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THE FLOOR-TO-CEILING FIREPLACE IS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE GREAT ROOM, WHERE THE ROYERS ENJOY SPENDING QUIET EVENINGS TOGETHER OR ENTERTAINING FRIENDS. TWO DORMER WINDOWS OVERLOOKING THE GREAT ROOM LET IN PLENTY OF NATURAL SUNLIGHT TO BRIGHTEN THE ROOM.

OPPOSITE: THE ROYERS' COZY LOG HOME IN FLAT CREEK, TENNESSEE, SITUATED ON THE 212-ACRE STILLHOUSE HOLLOW FARM, PROVIDES A WELCOME REFUGE WHERE THE FAMILY CAN FEEL CLOSE TO NATURE AND RECONNECT WITH EACH OTHER.





# *Built to Last*

A Tennessee couple builds a log cabin retreat on generations-old farmland.

BY KAREN DOSS BOWMAN ✨ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES RAY SPAHN

WHEN ALICE ROYER AND HER HUSBAND JOHN HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUY BACK THE 212-acre farm that had belonged to Alice's family all but 10 years since the U.S. Civil War, the couple jumped at the chance. Alice has vivid memories of spending time on the farm during her childhood, when it was her grandparents' home, so the land became a piece of family heritage she hoped to share and pass on to her two children, who are now adults. In 2008, the family built a log home on the property, giving them regular weekend escape from their busy lives in Knoxville.

"We feel fortunate to be able to have this land again, and to have this beautiful home along with that is just wonderful," Alice says.

The Royers' property, named Stillhouse Hollow Farm, is located atop a hill in the small community of Flat Creek, Tennessee, near Shelbyville. The couple owns cattle and a donkey, which are cared for by a farm manager who lives nearby. The pastoral setting is ideal for the Royer family, who all enjoy outdoor activities such as skeet shooting, target practice, riding four-wheelers, and playing horseshoes.

"We love the outdoors, and we love having family and friends visit," Alice explains. "A log home seemed to fit what we wanted—we wanted the house to be nice, but rustic enough that you didn't have to worry about getting the floor dirty. We wanted minimal upkeep on the inside and outside."

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**ABOVE:** A SITTING AREA IN THE LOFT PROVIDES A QUIET SPOT FOR READING OR JUST RESTING. DÉCOR SUCH AS THE RED-CHECKED SOFA AND FUR RUG BRING IN POPS OF COLOR AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF NATURAL WOOD TONES.

**RIGHT:** THE MASTER BEDROOM'S VAULTED CEILINGS SHOWCASE THE EXPOSED BEAMS OF THE TIMBER ROOF SYSTEM AND ENHANCE THE ROOM'S SPACIOUS FEEL. THE WINDOWS OFFER A STUNNING SECOND-STORY VIEW OF THE EXPANSIVE OPEN FIELDS AND SURROUNDING WOODS.

Produced by StoneMill Log and Timber Homes and built by a family friend, the Royer home—an adapted version of the company's Springcrest plan—is constructed out of 6x12-inch, rectangular Western hemlock logs. Because StoneMill uses lengths of up to 40 feet in this species, the Royers' home was built entirely out of full-length logs, eliminating the need for splice joints and giving the structure the highest level of stability and added beauty. The log siding on all interior walls maintains the complete wood look throughout the home.

The materials and building techniques were designed to make sure the house lasts for generations to come. The flat logs, for example, are easy to maintain. Additionally, about 90 percent of the logs are "heartwood," which has natural resistance to water absorption, minimizing log shrinkage and settling.

Another feature that adds longevity to the Royer home is the dovetail corner system, which is "one of the strongest corner connections you'll find in the entire log home industry," explains Mathew Sterchi, StoneMill's vice president of sales and marketing.

The Royers' timber roof system with exposed beams is built out of an 8x14-inch ridge beam and 4x8-inch timber rafters, with structural 2x6 tongue-and-groove decking. Above the rafters and decking, StoneMill installed a layer of felt paper, then a built-up roof insulation system, giving the roof a minimum R-30 insulation value. And with Energy Star®-rated windows and doors from Kolbe and Kolbe and StoneMill's four-inch





**ABOVE:** THIS DOWNSTAIRS BED-ROOM IS FURNISHED WITH FAMILY HAND-ME-DOWN PIECES THAT HAD BEEN IN STORAGE FOR MANY YEARS. ALICE ROYER, A TALENTED SEAMSTRESS, MADE THE BEDCOVERINGS AND ACCESSORIES.

