



A Midsummer DAY'S DREAM

For Peter and Paulette Graves, building a second home in northern Michigan was a labor of love. And, like many such labors, it took time, patience, and a dedicated team of helpers—in this case, an exceptional log home design and building crew.

“We enjoy all the water sports, especially boating,” says Peter. So when the opportunity to buy a shore property on Lake Charlevoix came along, Peter and his wife were delighted.

“We’d been going up there in summer for years, either to Charlevoix or another big lake,” says Paulette. Now they had an opportunity to build a perfect summer place, and it would certainly be a log house. As Peter says, “There’s a warm feeling to logs and we’re big on fireplaces.” Knowing pretty much what they wanted, the couple sketched a few ideas.

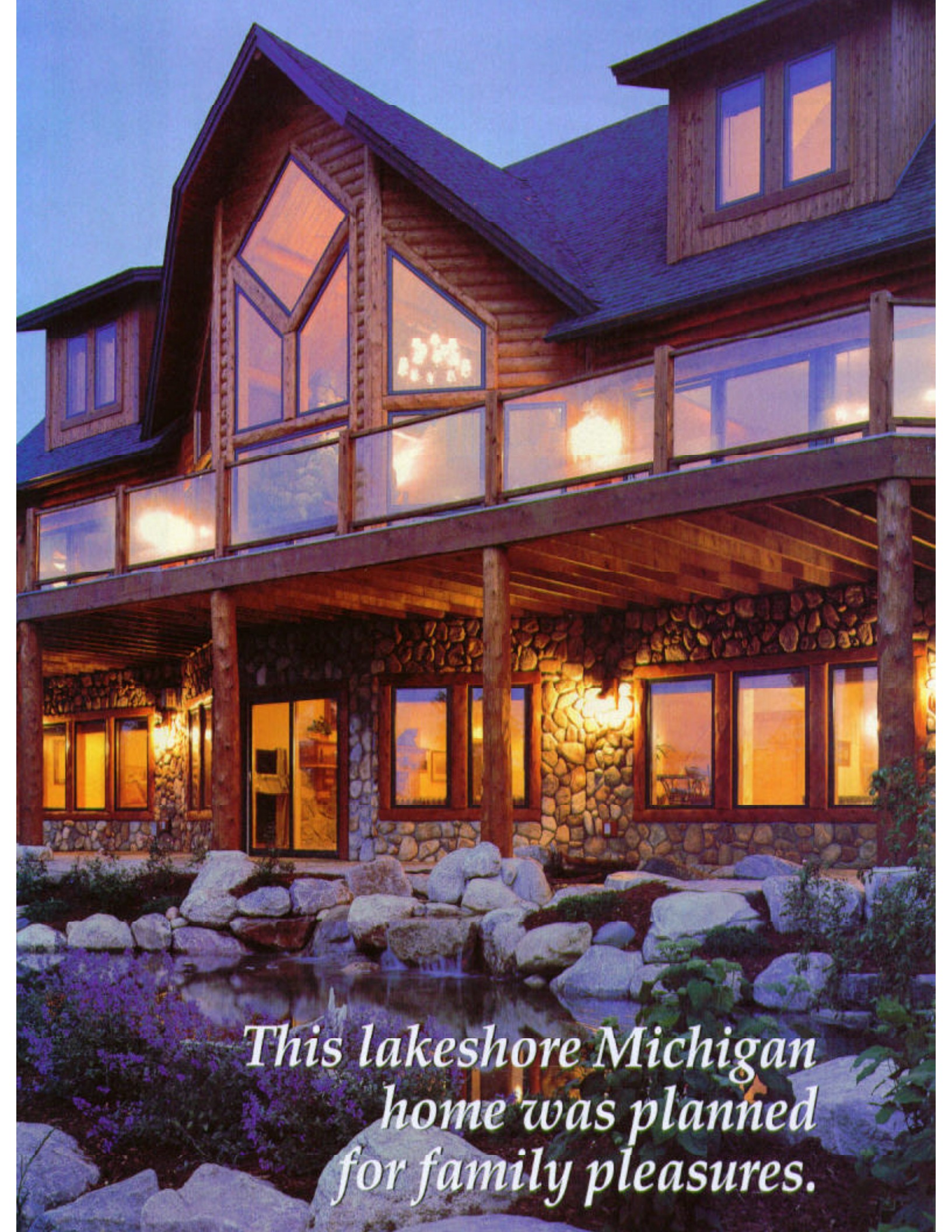
Finding the right log home producer to do the entire job was a necessity, considering the distance from northern Michigan to their home base at the time, a four-hour drive away. Following a friend’s recommendation, they visited a model at Town & Country Cedar Homes and knew they’d found a good match. One of the company’s design managers, Doug Boor, was ready to handle everything from site preparation to the preliminary design to the finished home.

LORETTA NOVICK
PHOTOS *by* ROGER WADE | STYLING *by* DEBRA GRAHL



The lakeside façade provides a backdrop for an ornamental rock-bordered pond.

