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Northern TERRITORY

One Owner/Builder
Team Strikes a Perfect
Balance Between Log
Home and Northern Style

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Lakeside living in Northern Michigan is a just a dream for many visitors. You'll hear them at the trendy Traverse City eateries murmuring, "Wow, it sure would be nice to have a place up here." That simple sentiment quickly became reality for one Okemos family during their very first trip to the north. Little did they know that there was a realtor in their midst who swiftly went to task showing them all the homes available. Before long, the family signed off on a simple cottage with an ample, sloping lot and frontage on beautiful Long Lake.

The ranch style cottage was cramped and awkwardly designed; the couple knew they would be replacing it and immediately began collecting ideas and building an enormous "idea binder." Paul Maurer was recommended and the relationship between builder and client was such a good match that they continue a close camaraderie today. The idea binder turned out to be tremendously helpful because Maurer and his crew always knew precisely what the couple wanted, whether they were close by or back in Okemos.

First and foremost, the family sought a "north woods" style, without embracing the bona fide "log cabin" route. Using cedar shake shingles, split fieldstone and hunter green details on the exterior, then pine trim, and alder doors, hickory floors on the interior, the team pulled it off perfectly. By far the most intricate north woods building challenge was to create faux logs for the ceilings. "A full log would be too big, too heavy, and not be structurally appropriate for the rooms," explains Maurer. His solution: Make his own using many hand ripped pieces and crafting them together for a natural, hewn log home style—without all of the weight of a real log.



Rustic Artistry Adds Whimsy and Style

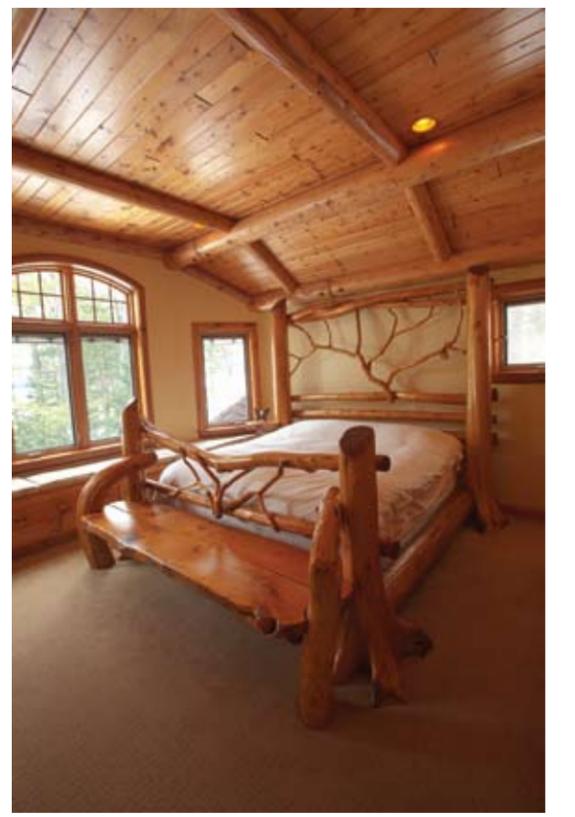
ABOVE: Newel posts become bedposts as limbs are woven throughout the main, grand staircase as well as in select pieces of furniture throughout the home.



MIDDLE: Granite counters run throughout all bathrooms and kitchen. Each room boasts a different granite style, yet all add elegant flair to the north woods theme.

BELOW: Arched pine ceilings with Paul Maurer's custom created beams give each room its signature rustic flavor.

BELOW RIGHT: Neutral tones allow the excellent woodwork to take center stage.



Second in the wish list binder was to be able to view the lake from as many rooms as possible, which was somewhat challenging since the lot is narrow. Maurer constructed the 26-foot high main living area with windows stretching to the uppermost peak. From the kitchen, foyer, landing and dining area, everyone gets a shot at Long Lake's famed, spectacular sunrises.

Mixed in among the idea binder's granite, hardware, paint and tile ideas was one especially unique request: a quilting room. The room was built to accommodate a 12-foot-wide long arm quilting machine, but it also became the recipient of an antique stained glass window and a playful peek-a-boo cupboard which opens up to the living room below.

