

*Perched atop a rocky bluff, a custom log home is fashioned with exhilarating views.*



## BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN BEAUTY

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**B**ARBECUE AND THE BLUES—WHAT A GREAT COMBINATION! In the city that calls itself the home of rock and roll, Memphis residents Mike and Linda Farrow have delighted in all its gracious hospitality for over 30 years.

The Farrowes have successfully created a comfortable lifestyle in this mid-Southern city where Mike is a financial consultant and Linda works part time in a law firm. But, while the city's dining and music scene are hot, the sticky summertime temperatures have caused Mike and Linda to look eastward for a periodic cool off.







Rising out of a steep slope, stone columns support the porch, the deck, and the back of the Farrow home.





**ABOVE:** The Mountain Air community, high in the North Carolina mountains northeast of Asheville, enjoys dramatic views and spectacular golf. **RIGHT:** The great room features a massive stone wall, which embraces a hearth, and log trusses running parallel to the windows that overlook the deck.

"Memphis is hot and that's one of the reasons we decided to look in North Carolina for a second home," says Mike. "I had always been interested in log homes and thought it would be fun to own one. We liked the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, and with Linda's mom living in nearby Asheville, it seemed like a logical place to start looking.

**T**heir search began around Cashiers and the Grandfather Mountain area. Ultimately, the family decided to go north of Asheville. "One Christmas, we came up from Memphis with one of our daughters and headed for a planned community called Mountain Air. It was snowing so hard we could hardly see two feet in front of us. Nev-

ertheless, our daughter pointed to a secluded lot at the end of a road that had a dramatically sloped drop off," says Mike. "Both the 4,300-foot elevation and beauty of the area seemed like an ideal location. We immediately put a down payment on the site."

Property in hand, the Farrowes went to a log home show where they perused various log home manufacturers. "Town & Country Cedar Homes [of Petoskey, Mich.] impressed us, as did their materials and general attitude," says Linda. Town & Country connected the Farrowes to architect Don Wilson, who also happens to be one of their North Carolina distributors.

"We talked to Don for months," says Mike. "Don was patient since Linda would add a











**ABOVE:** Log joists support a tongue-and-groove ceiling in a kitchen that offers all the modern conveniences. Beyond is a breakfast table. **RIGHT:** The dining area is just off the great room and was sited to take advantage of the fabulous view. In all, the Farrow home has four levels, with two levels of outdoor space.

couple of feet one way, then notice that the house might be lopsided so she'd add a couple of feet on the other side. We tweaked the plans considerably, and sought a builder. After interviewing several, we ended up with Harley Stewart, a fantastic gentleman."

Architect Wilson suggested a home showcasing four-levels with over 4,829 square feet of space to maximize the outstanding site and view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. "I basically spent hours on the site envisioning this house. The 70 percent slope and huge limestone boulders were inherent in the home's orientation. Add the view and all the topography—and that's what drove the design of this home."

For example, from the exterior rear exposure, Wilson designed eight cultured-stone pilasters that climb 32 feet from grade to the main deck. "Don really was thinking when he designed these supports," says Linda. "Not only are they structurally important but their

beauty is enhanced by copper tops. In the summer they are flower planters and in the winter they are topped with a pretty copper cap."

In October 1998, a 12-inch-thick concrete wall was poured for the crawl space. Because keeping the rock outcroppings was integral, steel pins were used to secure the foundation to the rock. "It went reasonably well given that the crew had to contend with the cold and wind that hampered excavation initially," says Wilson.

The Farrows' package included everything but the kitchen cabinets, front door, flooring, and drywall. The 11 loads of pre-cut white cedar logs were shipped from Town & Country's office in Michigan. In addition, they also sent an assistant to help Harley with scribing the logs.

