



The family enjoys views of the surrounding mountains from any one of the cabin's many covered patios and spacious wrap-around porch.



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WALERIE PICKERT

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# LUXE LOG CABIN

The sprawling wooded estates built by Gilded Age magnates on the lakeshores of upstate New York inspired a family retreat in the Virginia mountains.

*by Samantha Hoback*

When Valerie Pickert and her husband Steve began planning for their mountain home, they looked to the Great Camps of upstate New York for inspiration.

"Steve and I both love Blue Ridge log cabin architecture as well as the rustic Adirondack style of construction that dates back to the Great Camp days," says Valerie. "So we tried to combine both for our Virginia home design."

At the beginning of the 20th century, America's most illustrious families—the Vanderbilts, Astors, Guggenheims and Rockefellers—purchased lavish rustic retreats in the Adirondack Mountains.

Sagamore, situated on the shores of Raquette Lake, was home to Alfred G. Vanderbilt and boasted a tennis court, bowling alley, schoolhouse, six guest sleeping cottages and a boathouse. William Avery Rockefeller's camp, called The Point, sits on a 10-acre peninsula in the

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1. The home is situated on roughly 90 acres.
2. Reclaimed wood makes a rustic yet elegant statement.
3. Modern appliances balance out the other rustic features.



Besides being sprawling, multi-building complexes for the rich and famous, the Great Camp estates shared a unique architectural style that incorporated native timber and stone. They were at once luxurious and rustic, built to blend into their surroundings.



The kitchen features a farm sink, large multiple-burner stove, and painted cabinets that give the space a sense of charm and sophistication.

Saranac Lake and functions today as a luxury resort.

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Valerie and Steve Pickert's home brings a sense of rustic luxury to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, where they both grew up and still have family. "I have a sister in Charlottesville," Valerie says. "My mother graduated from Randolph Macon, and my father went to UVA, as did our oldest son and two cousins."

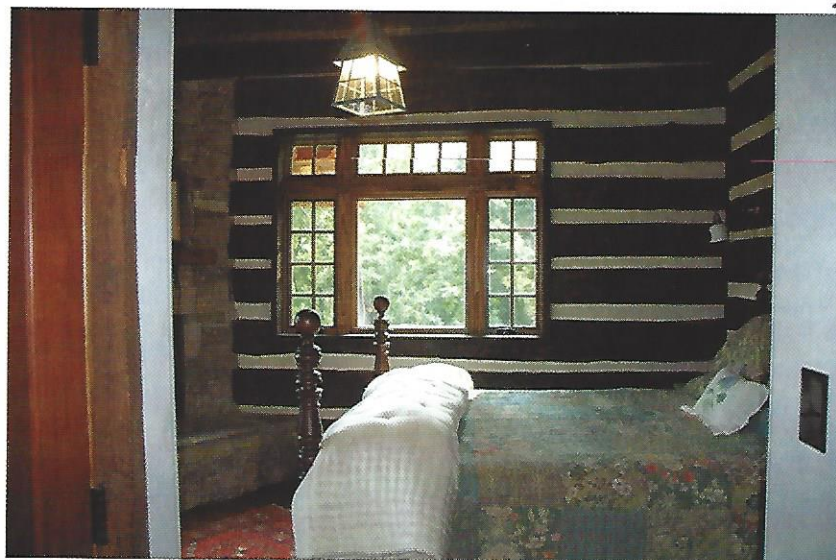
It took a long time before they found the right piece of land on which to build their home.

"We looked for at least five years," she says. "We love it because of the incredible mountain view, the rolling pasture which has recently been

#### WHO BUILT IT?

- » **Artisan Construction, Inc.**  
Charlottesville, VA
- » **Woodson Parish, Architect**  
Charlottesville, VA
- » **Appalachian Antique Hardwoods**  
Waynesville, NC
- » **Deibert Masonry**  
Ivy, VA
- » **Joe Sheridan**  
Waynesboro, VA
- » **Jessica Primm Landscape Design**  
Charlottesville, VA
- » **Grelen Nursery, Inc.**  
Somerset, VA





With three bedrooms and three-and-a-half bathrooms, the cabin is the perfect home for the Pickert's extended family.

planted with a small vineyard, the creek and dense woods, perfect for carving trails."

The house, completed in 2010, sits on 90 acres just outside of Charlottesville and consists of three

bedrooms, three-and-a-half bathrooms, several outdoor balconies and a bluestone terrace overlooking the valley and mountains.

In keeping with the rustic Adirondack style, they used a great

VALERIE PICKERT

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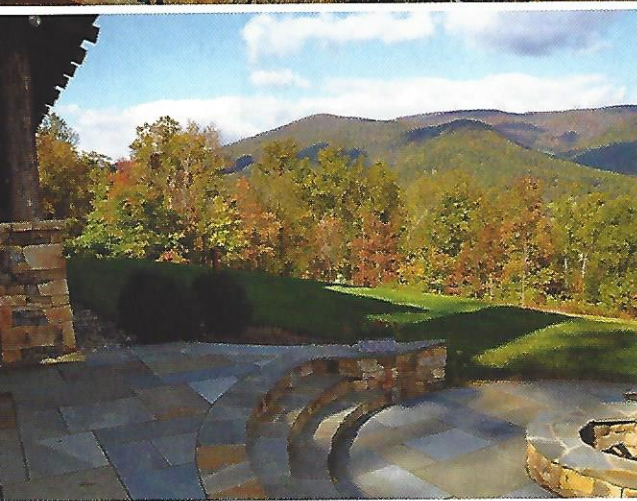
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VALERIE PICKERT



VALERIE PICKERT

TOP The twig staircase is made of reclaimed rhododendron wood.

BOTTOM: The outdoor fire pit extends the living space beyond the cabin walls, where the family can take in the amazing mountain views.

deal of reclaimed wood for both the structure and design elements, such as heart pine for the floors and rhododendron for the staircase. The reclaimed materials add touches of whimsy and character to the design and have easily become the homeowners' favorite features of their mountain home.

"We love the twig staircase and the catwalk overlooking the family room," says Valerie. "We also love the built-in bunk beds that were hand made out of standing dead lodgepole pine from Wyoming."

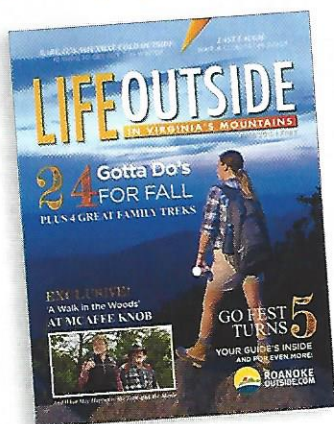
To balance out the natural wood and stone elements, the Pickerts chose modern appliances and fixtures, such as a white farm sink and small wine refrigerator in the kitchen, and a rain showerhead and polished silver faucets in one of the

bathrooms. These modern touches enhance the elegance and sophistication they so admired in the Great Camp estates.

While the interior of the home is impressive, the true heart and soul of the cabin lies beyond the windows and doors. Like the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts of the Gilded Age, Valerie and Steve Pickert and their family enjoy the natural amenities that life in the Blue Ridge Mountains has to offer, from taking in the view from the outdoor fire pit to hiking the numerous trails nearby.

"One of our goals is to hike the majority of the Appalachian Trail in stages over the next 10 years," says Valerie. "Then again, our family loves the cabin and never wants to leave." ❧

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