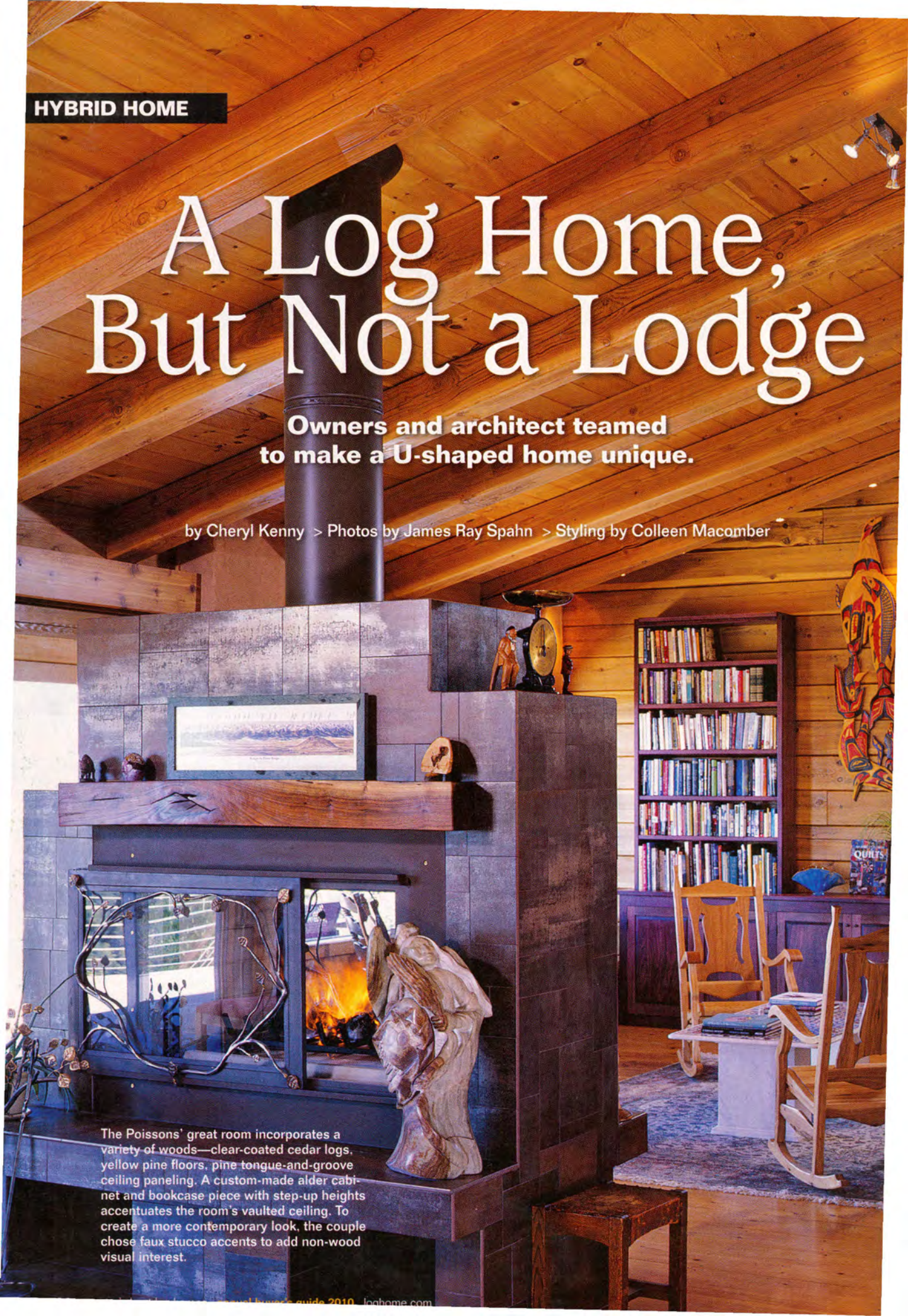
A Log Home, But Not a Lodge

Owners and architect teamed to make a U-shaped home unique.

by Cheryl Kenny > Photos by James Ray Spahn > Styling by Colleen Macomber



The Poissons' great room incorporates a variety of woods—clear-coated cedar logs, yellow pine floors, pine tongue-and-groove ceiling paneling. A custom-made alder cabinet and bookcase piece with step-up heights accentuates the room's vaulted ceiling. To create a more contemporary look, the couple chose faux stucco accents to add non-wood visual interest.

