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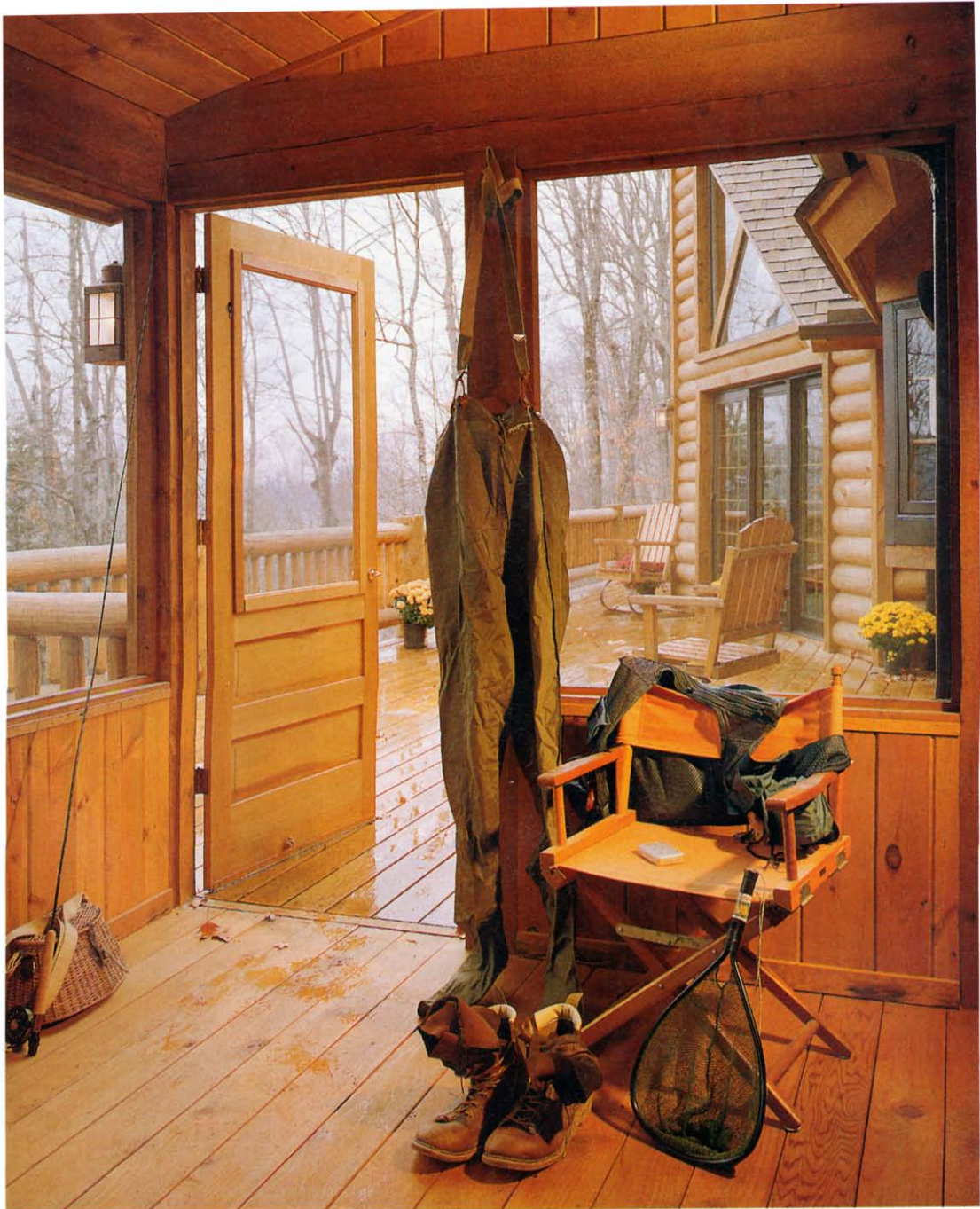


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Above the World

Above the World



The view from the porch of Fred and Kathy Arnold's new pine log home is one of splendid isolation.