LEFT TOP: Hand-hewn cedar stair posts and railings blend with the warm elegance of the great room.



This lakeshore Michigan home was planned for family pleasures.

RIGHT: An efficient kitchen features custom alder cabinetry, state-of-the-art appliances, and plenty of workspace.

FAR RIGHT: Breakfast at the bar is served in an attractive setting that combines warm-toned woods and slate flooring.

BELOW: A perfect table setting comes with nonstop views of the lake, trees, and sky.





The design phase itself went through several stages, beginning with two of Town & Country's existing plans, to which the Graves made changes and added amenities. Meanwhile, site preparation had to be dealt with.

According to Doug Booz, who has a background in forestry, the first look at the property was of snow-covered, low-lying ground with 100 feet of shoreline. "There was a lot of water sheeting between the clay layers of the subsoil. We overdug for the foundation and laid a tube to divert water beyond." Other steps were taken to channel water through what would become, with the aid of expert landscaper Bob Drost, a model of aesthetic engineering. Today, on the 550-foot-deep lot, a series of waterfalls leads to a large pond set between the lakefront façade and the lake. The total picture adds enormously to the home's attractions.

The house itself grew into a three-story design with four bedrooms and three-and-a-half bathrooms plus decks and a front porch. With Town & Country's Don Neill as onsite project manager, the construction proceeded smoothly. By the fall of 2003, the 5,400-square-foot

house was ready, and guests were invited for a special Christmas.

The home's exterior combines hand-hewn cedar log siding and cedar shingles with stone. An applied finish that takes on a different tone with each material enhances the overall look. Inside the house, log walls harmonize with drywall, cedar moldings, tongue-and-groove paneling, and log rafters to create a warm, gracious setting.

Everyone agrees that this is a home intended for family gatherings, which now include three generations. The welcome begins on a curving driveway bordered by several varieties of spruce and pine and leads to a large parking area. Steps away from the ample three-car garage (it accommodates a 21-foot ski boat plus two cars) is an inviting front porch with a stone-framed arched entry. Open the door to the foyer and there is an unimpeded view of the lake, trees, and sky across the great room through the wide wall of windows.

The adjoining master bedroom suite was planned with a few special touches, including his and her walk-in closets. In the master bathroom, separate sinks are set in individual granite-topped counters. Sliding glass doors lead to the lake-view deck, assuring plenty of daylight in the for-



This bright, comfortable great room with its fieldstone fireplace is an invitation to complete relaxation.

mally decorated bedroom. The Graves credit interior decorator Vicky Grinnell with supplying many of the notably handsome furnishings. For example, on the window wall, swagged valances frame the view, and a figured molding over the king-size bed suggests a mini-canopy.

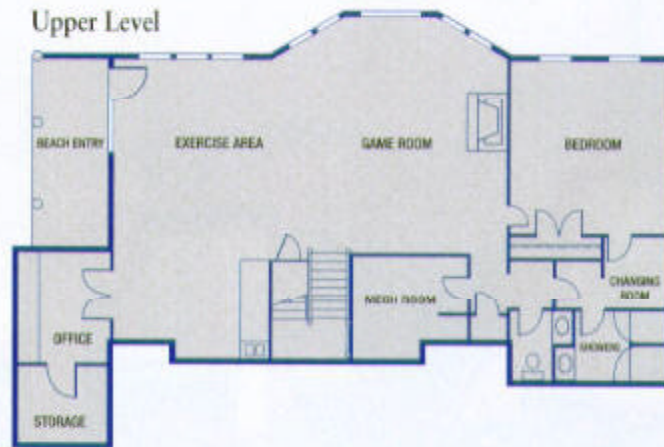
In the great room, a wood-burning fireplace sets the scene for social events with friends and extended family. With six children and a growing number of grandchildren, Paulette and Peter can plan on frequent family visits. A wise decision to limit TV viewing to other

rooms makes this great room an ideal place for relaxation and conversation. Doors to the deck were deliberately set off to the side to maintain the room's sense of tranquility. The wide fireplace of Michigan fieldstone is accented with a sturdy log mantel. Sofas, armchairs, and upholstered benches are all placed close to the warming hearth. (For TV, games, and exercise options, there's a sizable recreation room directly below.)

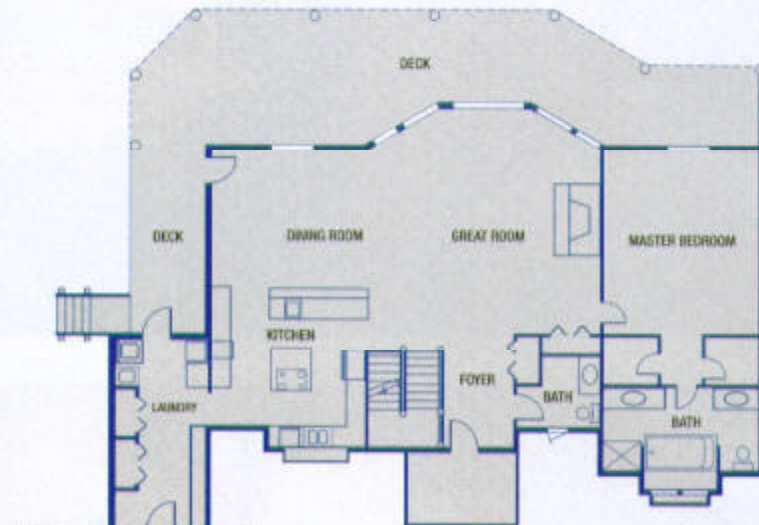
Open to the great room is an airy dining room, a breakfast counter, and a state-of-the-art kitchen. The dining table is placed to maximize