**LEFT:** THE DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM SHOWCASES AN ECLECTIC MIX OF MATERIALS, INCLUDING HICKORY CABINETS, A NATURAL STONE BOWL SINK, AND A VANITY COUNTERTOP MADE FROM MAI WOOD WITH A ROUGH EDGE. THE ROYERS INSTALLED THE SHOWER TILES THEMSELVES.

insulated chink joint between each course of log, the Royer house is extremely energy efficient to cut down on heating and cooling bills.

"The four-inch chink joint gives us the ability to increase the R-value of the log wall by putting rigid insulation between each log course," Sterchi explains. "When the logs expand and contract throughout different seasons of the year, the finished chinking maintains a bond and will expand and contract with the logs as they move. That flexible bond allows for a weathertight and airtight shell."

When selecting a design for their weekend retreat, the Royers wanted a design that would be suitable for visiting with family and friends. The open concept floorplan, for example, allows the Royers to chat with their guests while preparing meals. The great room becomes an ideal spot where family and friends may gather for a cozy visit around the fireplace, while the master suite is secluded upstairs to provide privacy for the homeowners. Outdoor living spaces also were an important consideration for these nature lovers. The covered porch that runs along the front and on one side of the house is equipped with a sound system and an outdoor fireplace, allowing the family to entertain guests outside—even on cool evenings.

The Royers also did some of the finishing work on the home themselves, both to save money and to feel a sense of ownership in the process. Everyone in the family—plus a few friends—helped to install the hardwood floors, which run throughout the entire house. The floors, made of prefinished hickory, are durable and easy to maintain, and the Royers hope they will last for years to come. Other DIY projects included installing the tile work in the bathrooms and creating stone sidewalks outside.

For prospective log home owners, Alice recommends doing careful planning and taking time to research the different log home companies and options available.

"Take time planning so you don't make a mistake," she says.

If she could do anything differently, Alice says she would have added more bedrooms to accommodate the many guests who love to come and visit.

"I've been surprised at how many people want to come and visit for the weekend," Alice says. "I never would have dreamed that in a million years. But we're outside a lot, so it's a good place to have friends and family come to visit."

Still, she's been pleased that the house turned into a rustic beauty, one that is worthy of keeping in the family for years to come.

"I just can't believe how strong this house is," Alice says. "The beauty of the house is so impressive and the workmanship is incredible." ❁



**ABOVE:** THOUGH THE ROYERS WERE TRYING TO CREATE A RUSTIC FEEL FOR THE HOME, THEY SELECTED HIGH-END FINISHES THAT WOULD LAST FOR YEARS TO COME, SUCH AS HICKORY CABINETS, GRANITE COUNTERTOPS, AND A COPPER FARM SINK. THE WINDOW OVER THE KITCHEN SINK GIVES THE HOMEOWNERS A NICE VIEW OF THE BACKYARD, WHERE THEY MIGHT CATCH A GLIMPSE OF WILD TURKEYS OR ROAMING CATTLE. THE BAR IS MADE OUT OF THE SAME CULTURED STONE VENEER USED FOR THE HOME'S FIREPLACES AND FOUNDATION.

**LEFT:** THE DINING ROOM IS OPEN TO THE KITCHEN AND GREAT ROOM, CREATING AN IDEAL SPACE FOR ENTERTAINING. THE DINING ROOM TABLE IS MADE FROM HEAVY MAI WOOD, WITH A LIVE EDGE, MEANING THE EDGE HASN'T BEEN TRIMMED AND SANDED FOR A PERFECT SHAPE BUT HAS A MORE NATURAL LOOK. THE CHAIRS ARE MADE FROM REPURPOSED PLOW PARTS.