Architect Matt Franklin knew a conventional square or rectangular home wouldn't give Michael and Becky Poisson what they wanted. The retired couple had asked him to design a home that "brought the outdoors in." A box shape with living areas around the perimeters wouldn't integrate the outdoors with the interior spaces.

So Matt, lead architect with Mountain Architects, the design arm of PrecisionCraft Log & Timber Homes, chose a different angle. "Instead, we stretched the house into a U-shape with a courtyard so that all major rooms visually connect to the exterior on two or three sides, with fantastic views from multiple directions," he explains.

The Poissons' second request was that the home be "log, but not lodge." So, on the outside, the home evokes Frank Lloyd Wright. A shed roofline rises to more than 14 feet along the 36-square-foot courtyard formed by bedroom wings on two sides and the connecting entry hall in the middle. Guests in the courtyard can see through the foyer and great room to a breathtaking panorama of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The architect started with PrecisionCraft's Joshua Tree model, which has a Southwest feel and formed the basis for the greatly altered, customized design. "This was not the most cost-efficient way to design, but it is the best design to relate to the outdoors,"

The Poissons used three NanaWall door systems in the great room so that they could easily walk out onto their 13-by-80-foot deck and to maximize the view from the inside. The deck, built with Trex decking, is bordered by custom railings made from square steel posts and stainless steel tension cables strung horizontally. The 6-inch-wide steel railing tops serve two purposes: They are large enough to provide safety, and to accommodate a plate or glass during outside entertaining.

Matt says. "We tried to keep the form of the house clean and simple with a Southwest flair that uses a lot of courtyard space."

Inside, the Poissons have included a combination of new and old furniture pieces that range from formal to rustic to reflect their travels and their individual personalities. The kitchen, Becky's favorite place and where Michael indulges his love of cooking, features grape-stained cabinets that complement the mauve faux-stucco walls and pink tones of the concrete, apron-front sink. The island, where "cook's helpers" sit on tractor seats, was built with reclaimed barn boards.

The kitchen's rustic feel contrasts, but does not clash, with the formal elements in the dining area, including a classic woven silk rug from India, a substantial 18th-century oak table that seats 12 and a chandelier of hand-blown glass made in Hawaii.

The main level includes master and mother-in-law bedroom suites—Becky's mother lives with the couple—and a step-down great room. A lower-level walkout houses Becky's 1,200-square-foot quilting studio, a guest bedroom and a media room.

The dining area (right) is a mix of new and old, formal and rustic, and was specifically designed to accommodate the Poissons' large, late-18th-century oak dining table. The recycled pine floor contrasts nicely with hand-woven silk rug bought by Becky in India. The glass chandelier and wall sconces were hand-blown in Hawaii.

The gourmet kitchen is one of Becky's favorite spots and features shades of mauve and purple. The cabinets have knotty alder doors finished with a grape stain, picking up the pink hues in the faux-stucco walls and the concrete, apron-front sink. The countertops are granite. Michael, who enjoys cooking, keeps his collection of olive oils (top left) above the eight-burner stovetop and a tile wall mural of trout in a stream.

The foyer has connecting hallways to the bedroom suites on each side. "These circulating spaces—the hallways—are celebrated as gallery areas and are an important element of the design," Matt notes. The foyer, which steps down into the great room, also reflects the couple's use of different textures and materials. Its polished concrete floor complements the beige adobe half-walls topped by black maple planks and cedar log columns. Four-foot tall fountains made from locally quarried stone flank the glass-paneled, pine entry door. The hand-blown light above the door is from the Strini Art Glass in Hawaii, as are most of the home's light fixtures.

All of this multi-styled approach is found inside a log structure. The package of 10-inch-diameter, D-shaped cedar logs was provided by PrecisionCraft and built by Mark Stamper Construction. To tone down the overwhelming look and feel of wood throughout and to create a more contemporary appearance, the Poissons added framed, rectangular columns with a stucco look. The architect agreed with the approach. "Log is versatile, and this design shows you can mix it with other materials so that the logs are a part of the home and not the only element you look at," Matt says.