By Linda Marx • Photography © Roger Wade • Styling by Debra Grahl

Twin hemlocks, towering pines, birch trees and handsome maples run rampant near an exquisite lake that separates Iron County in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, from Phelps, Wisconsin. Amid the grass and pebbles that make up much of the yard surrounding this couple's rustic retreat, deer, porcupine, squirrels, birds and a family of badgers live together in natural tranquility.

On five and one-half acres, the closest neighbor is so far away that Dr. Fred Arnold, a Hinsdale, Illinois, veterinarian, and his wife Kathy, who manages the couple's animal hospital there, feel their second home is the stage setting of a wilderness dream.

"When we found this lot seven years ago, I watched my husband walk down to the lake," Kathy recalls vividly. "After a few minutes of contemplation, he turned around and began walking back to where I was standing. The look on his face said it all: 'I have found Nirvana.'"

For 16 years, the Arnolds, both 57, had maintained a small cottage elsewhere in Iron County which they had hoped would be suitable for their retirement sometime in the coming decade. They had gotten used to the nearly 400-mile drive from Hinsdale to Iron County, but were worried about living space.

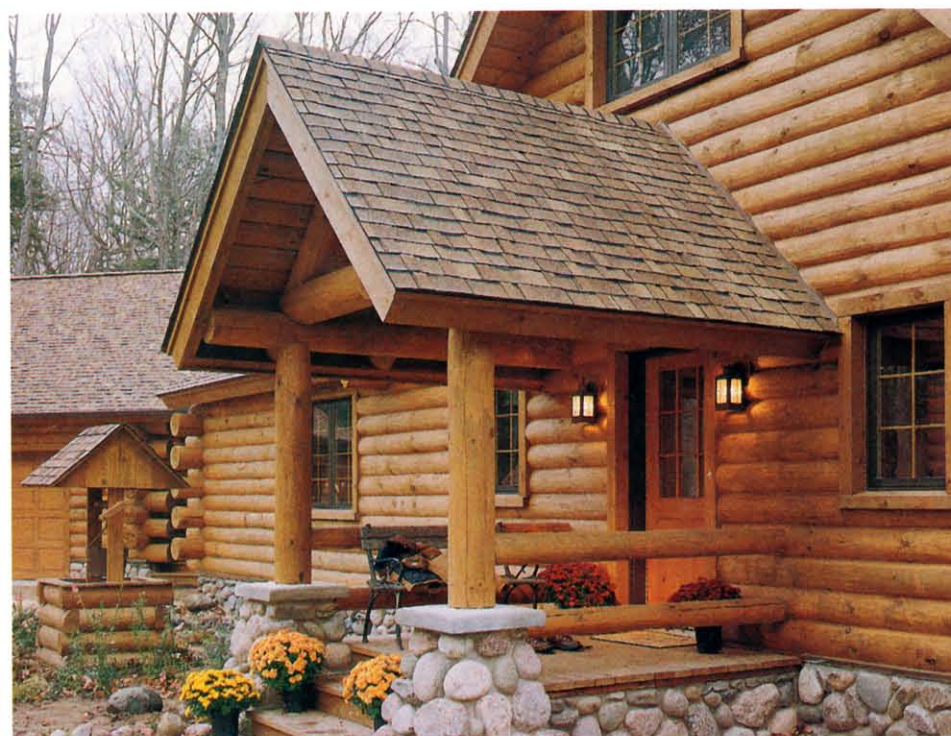
Spending a few days in the cottage was one thing. But retiring to live much



ABOVE: Since the Arnold home is built into a hill, the view from on high allows the eyes to follow the rocks and samplings of wood on the property, which ends at a lake. Seven-foot wide steps of flagstone are currently under construction.

LEFT: The combination of pine wood and Michigan fieldstone creates a romantic entrance for the Arnold family's new log home built into the side of a hill.

FAR LEFT: The screened-in porch in the rear of the home was designed for the family's enjoyment even in bad weather. Fred's fishing gear hangs above a wood chair. Panoramic views of the woods and Lake Smokey make the room a popular spot for the family.





of the year in such confined quarters didn't appeal to Kathy, who had grown up in a large family home.

