

From across a manmade fishing pond, all three stories of Jim and Sue Schaefer's home are visible. The porte cochere leading to the garage provides a dry parking spot for guests.



Labor Days

Faced with unexpected challenges when building their log home, one Kentucky couple learned that hard work can lead to beautiful things.

story by Reed Karaim | photography by Franklin and Esther Schmidt



A dramatic half-sawn, peeled cedar log mantel complements the soaring Cultured Stone fireplace that dominates the Schaefer's great room. The raised hearth brings the fire to eye level while also providing a cozy seating area.

In the kitchen, the refined country look is anchored by dark green KitchenMaid cabinets, which provide a perfect contrast with warm, golden walls. The custom granite countertops continue the earthy aesthetic while adding a touch of sophistication.



Building a home is almost always a labor of love—“labor” sometimes being the operative word. That’s what Jim and Sue Schaefer found when they decided to build a log home on 77 acres they had purchased just outside Louisville, Kentucky.

After falling victim to noisy neighbors, the Schaefers realized they could take advantage of the necessity of a move to do something they’d been mulling over.

“We both loved log homes,” remembers Sue. “It seemed like it was time to take the leap.”

Jim, a commercial contractor, and Sue, a graphic designer, had built a house together before, so they had a good idea how

to go about it. After acquiring a piece of property large enough to prevent any future neighborly annoyances, the Schaefers took their designs to a few companies, settling on White Eagle Building Systems, a log provider and custom builder in Borden, Indiana.

“I wanted a company that knew what we have to deal with in this region of the country,” explains Jim. They also had the log package he and Sue were looking for: 12-inch milled Eastern pine square logs with dovetail joints.

“A customer can come to us and get any kind of log—whether it’s handcrafted or milled—or timber framing,” says White Eagle president Randall Gasper. “We can build one project that incorporates all

these things.”

The Schaefers, he remembers, arrived with a floorplan and pictures culled from magazines. White Eagle suggested some structural changes that would help keep costs down. As a contractor, Jim was impressed by the company, and when the logs arrived on schedule, the Schaefers couldn’t have been more pleased.

Then it started to rain...and rain...and rain. “It was actually the wettest November on record,” says Sue. Adds Jim, “We thought about building an ark out of our logs.”

Although, according to Jim, the logs were “so nice you could have used them to make furniture” when they arrived on-site, the relentless rain eventually discolored



The base for the dining room table was rescued from the scrap pile by Jim—it's the remains of an old oak tree cut down to make room for the pond. The copper tabletop was custom made to rest on the two 18-inch-thick pieces of oak.



ABOVE: The Schaefer's master bedroom includes a walkout deck and a wall of Bucks County Cultured Stone from Owens Corning, an idea that was inspired by a photograph the couple saw in *Log Home Living*.

RIGHT: While the couple used the same porcelain tiles in three rooms, they selected different colors of grout—tan for the master bath, and green in the kitchen and dining room—to draw out different tones in the richly textured tiles.





"It's kind of my retreat," Jim says of his office in the loft, which boasts a panoramic view of the family's 77-acre Kentucky property.

them. The weather also threw construction behind schedule and created additional headaches, including a hairy day when workers installed the great room's 400-pound triangular windows in a strong wind.

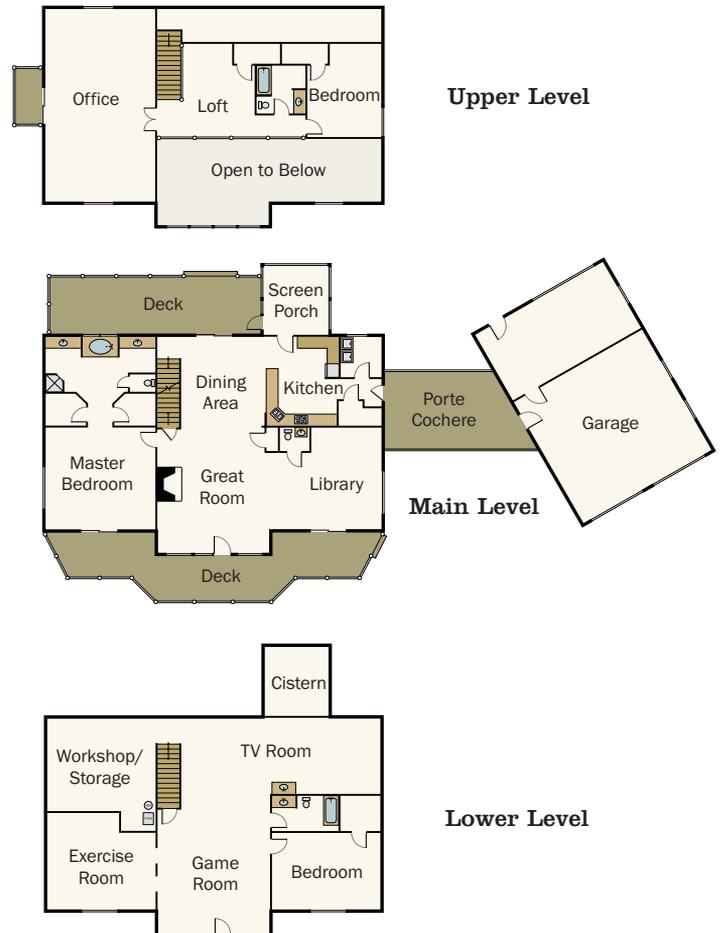
The Schaefers, who were doing their own finishing work, found themselves facing the arduous task of drying and bleaching the logs.

But it was out of those long hours of labor that a true love for their home was born.

"We got to know every nook and cranny," says Sue. "It was hard, but we kind of bonded with the house."

These days, the knotty pine walls look warm, clean and beautiful, and the Schaefers truly feel at home. "Was it worth it?" says Sue. "Gosh, yes. Knowing what we know now, we'd do it again."

But Jim hesitates. "We'd do it again," he chuckles, "but I'd build in the summer instead of the fall." 🏠



home details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 3,036

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: WHITE EAGLE BUILDING SYSTEMS

LOG PRODUCER: HONEST ABE LOG HOMES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 75