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not only the lake view, but also the morning sun, which streams in through the east-facing windows. The couple enlisted their son, Mark, as their contractor, challenging him to live up to his motto: "I can build any style home."

CHANGE *of* PLACE

A California family pitches in to build their Georgia post-and-beam home.

STORY AND STYLING BY DEBRA GRAHL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER WADE



The lower-level family room has a vintage look that's uncharacteristic of log homes but plays nicely off the pine ceiling and Brazilian tigerwood flooring. "We don't spend a whole lot of time down here when it's just the two of us," Janis says, "but the space sure comes in handy for our neighborhood parties."





Some might wonder how admitted workaholics Lonnie and Janis Horn could leave a fast-paced lifestyle in California to relocate to a sleepy mountain town in Georgia and not suffer culture shock. “Well,” Lonnie points out, “we were both born and raised in the Midwest, so the return to a calmer, quieter lifestyle was appealing to us.”

Oklahoma born and bred, Lonnie moved to California after graduating from college. Janis, originally from Wisconsin, moved there with her parents in her teens. They met and married in their 40s, a second marriage for each, and lived in the Santa Clarita Valley for 18 years. Despite busy careers, they made time to raise and breed horses on their 15-acre ranch and to build and sell spec homes.

After retiring, the Horns sold the ranch and moved to Hiawasse, Georgia, to be near Janis’s two children and six

grandchildren. They enlisted son Mark Wright, a general contractor, to build a custom log home, which had long been a dream of theirs. The twist is that the home they chose was log post and beam. “I was eager to prove my motto: ‘I can build any style of house,’” Mark says. “This project gave me that opportunity.”

The Horns had been drawn to log post and beam after learning about that style on a visit to a home being built in North Carolina. Janis got permission from the general contractor to explore the house several nights after the workers had left. She recalls using scraps of wood laying around the job site to represent walls and furniture so she could get a sense of “how the house would live” for them.

They contacted the log provider, The Log Connection of Penticton, British Columbia, and asked about modifying the company’s Westbury plan based on Janis’s nightly visits. The biggest changes were

OPPOSITE: The prominent front entrance features double doors and a log post-and-beam portico that previews the logwork inside and harmonizes with the bold upper-level prows that flank it.

ABOVE: Inside the home, on the other side of the mahogany French doors, whose stained glass forms a circular pattern, the formal entry features a hand-forged, wrought-iron chandelier. The log beam above the doors is flattened at the end to meet the 1-by-8-inch pine boards.

Natural light floods the great room, which offers a spectacular view of Lake Chatuge. "There are so many windows in the great room that I had very little wall space to work with," says Janis, who decorated the home. For the main grouping, she chose chocolate-brown leather chairs and sofas to surround a hand-knotted wool and silk area rug.









locating the kitchen where the original plan called for a bedroom and adding six feet to the great room.

The Horns broke ground on their lakeside lot a mere three days after buying it. “We don’t drag our feet,” Janis exclaims. While the site was being readied and the foundation concrete slab and walls were poured, The Log Connection crafted the logs, ranging in diameter from 14 to 20 inches, and shipped them from British Columbia to Hiawassee on two tractor-trailers. Because the rigs couldn’t drive all the way to the site, a neighboring church let the Horns unload in its parking lot. A smaller flatbed truck shuttled the logs to the site, where they were set in place by crane, guided by a Log Connection representative.

Once the logs were in place, Mark started framing the walls. They’re sheathed with oriented strand board and chinked pine boards on the outside, giving them a traditional log look, and insulated with R-19 batts and covered on the inside with tongue-and-groove pine boards. “Post-and-beam construction is nice,” he notes. “All you have to do is fill in the walls.”

The loft and cathedral ceiling are pine tongue-and-groove, and tigerwood flooring from Brazil was used everywhere but the tiled bathrooms. Balancing the wood are drywall on the kitchen ceiling and large expanses of glass in the great room and dining areas. “There are so many windows in the great room that I had very little wall space to work with

OPPOSITE: A reproduction antique bar and stools add elegance to the downstairs family room. An alabaster and wood ceiling fan enhances the vintage charm of the popular gathering area.

