinking offers flexibility and conveniences not found in other log wall styles, according to Mathew Sterchi, StoneMill's vice president of sales and marketing.

"Wide chinking increases the wall's insulation," he says. But most important for customers who don't care to plan out every single detail

before construction, the wide chinking lets them finalize the electrical plans after the logs are in place. The chinking isn't added until after the wiring is in place and the logs are stained, giving home owners ample time to change their minds or add wiring for new fixtures.

"You don't need to coordinate a local electrician to be onsite at the same time that the log stacking crew is doing the work," says Mathew. "In a log-on-log system, you have to go according to plan and there isn't much room for modification or change." —L.P.

Eventually, all three couples ended up buying or building vacation homes in the Blue Ridge Mountain area just outside of Boone. The Angels built a 1,068-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bathroom cabin on a wooded lot at the top of a mountain ridge. From the front porch, they can see skiers zipping down a nearby ski slope during the winter months, and from the back porch, they can watch as the land rolls from North Carolina into Tennessee and Virginia. For years, the size was perfect for a weekend getaway for the couple and occasional friends. "We fell in love with the area and wanted to spend as much time up here as we could," says Cheryl. But they soon found they needed extra space for storage as well as an office area. The solution was to add a 14-by-17-foot den with additional closet space.

The Angels turned to StoneMill Log

Homes, the Knoxville, Tennessee-based log producer that constructed the couple's original vacation retreat. Cheryl called the company, told her representative how large the addition would be and then asked about costs and a completion date.

Adding On

Adding onto an existing log structure brings sizeable challenges. The old logs have likely already settled and acclimated to the environment. Attaching new logs to

RIGHT: A splash of willow green on the cabinetry gives the petite kitchen a distinctive personality. **BELOW:** Green trim on the windows and doors lends a warm touch that traditional bright-white trim wouldn't deliver. The corner china cabinet emulates the color and ties the dining room's look together.



old could cause future problems, because the new logs will expand and contract at different rates than the old ones.

"You need to take time to plan and make certain everything is properly thought through," says Mathew Sterchi, vice president of sales and marketing for StoneMill Log Homes. "It requires a good level of communication between the log supplier, the general contractor and the home owners."

Through the years, StoneMill has developed a steel channel system that lets owners connect old with new without building a breezeway, the easiest way to attach two structures. "We didn't want to have a tunnel connecting the old and new parts," Cheryl explains. StoneMill's

ABOVE: From their lofty perch above the great room, the owners can take in a spirited game of checkers at the game table fashioned from a wine barrel. **LEFT:** Drywall helps to brighten up the bedroom, while the Canadian western hemlock timbers remind you that you're in a rustic log home.



When the owners decided to add on to their original 1,068-square-foot house, they wanted to retain its rustic cabin-in-the-woods charm. To achieve this, the addition is attached at the side and back, so isn't obvious as you approach the home.

channel resembles a giant "U" with the bottom flattened out. That edge, when attached to the old structure, forms a channel into which the new logs are set and secured with lags. The lags allow some play between the old and new structures while forming a tight seal to keep the weather out, and the channel is finished with trim and hidden from view.

StoneMill built the Angels' addition from the same type of 6-by-12-foot Canadian western hemlock timbers used in the original home. As it does with new home construction, the company milled the wood in Tennessee for the dovetail corners, electrical wiring and truss and joist joinery, then assembled it onsite.

Besides maintaining structural integrity, another challenge the Angels faced with their addition was keeping the

original rooms from becoming too dark where the new structure joined the old. The addition removed one bedroom window and completely enclosed the first-floor bathroom. To keep the bathroom from feeling dark and closed in, the couple installed a stained glass window, which Cheryl made. The window allows privacy while letting in light, and the couple saved money because Cheryl made it herself.

Bargain Bonanza

Cutting costs and staying on budget was key when building both the original home and the addition. Both times, the couple spent months thinking of ways to include extra touches to make the cabin feel warm and homey without breaking the bank.

Glance around the cabin and you'd never know how good many of the finds actually are. The "antique" skis mounted over the fieldstone fireplace are actually a fiberglass pair painted with wood-finish paint. The couple scored them for a few dollars at a church rum-

mage sale after discovering that vintage skis run a few hundred dollars. "You'd never know they were originally bright red," David says.

The bargain shoppers bought the fireplace tool set for \$10 at another tag sale and knocked several thousand dollars off their cabinetry bill by having their contractor build kitchen cabinets that replicated the design of high-end cabinetry they saw in magazines. The Mexican tile they chose for their kitchen countertops was marked 75 percent off when a warehouse chain closed its store. And the couple found the black and brown marble top for the desk in their new office in the salvage pile at a North Carolina marble company. They had the marble etched, rather than buffed, to tone down the shiny finish.

"While we had to be conscious of our budget, our approach was that we can tastefully decorate by being smart about it, doing some of the work ourselves and shopping wisely," Cheryl says.

As another example of their thriftiness, the closets in the office addition were

built from plywood rather than log or 2-by-4s and drywall. "It made the closets look like pieces of furniture, and it cost less than regular closets," says Marvin Trivette. A general contractor for more than 15 years, Marvin encourages home owners to tackle some of the work themselves if they want to trim costs. "If they're interested, they can put in some of the insulation or do some painting," he says. "It will definitely save money." For both the original home and the addition, the Angels took Marvin's advice and searched for ways to do their own work.

Yet, according to Marvin, often the biggest savings come from doing nothing at all. "Have a good plan from the start and don't make a lot of changes while you're building. Changes can cost a lot of money," he says.

Marvin also recommends buying quality windows, doors, cabinets and flooring. They don't have to be the most expensive options, but each should be long-lasting. "All of these are hard to change," he says.

For no money at all, David dressed

up the flat-front cabinets in the bathroom by attaching willow branches cut in half. Even the mirror in the downstairs bath is trimmed with willow branches nailed to a board and hung over the mirror like a picture frame. The bathroom floors and countertops are made of salvaged fieldstones left over from the fireplace.

"We wanted the house to be as rustic as possible," says David. "I'm not a great carpenter, so if it needs to be straight, someone else needs to do it. But if it can be crooked, I can do that."

An Extra Splurge

Even with their mindful budget-watching, the couple invested in important amenities. They went all out on the fieldstone fireplace, for instance, and the back porch is 12 feet deep—much larger than they originally thought about making it. In fact, the



Cheryl Angel is loving life in her expanded log home.

Angels have nearly 1,100 square feet of deck and porch space surrounding their cabin.

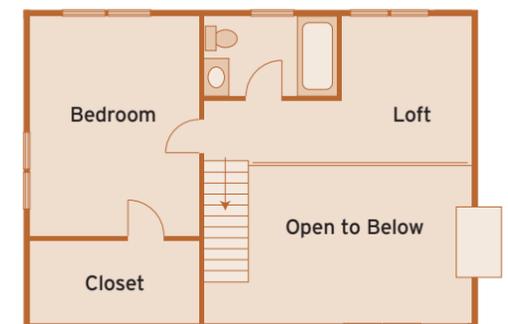
"It's possible to build a beautiful second home on a budget," Cheryl says. Her advice: Have an idea of the look you have in mind and what you need to spend your money on. "Get things that contribute to the overall feel you are looking for," she says. "If you put your time into it, you can certainly save money and get a great looking finished product." ■

HOME DETAILS

- Square footage: 1,288
- Log producer: StoneMill Log Homes



Main Level



Upper Level

Reprinted with permission from *Log Home Living* May 2004. ©2004 Home Buyer Publications, Chantilly, Virginia, 800-826-3893.