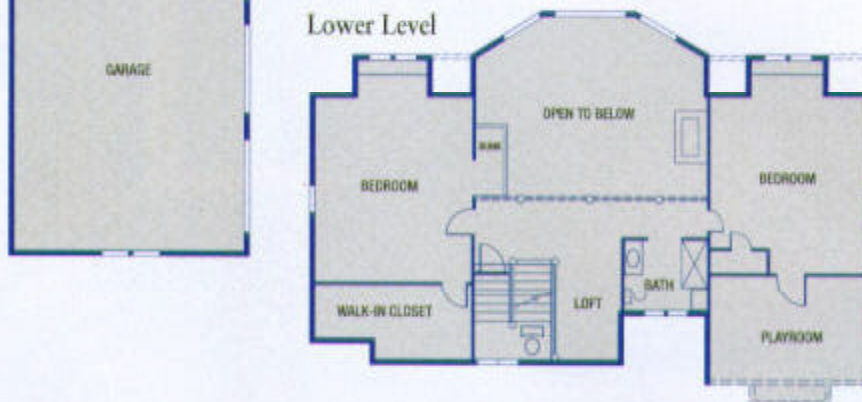
Upper Level



Main Level



Lower Level



grand lake views through windows on two sides. In the kitchen, granite counters, custom alder cabinets, and a Sub-Zero refrigerator make for an elegant, efficient workplace. "But the best thing about the kitchen," says Paulette, "is I can be at the stove and have a gorgeous view of sailboats out on the lake." A laundry room, pantry, and extra closet connect the kitchen and garage.

Upstairs, where a loft overlooks the great room below, Paulette, a retired teacher, has a small office. Two lake-view bedrooms and a full bathroom also occupy this upper level. Extra delights for young guests

came from the Town & Country design team, who created a 10-by-12-foot carpeted playroom off one bedroom and a 4-by-7-foot, built-in bunk in the other. Separate areas for sleeping and play activities plus thick, sound-filtering bedroom doors were important design considerations.

A combination of rusticity and formality works well throughout the house. In the foyer, the stair-posts have a flare-bottom tree trunk base as though growing from the ground, and overhead a multilight chandelier casts its glow on a period armchair. Slate floors in the kitchen, dining room, and foyer offer durability and good looks, while com-



ABOVE: In the formal master bedroom, there's an unobstructed view of the lake across the deck and its glass "fence."

RIGHT: A true conversation piece, this unusual stone basin is fitted onto a wood counter in the powder room.

LEFT TOP: The downstairs family room offers a wide-open choice of games, exercise, or sitting by the fire.



comfortable carpeting was chosen for most of the other rooms. In the powder room, an unusual basin of heavy stone was fitted onto an old-fashioned wood vanity.

Temperatures at this latitude can easily drop to zero in winter so, although the house is mostly used in summer, there's an adequate heating system for year-round use. The gas forced-air heat runs on propane stored in a 2,000-gallon underground tank installed near the road. In case of a power failure, the Graves can rely on a generator in the nearby woods, which also runs on propane gas. Air-conditioning is also available when needed.

On the lower level, a recreation room has been equipped with gear for all ages, from pool and card tables to a treadmill and large-screen TV. Its most unique feature is the scenic mantelpiece above the fireplace, carved by a Utah craftsman. There's also a mini-kitchen with a refrigerator and microwave. Glass doors open to a close-up view of the rock-bordered ornamental pond and its rainbow trout, fed by a recirculating water system.

level also has space for many other uses. Besides storage and mechanicals, one room was planned as Peter's office. Another, specifically

designed for beach-goers, is equipped with two shower stalls, two sinks, lockers, and benches. An extra bedroom is large enough to hold three queen-size beds.

During the home's long summer use, from June to mid-October, outdoor living gets full play. The glass "fence" along the main floor deck works not only to guarantee unobstructed views of the water, but also serves as a windbreak when stiff breezes blow in off the lake. The family powerboat can take guests to Lake Michigan and beyond, or they can go the waterski route close to home. The log house is the family center, the gathering place.

"We waited nearly 20 years to build our log home," Peter says. "We got a lot of creative input and real dedication from the builders." Although most of the year is now spent in Arizona, future plans include the likelihood of more Christmases at the lakeshore house, perhaps in alternate years. They will, of course, be big family events. ♣

LOG HOME PRODUCER AND BUILDER: Town & Country Cedar Homes, Petoskey, Michigan.