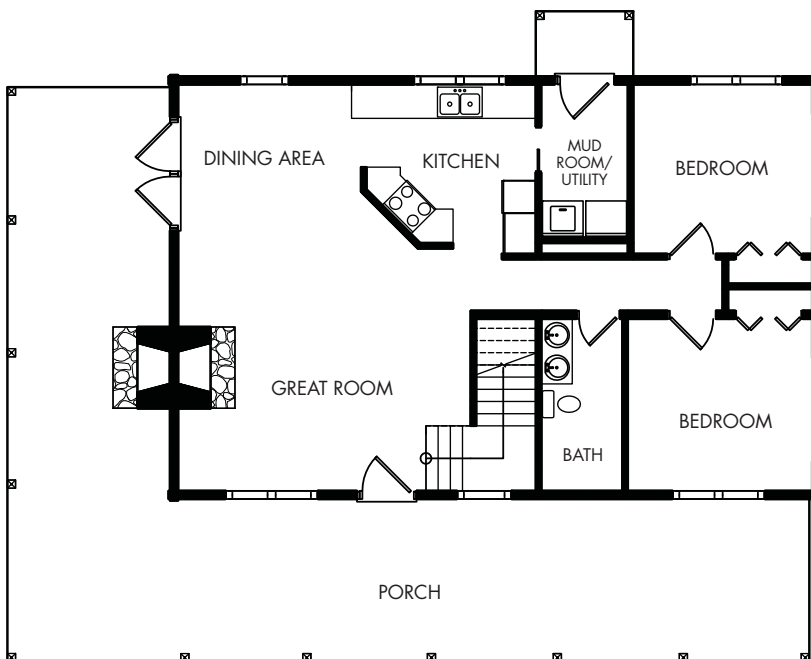
## Farm Fresh

The Royers' home evokes the early log houses built in Tennessee 200 years or more ago and looks like it has been sitting on the 212-acre farm for generations. The home's compact design makes it easier to maintain, but it still includes all the spaces and amenities the family needs for their weekend get-aways. With two bedrooms on the main floor, John and Alice could potentially make this their retirement home. No matter what the future brings, this home will be a lasting legacy.

**Log Home Producer & Designer:**  
**StoneMill Log and Timber Homes,**  
 Knoxville, Tennessee  
**Log Home Builder: Ricky Prince,**  
 Normandy, Tennessee

1.5 story home 🌿 Square Footage: 1,550

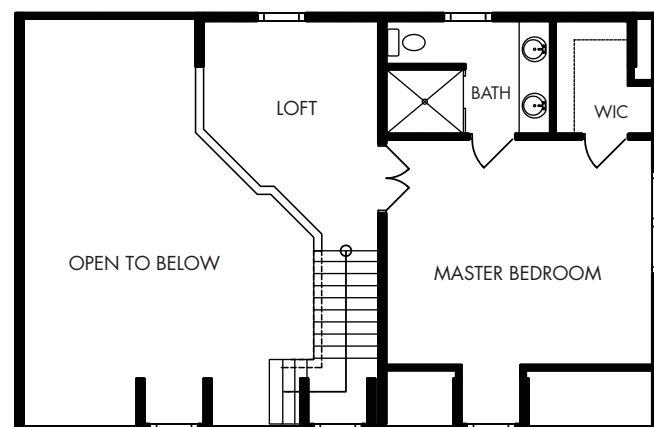
Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 2



MAIN LEVEL

THE MASTER SUITE IS LOCATED UPSTAIRS, GIVING THE HOMEOWNERS AN ADDED MEASURE OF PRIVACY WHEN THE HOUSE IS FILLED WITH GUESTS.

AN OUTDOOR FIREPLACE EXTENDS THE HOME'S LIVING SPACE TO THE EXTERIOR, PROVIDING A PLACE WHERE THE FAMILY CAN ENJOY MEALS TOGETHER OR JUST RELAX WHILE TAKING IN THE BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS.



UPPER LEVEL

THE HOMEOWNERS INCORPORATED COVERED PORCHES ON THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST SIDES OF THE HOUSE TO PROTECT IT FROM SUN DAMAGE AND THE ELEMENTS. THE OVERHANGS ON THE OTHER TWO SIDES OF THE HOUSE ARE 2-FEET WIDE, STONEMILL'S STANDARD, TO GIVE ADDED PROTECTION AS WELL.



# StoneMill

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