"The crew was just fantastic," says Linda. "We really enjoyed watching Harley and his six workmen take pleasure in crafting this

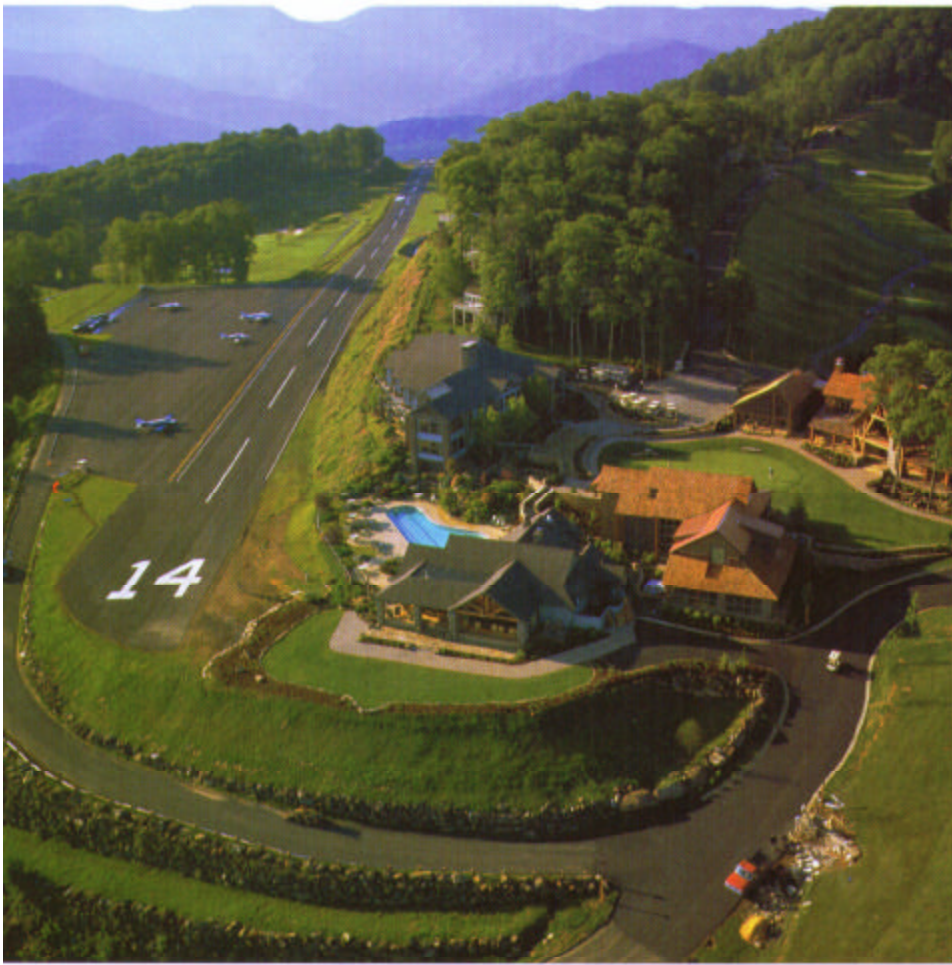




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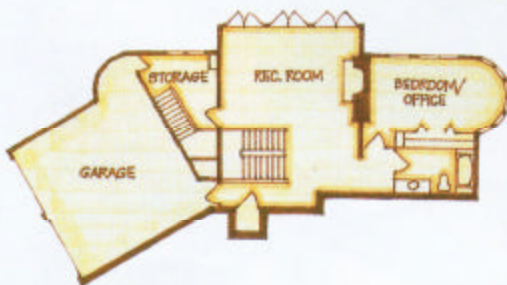
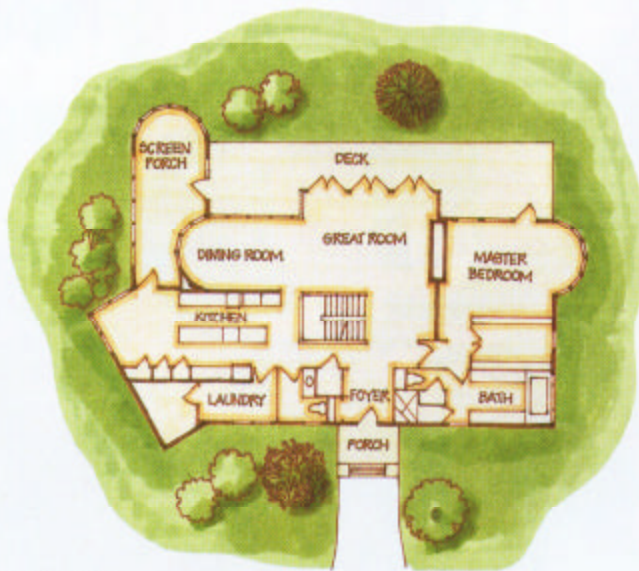






**ABOVE:** A runway at Mountain Air can accommodate small aircraft.

**RIGHT:** The master bedroom is near the great room and has its own door to the deck.



home. These people took enormous pride in what they were doing. Linda and I came up as often as we could, probably once a month, to see the progress," adds Mike.