The great room features unusual, accordion-style, NanaWall glass doors that open to the deck for an unobstructed view. A freestanding, two-sided fireplace went through four rebuilds before the homeowner and builder found a size that wouldn't overpower the room. It divides the sitting and dining areas. The fireplace pays homage to Michael's passion for fly fishing and to the couple's last name: Poisson is the French word for fish. So the tile is a design by interior designer Jan Neiges that features a fossil fish.

An accent wall of vertically hung, recycled barn board (top) creates a backdrop for artwork in the Poissons' master bedroom. Becky made both the quilt wall hanging and the quilt on the bed.

The mother-in-law suite (above) features a bright palette of lemon yellow, cantaloupe orange and tequila sunrise rose, accentuated by the wall quilt Becky's mother made.

A California poppy stained glass (left) the Poissons have owned for 30 years hangs above a Japanese soaking tub. Custom porcelain tiling was done by the Poissons' friend, Ron Hichenbottom.

The cedar logs received a Lifetime stain on the exterior to give them a weathered look. The house, which sits on 38 wooded acres, has a roof constructed with structural insulated panels topped with blue metal roofing.

"The home is extremely eclectic, a showcase for the Poissons' diverse interests," the designer says. "We even designed nooks and niches to highlight their Inuit art and Becky's handmade quilts."

The couple's overall goal for the home was that it be a reflection of them, their values and their tastes, "as well as warm and inviting," says Michael, a longtime Californian before he retired to Colorado. The home mixes what Becky calls "smiley" colors with different textures and materials, from polished concrete floors in the foyer to adobe half-walls with cedar columns in the great room. Artistic touches include an adobe Mountain View mural in the great room and a tiled trout mural that hangs below Michael's collection of olive oils in the kitchen.

"Becky and Michael are very creative," Mark adds. "They let this home morph into a truly custom home." **CBLH**

First Floor

Basement

RESOURCES

Square footage: 5,900, including 700-square-foot garage

 # Bedrooms: 3

 # Bathrooms: 3.5

Log species: Cedar

Log provider: PrecisionCraft Log & Timber Homes, Meridian, ID (800-729-1320; precisioncraft.com). Circle 033 on the Reader Service Card between pages 112–113 for more information.

Architect: Mountain Architects, Inc., Meridian, ID (800-729-1320; mtnarchitects-loghomes.com)

Builder/general contractor; stairs: Mark Stamper Construction, Westcliffe, CO (719-284-1248; markastamperconstruction.com)

Cabinetry: DeWils Cabinets (dewils.com)

Chinking: Mel Todisco, Rocky Mountain Chinking, Westcliffe, CO (719-783-9226)

Custom bookcases; mantels: Bernie Hutterer, Plane Furniture, Westcliffe, CO (719-783-3706)

Doors; windows: Mariposa Window and Door, Salida, CO (800-539-7066; mariposawindow.com)

Flooring: Carlisle Wide Plank Floors (800-595-9663; wideplankflooring.com)

Fossil tiles: Green River Stone Company, Plymouth, MN (763-551-0001; greenriverstone.com)

Interior designer: Jan Neiges, The Kitchen & Bath Studio, Centennial, CO (303-771-5910; thekbstudio.com)

Landscape: Robert Seefried, RAS Landscape Design, Westcliffe, CO (719-783-4255)

Lighting: Strini Art Glass, Maui, HI (808-579-8500; striniartglass.com)

Masonry: Tim Hershberger, Tri Country Masonry, Westcliffe, CO (719-783-9535)

Railings: Custom Woodworks & Metal Craft, Strafford, MO (719-371-4966; customwoodworksandmetalcraft.com)

Rocking chairs: Jerry Brown, Westcliffe, CO (719-783-2756; coloradorockingchairs.com)

Stucco: Adobe Builders, Westcliffe, CO (719-783-3577)

Wall system: NanaWall System, Mill Valley, CA (800-873-5673; nanawall.com)

A rustic pergola, built with spruce log columns taken from the property and topped with Douglas fir timbers, invites guests into the entry courtyard. Steps of stone slabs from a local quarry lead to a glass paneled, pine double door. Above the door is a carved Native American eagle that the Poissons brought from their California home. Michael, an avid fly fisherman, was lured to Westcliffe, Colorado, by its dry, sunny weather and 700 miles of riverways and lakes.