"I am used to more space and wanted big rooms with lots of fireplaces and great windows," she explains. "When our daughter suggested we look at large lots on Smokey Lake not far from our cottage, we were thrilled because we love

the Upper Peninsula and know so many people in Iron County."

Since part of their home in Hinsdale is made of log (it was an old blacksmith shop), the couple knew they wanted to build a log home for retirement. They like the look and warmth of the logs, as well as the laid back lifestyle which log homes secure.

BELOW: The open, friendly kitchen has a Viking stove and charming oak dining table.

Views from the sink illustrate large trees and shrubbery leading down to the lake, which makes dishwashing as enjoyable as dining.



"We love the slower pace and quiet space that is part of log home living," says Fred. "We just didn't know who to see or how to create what we had in mind."

For several years after buying the lot, the Arnolds spent holidays visiting companies, seeking out the perfect log home manufacturer. They knew that the home they wanted would include, among other things, a large kitchen, walk-in closets, decks, a screened-in porch and a first floor master bedroom. They looked through dozens of plan books from many log companies, but everything looked the same. And they really wanted something different, something created especially for them.

"We knew we wanted a log home," Kathy says, "but not a full one. We wanted exterior logs and logs in the great room. But not everywhere. We had lots of specific ideas that were special for us."

Finally, in 1996, they discovered Tomahawk Log & Country Homes in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Troy Gullo, a Tomahawk consultant, worked with the Arnolds on plans, proposals and possibilities.

The company had built a home similar to what the Arnolds desired, and Gullo was able to make some minor changes which Kathy had in mind. Within a month, Gullo took the company's prow style home with custom glass and lots of dramatic flourishes and laid it out to fit perfectly on the couple's Iron County lot. The great room would be the first room seen when entering through the front door. It would also be the link to a higher traffic and lower traffic wing of the home. The garage would be angled.

"We used the 12" Saddle-Lok™ corner system on the Arnolds' dream home," says Gullo, who insists the creation of the 2,782 square-foot home was shared by the couple.

"Its size is one of the largest in the half-log industry and is very fitting for



ABOVE: The great room, with its large wood-burning stone fireplace, is Fred and Kathy's favorite nesting place. The room's furniture includes a pine chest, pine end tables and built-in bookcases. Two leather chairs, known as "catcher's mitts," flank a sofa done with a duck-patterned print in muted green, teal and burgundy. The throw, created in nautical loons, matches the wilderness theme.

the size and dramatics of the home," he explains. "The species of the woods are Norway and Northern white pine with a maintenance schedule similar to any other wood."

The next step was to find a builder who would create the custom home.

Many builders the couple talked with had ideas which would skimp on one thing in favor of the other. One builder said you don't need this; another said you don't need that. But the couple wanted it done right, and had developed a five-year pay plan in which to do it. They finally decided on Dan Benson in Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin, whose foreman, Reed Wells, handled the project from start to finish, which took approximately one year.

"We made many decisions, such as putting Michigan fieldstone on the lower

BELOW: The loft is made completely of pine with matching wood furniture. Kathy likes purple, blue and pink, so she outfitted her day bed in the new "Granny chic" that is popular with today's log home owners.



level, where to put the washer and dryer, and how many fireplaces we wanted,” recalls Kathy. “But other than Fred meeting with us periodically, we left things up to Tomahawk and the builders. The process was painless. No nightmares. And the end result is beautiful. These men put their heart and soul into our home.”

Open decks and porches surround the luxury retreat. With a total of 15 rooms, the home is ideal for visits from the three Arnold children, all married and in their 30s. The great room is dominated by a Michigan fieldstone fireplace and the seductive prow. The views from floor-to-ceiling door/windows bring the natural wonders of the outdoors inside. Furniture and furnishings of wood and leather with themes of ducks and loons

keep the design compatible with the hillside wilderness tableau.

The master bedroom, with built-in bookcases and a fireplace made of floor-to-ceiling stone, is located on one side of the great room; an office is located on the opposite side.