There were no hitches in the two-year venture as the house took shape. There were, however, changes as the building evolved. Mike says that Linda suggested they change the size of the master bedroom closet, which was scaled down. "We also added a walk-through loft for the three bedrooms upstairs. Actually, we wanted as much log as possible to show throughout the home. There's very





little drywall except for my study, and even at that there's just drywall up to the chair rail," says Mike.

**W**ilson designed the house logically, with maximum attention to functional space. With the garage on the lower level, you enter into a slate-floored recreation room adjoining a steam room and Mike's study. One flight up, the main level boasts heart-of-pine floors and houses the great room, kitchen, dining room, master bedroom, and porch. Lining the back of the house are expan-

sive windows. "We did add windows, or I should say, French doors, which allow easy access to the deck and of course enhance the view," says Linda.

But it's the 27-by-12-foot porch poised, as if suspended in midair, on the main level that attracts considerable attention. "If you ask anyone on the mountain if they have seen the Farrow house, they say, "Oh you mean the one with the fabulous porch?" It is the most famous porch at Mountain Air," says Don Wilson. The view from the screened-in porch, which is cantilevered out from the kitchen,

offers 100-mile views, clear to Cashiers, NC.

Wilson said he didn't want a dangerous, sloping driveway. "As it exists now, there's a 45-foot walk up to the front door from the garage. On the interior lower level, there's a 12-foot vertical stair climb to the main level, then another 12-foot staircase to the three bedrooms on the home's upper level. For easy grocery unloading, Linda and Mike chose to have an elevator going through all levels of the house," says Wilson.

Considering that the home is relatively new, the couple has only spent a fraction of time











**ABOVE:** The screened porch off the deck affords dramatic, insect-free views as well as an informal setting for meals and snacks. **OPPOSITE:** The great room has easy access not only to the stairs but also to the dining area and kitchen.

here. Linda is still in the process of adding tasteful furnishings in warm jewel tones coupled with tailored accents. In the meantime, when they are in residence, they've found that the propane forced-air heat does an admirable job of keeping the house warm in the mountain's damp, winter climate. For summer, they anticipate having the windows open and allowing the mountain breezes to keep the home cool, though they did install air conditioning for the really hot days and nights.

**T**he entire house exposes considerable honey-colored logs, which is what the Farrow's wanted. The 7-inch logs are 2 to 3 inches in depth and are applied to the siding on both the interior and exterior walls. Town & Country employs a post-and-sill con-

struction system, whereby foam insulation is inserted between split-log sections attached to vertical posts. The split logs are kiln dried. "We figure there's approximately 11 percent moisture content when the logs are shipped and assembled on site," says Wilson.

One of the most important factors in this home is the dramatic use of trusses, purlins, and rafters. The entire second floor has exposed purlins and rafters, which accent the tongue-and-groove ceilings throughout the home. "You can see the effect dramatically on the upstairs loft walkway, looking up toward the rafters on the ceiling then looking down into the great room, again showing off all the log structure," says Mike.

Another notable feature is the radial bays incorporated into the design of the dining

room, porch, Mike's study, and master bedroom. "It's this attention to detail, from the custom, blue-stained kitchen cabinets and granite countertops to the heart-of-pine flooring, that makes this house so special," says Wilson.

"The Mountain Air community is really a pleasure," says Mike. "It's a good place for hiking, golf, entertaining, and retreat from living as usual. We spent our first Christmas here last year and we intend to do that again this year and hopefully for many years to come." ■

**LOG HOME PRODUCER:** Town & Country Cedar Homes, Petoskey, Michigan; **BUILDER:** Harley Stewart, Harley's Woodworks, Barnardsville, North Carolina.