

At Home In H

A photograph of a log home with a stone and log exterior, surrounded by trees and landscaping. The house features a combination of light-colored stone masonry and dark wood log siding. Large windows and a covered porch area are visible. The property is landscaped with several tall, thin trees, yellow flowers, and large rocks in the foreground.

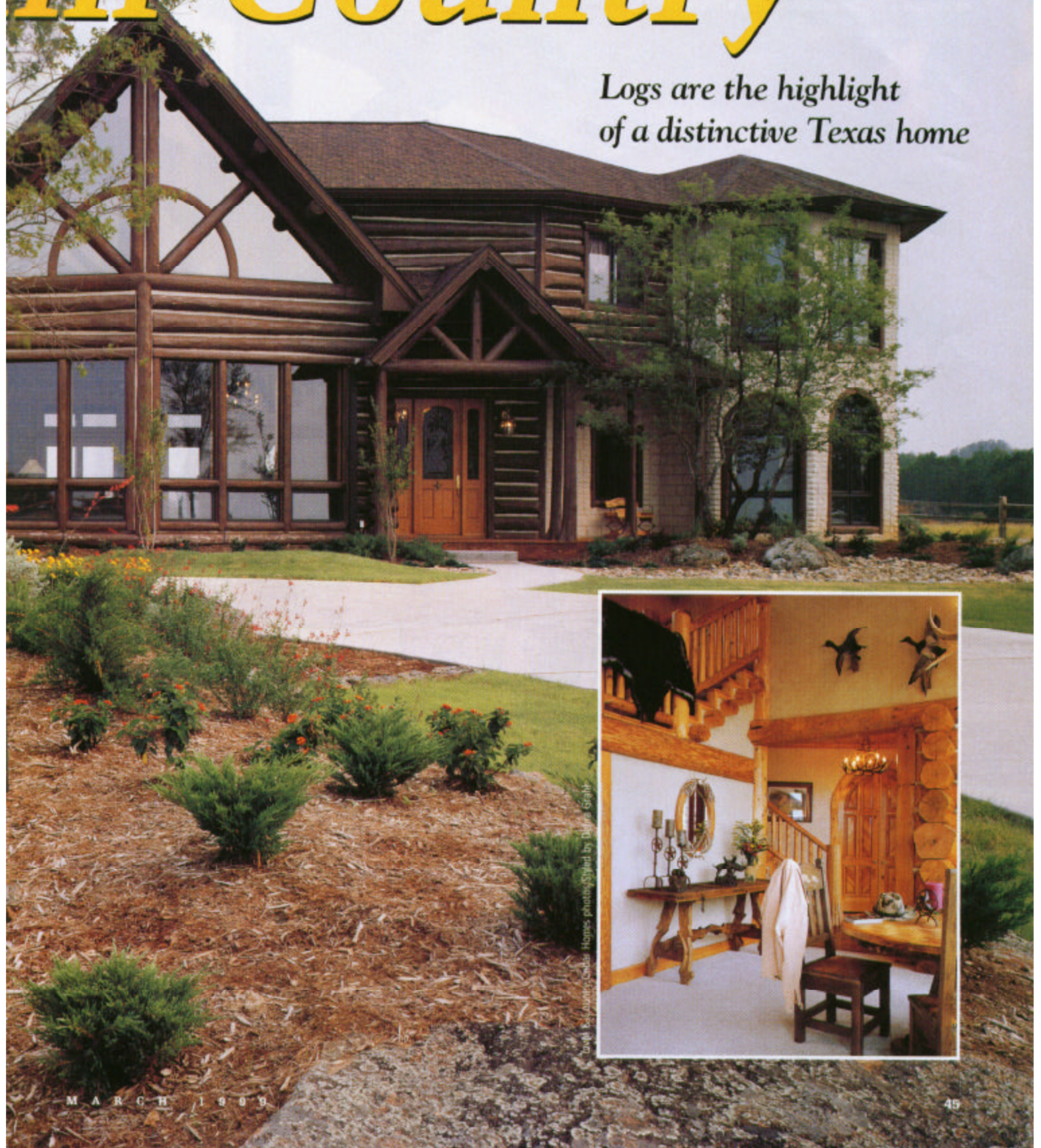
*Story by Cathy Nelson Price
Photography by Roger Wade*

Austin, Texas, is not known as log home country. Timber is scarce, and the sun is unforgiving. But Griff and Sandra Thomas weren't about to let such minor inconveniences keep them from building the log home they had envisioned.

Their distinctive Llano County home, which blends Southwest style with the warmth and charm of cedar logs, was a challenge for the builder, the designers and even the owners.

Mill Country

Logs are the highlight
of a distinctive Texas home



Log trusses add drama to the great room. Opposite: Half-logs applied to some of the interior walls give the home a full-log look. Opposite below: Sandra, a gourmet cook, designed a professional-quality kitchen with panoramic views.





Not only was the climate not log-friendly, there was a definite lack of log home builders in the area. A neighbor referred them to Town & Country Cedar Homes, based in Petoskey, Michigan. "That was on a Sunday," Sandra recalls. "Monday morning at eight o'clock I called them and said, 'I don't know anything about you, but this is what we want.'"

Griff, a surgeon, and Sandra, a pediatrician, had definite ideas for the look of their dream home, and "this is what we want" became the guiding phrase in the months of construction that followed. Town & Country design consultant Doug Boor, who worked closely with the Thomases, remembers the tenacity with which the couple held onto their concept. Although some lively discussions erupted along the way, Doug believes the end result benefits everyone. "They got what they wanted, and the blend of stone and logs and Southwestern architecture is a great new opportunity for the log home industry."