The ultimate test was during the creation of the showstopper centerpiece to this home: an enormous, hand-carved sumac and pine staircase stretching into both the living room and foyer. It was lovingly—but slowly—created by hand from a talented artist the couple discovered on their own. To this day, builder and owners chuckle over that meticulous process, but toast to the final masterpiece: the staircase, the home and most of all the enduring friendship. □

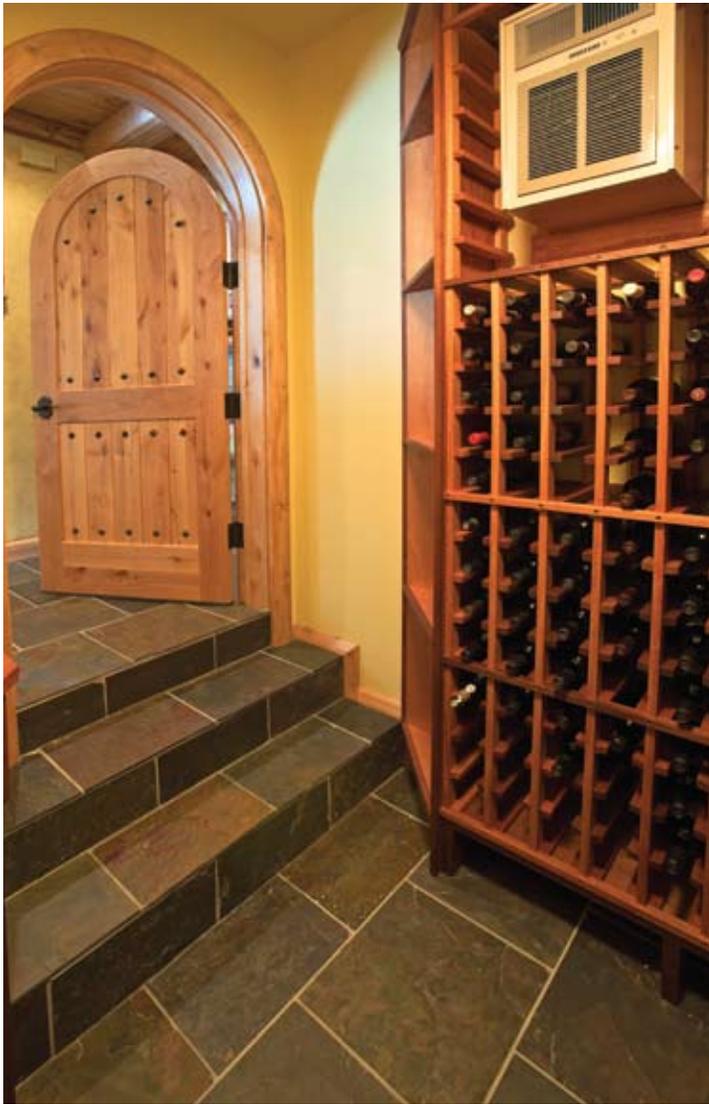


PREVIOUS PAGE
ABOVE: Finished in 2006, this 6,700-square-foot lake home is a roomy replacement to the lot's original cramped cabin.

INSET: Classic slate and warm tone walls draw guests to the center-point table with upholstered chairs to pull the themes together and keep guests comfortably chatting long after dessert.

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ABOVE: Wide and open spaces throughout the living quarters fill with family and friends all summer long.

BELOW: Truly a kitchen for cooks, this space has spices and pans perfectly positioned for fast access. The Wolf range, SubZero refrigerator and handcrafted cabinetry make it a chef's heaven.



ABOVE: Conveniently around the corner from the kitchen is a whimsical Tuscan-style arched door leading to the family's climate-controlled wine cellar.

BELOW: One stroll through this home and visitors quickly notice that the owner loves owls. The couple's wood artist noticed too and carved a few feathered friends just for her in his masterpieces.



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Paul Maurer General Contracting

PRINCIPAL OWNER (S):

Paul Maurer

NUMBER OF YEARS IN BUSINESS:

33

YEAR BUSINESS STARTED:

1979

EDUCATION:

Paul Maurer holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Michigan State University.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

At Paul Maurer General Contracting, our philosophy is to work hard, be honest and treat others as you would like to be treated.

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