Upstairs is a loft with a day bed and a small loom for Kathy, which will eventually be replaced by a larger model and sewing machine. A hot tub will be installed near the loft in coming months; wood steps will lead to the deck and screened-in porches. The Arnolds also plan to lay bluestone paving under the deck area.

“I am very excited about the prospect of living in this charming log home,” Kathy said, laughing. “Now my husband,

who is semi-retired spends more time there — every other week — while I have to stay behind and run the animal hospital. He absolutely loves being in the woods where he can fish on the lake, downhill ski, snowmobile, split wood and hike in open bliss. I call him my ‘Mountain Man.’”

Fred agrees there is nothing better than meandering through the thickets in his beloved rural dwelling.

“I drive with our two Bull Mastiff, Pebbles and Bam Bam, and spend as much time as possible in the new log home,” he explains. “I enjoy cooking and trying to make our property look like a park. In the winter, I like to ice fish. I thrive in the outdoors and can’t get enough of it.”

BELOW: A floor-to-ceiling fieldstone hearth dominates the bedroom, along with custom made corner bookcases. The bed is an elegant metal sleigh placed ideally for enjoying views of the landscape through simple French doors.





LEFT: Fred and Kathy Arnold's 2,782 square foot dream home by Tomahawk Log & Country Homes is a mix of Norway and Northern white pine. Custom glass and Michigan fieldstone add a touch of magic to the dramatic. "The Creature" parked outside is a Polaris six-wheel drive Fred likes to use for "log lugging."

Kathy looks forward to spending more time at the log home in the coming years, even before retirement, when the couple will physically leave Hinsdale for Iron County. Those will be years of decorating the home and adjusting to the lakeside life of crisscrossing timbers, antique flooring, beamed ceilings, diamond-fretted windows, a winter lake and trio of romantic hearths.

Kathy's favorite part of log home life comes on winter nights, when she and Fred are seated on their leather chairs in the great room reading books before bedtime. The only sounds are those of silence. The glow of the blazing fire illuminates the beautiful room. Outside there is snow on the ground and snow glistening on a pair of trees. The couple looks down from high onto the icy lake. The scene is Christmas card-perfect.

"We're like little kids," Kathy muses. "We just look at each other and say, 'Wow.'"

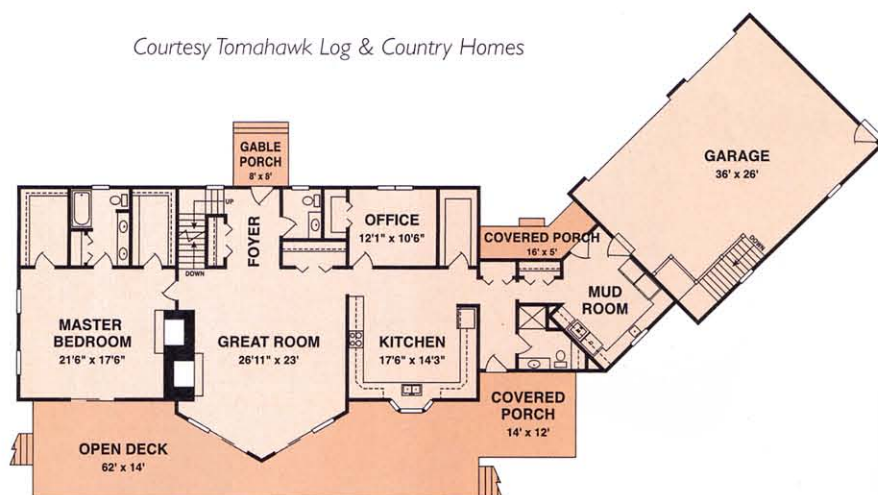
Linda Marx is a freelance writer from West Palm Beach, Florida.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

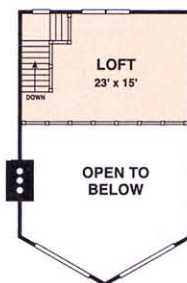
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The Arnold Home Floor Plan

Courtesy Tomahawk Log & Country Homes



MAIN FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