Town & Country Cedar Homes usually pre-cuts roof and structural components at its Petoskey



Drywall and a trio of arch-top windows make the master bedroom into an elegant sanctuary.





plants, but the Thomases' house also required a radial bay extension, which became the breakfast nook, and a cathedral ceiling for the great room, where the rafters converge in hub-like fashion.

The company specializes in panelized wall systems; the Thomases chose exterior walls with insulation sandwiched between half-log siding. The result is a full-log look.

The white cedar logs came from Michigan's Upper Peninsula and the surrounding areas. "We've found that the stability and durability of cedar makes for less call-backs and problems with homes that we've built," Doug explains. The logs were kiln-dried, which helps minimize the amount of shrinkage and, thus, movement. "The Thomases are busy people; they don't need to be worried about future maintenance," Doug says. "We wanted to give them as much selection and preparation as we could provide."

To deal with the scarcity of timber in their area, the Thomases combined local white limestone with hand-hewn logs on the exterior. Since the hot Texas sun tends to break down stain on logs, the southern and western exposures have the fewest logs. Porch and eave extensions shield the exposed west wall. Even the log-filled great room is protected by the roof overhang.

For these two busy doctors, parents of three young children, the home is both a retreat from office stress and a center for family life. The interior, which Sandra designed, promotes easy traffic flow as well as privacy. On entering the great room with its 28 1/2-foot ceiling, the dining wing is visible to the left, with the master bedroom wing to the right. Upstairs, the balcony leads to bedrooms for Hunter, 10, Lana, 8, and Mason, 2, as well as to two baths, including a shared bath between the older two children's rooms. All the bedrooms and the master bath have floor-to-ceiling windows.

Sandra's ideas were not run-of-the-mill by any means. "I was pretty adamant about the features I wanted: some drywall, some brick and masonry," she says. "I wanted my fancy dining room because I entertain," she explains. "I wanted a kitchen with circumferential views, and they said, 'No, you can't do that in kitchens; you have to have cabinets.' " She got both. But visitors to the home are the real winners; Sandra is a gourmet chef, and family and friends can enjoy her delicious dishes while admiring the spectacular views of Lake Buchanan, Long Mountain, Lake LBJ and the surrounding valley.

Griff, an avid hunter, and Sandra, a fisher, needed room in the great room for their trophies. The lighter trophies, such as fish and ducks, adorn the leather-look drywall. The log and

Right: A log bed and heavy wood window trim carry the home's rustic feel into a guest bedroom. Below: Tiles surround the master bath's luxurious tub.



stone walls are peppered with a variety of mammal mounts.

The kitchen and breakfast rooms feature octagonal Mexican saltillo tile. The home has gas heat. Both fireplaces, one in the great room and one in the family room, are wood-burning, with gas jets as backup.

One difficulty the Thomases faced was getting enough light in the house, in the right places. With the assistance of local decorator Carol Stine, they chose fan and light combinations for most rooms, in a variety of styles to match each rooms' decor.

In the future, the Thomases plan to extend the porch outside the kitchen area, to make room for a hot tub. A powder room accessible from both the house and the planned hot tub is already in place.

But first they're taking some time off. Designing and building this house took a lot of time. "But we were impressed with Town & Country from the moment we toured their facility and watched as they stripped the logs by hand," Sandra says. "They showed us every house they could so we could see the different features available. They were so willing to make ours a unique home."



NOTEBOOK

Log package price: \$289,000
(approximate)

Square footage: 4,272

Log producer: Town & Country Cedar Homes
Architect: Stephen J. Kramer Architecture and Design

Builder: Patland Construction

Cabinetry: Price's Custom Cabinets

Doors: M.R. Custom Doors

Entry chandelier: Arte de Mexico

Game room chandelier: Antler Designs

Interior decorator: Designs by Carol

Landscaping: Verdigris Landscape Designs

Living room furniture: Hill Country Lodge

Log furniture: Hill Country Living

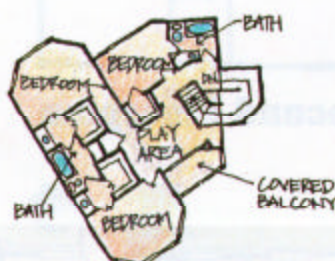
Masonry: Martinez Masonry

Sealant: Sashco Sealants

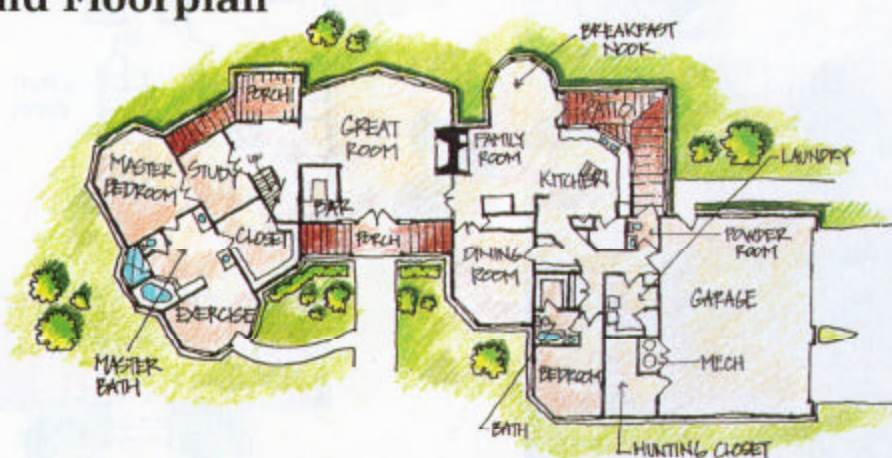
Windows: Pozzi Wood Windows

For contact information, see Resources.

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Second Floorplan



First Floorplan

Deep red walls in the formal dining room create a dramatic backdrop for the sparkling chandelier.