ABOVE: The kitchen brims with color and texture—and logs. Granite countertops pull together the mahogany kitchen cabinets. Uppers and lowers sport ebony crown molding. The painted pine island has a long rectangular stainless steel sink. Janis describes the kitchen decor as French Country, although a hutch that houses her collection of Fitz and Floyd china came from Mexico.



Logs' Stand-Up Act

Post-and-beam homes are an increasingly attractive alternative to traditional stacked-log construction. It typically costs less because it uses less volume of logs, although preparing each piece is more labor intensive. Log post-and-beam construction uses horizontal logs as structural beams to support dimensional framing members. The Log Connection, the British Columbia company that provided the Horns' post-and-beam package, handcrafted the large-diameter beams from Douglas fir, then flattened and grooved them to accept floor and wall framing. The posts are prepared from Douglas fir, western red cedar or Engelmann spruce, the wood the Horns chose. Each post is milled flat at the location of adjacent stud-wall framing. At each location of a stud wall, the posts are grooved to receive the wall covering (drywall or sheathing).

when decorating," Janis says.

Mark's challenge was following the highly detailed plans. "When I refer to the degree of difficulty in the overall construction of the house, half of that difficulty is material based, the other half is the layout of the house," Mark explains. "I don't think there is a single parallel wall in the entire house. It's all angles. Much of that is Mom's doing. But that's a big part of what makes it so special."

Janis handled the interior design herself, paying special attention to the kitchen. She describes the decor as classic French Country, although one highlight is a hutch from Mexico that houses her collection of Fitz and Floyd china. Most everything else came from a home improvement and furnishing membership club. "We ordered the kitchen cabinets and just about every one of our lighting fixtures, as well as our other plumbing fixtures, through Direct Buy and saved an amazing amount of money," she notes. "We did have to order in advance. I would suggest allowing at least four weeks for delivery."

A cozy guest bedroom on the lower level features vintage floral prints, as well as wood furnishings whose darker tones offer a pleasing contrast to the lighter honey walls. The room has a door, shown at right, that leads to a stone patio.

Lonnie landscaped the 2/3-acre lake-side lot. He's proudest of a fountain, built of concrete and faced with stone. Water spills into a pool, then streams around the side of the house and drops into another pool, where a pump recirculates the water back up to the fountain.

The Horns thought they'd make more use of the decks on their main-level, enjoying the outdoor views, but the hot summers changed their minds. "We prefer to sit on the lower-level shaded patio," Janis says, adding, "It's a great spot for entertaining."

Lonnie and Janis beam with pride at the home they and their son put so much effort into planning and building, but after leaving their hectic life in California behind, do they really call this project slowing down? They admit sheepishly, "It's all relative." 🏠



home details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 4,586

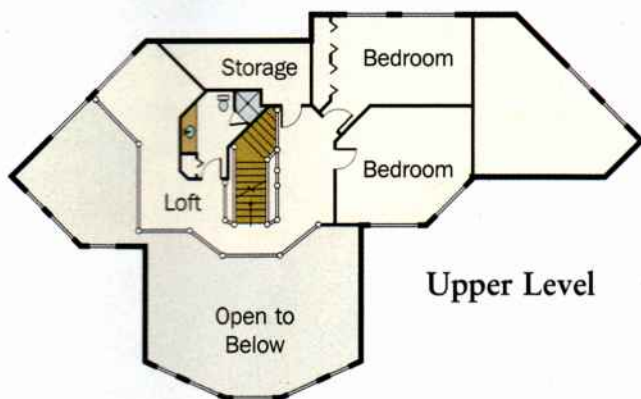
LOG COMPANY: The Log Connection

BUILDER: Mark Wright

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 62.

ABOVE LEFT: The loft hallway leads to a hideaway sitting nook that's perfect for enjoying a view of Lake Chatuge and mountains through large trapezoidal windows. This vantage permits a close look at the details of the log post-and-beam construction.

ABOVE RIGHT: The master bath boasts large-diameter post and beam logs, pine walls and boldly graphic Italian marble tile, created by a local artist using an etching process that resembles leaded glass. The pattern of the floor tiles recurs in the shower door. Views of the lake surround the black Kohler whirlpool tub.



Main Level

