

THE COMFORT ZONE

By Adam Headley | Photos by Mark Sorenson



The warmth of the Riter's log retreat, nestled into a hillside, sets this image of the site aglow. The simple pitched roofline and wrap-around farmer's porch are cabin classics that will never go out of style.

Inset Rocking chairs and blankets await visitors who enjoy the brisk morning air off the water.

Cozy and quiet, a log cabin near the shore of Perkins Pond in Sunapee, New Hampshire, turns a lifetime goal into a perfect family getaway.

Before his log cabin was ever on the ground, James Riter had his family and neighbors over for a visit.

The truth is, they were there to lend their creativity and construction knowledge to the project of a lifetime for James, a Massachusetts resident who wanted a quiet weekend retreat for himself and his three daughters — Ashley, 21, and 19-year-old twins Emily and Sarah — in the familiar surroundings of Sunapee, New Hampshire.

Moose Rock Lodge, named for James' favorite animal and his ongoing passion for building stone walls and other features on the property, is a three-bedroom, two-bath log beauty that, according to James' friend and the home's builder,

Dundee Nestler, is perfect in just about every respect.

But perfection takes planning ... and more planning. The home began to take shape as James decided to build on land that had been in his family for nearly 50 years.

The site is located near Perkins Pond in the town of Sunapee, which also claims ties to Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler and documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. The Riter home, built with eastern white pine with a modified package from Coventry Log Homes of Woodsville, New Hampshire, occupies one of two family lots. The other, a cottage constructed just across the street, holds special memories of summers spent swimming, water skiing and spending time with family.

When the time came to build James'



cozy jewel, he decided to serve as his own general contractor. He didn't have far to go for assistance. "Dundee had built several homes in the area," James says, "and another neighbor, Gerry Farland, had 40 years of construction experience around Sunapee. I had an excellent team of local contractors. My father, Ted, served as chief of staff, ready to help in any way he could."

The permitting process took close to a year, and 13 months of construction followed. James chose Coventry as his partner after lengthy research.

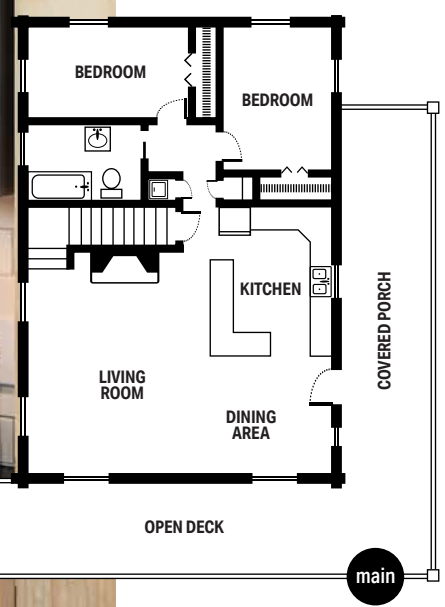
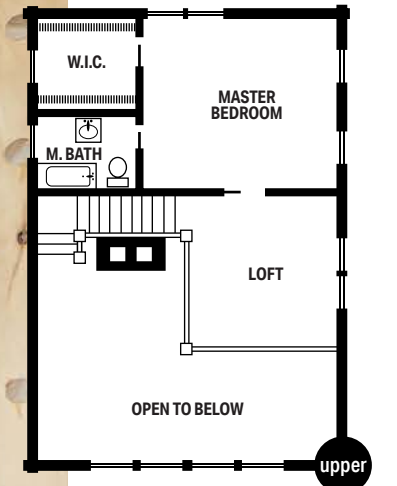
"I had looked at several log home companies, and the plan and style for the home came about with lots of hours visiting other homes and going through catalogs," he recalls. "Coventry Log Homes was great!

Prior to purchasing, I took several trips to the company, and Gerry and Dundee toured the mill with me."

Coventry sales consultant Jeremy Elliott offered options and helped James select a floor plan that suited his style. "We combined a couple of our popular plans, along with ideas James already had, to make the perfect waterside retreat for family and friends," Jeremy notes. "This home is cozy indeed. It was designed in our Craftsman style, focusing on the beam features in the roof and ceiling structure along with log rails for the interior and exterior. The custom gable glass, sliding patio doors and open front deck allows James and his girls to really enjoy the surroundings of the property."

above **The loft hideaway exudes coziness. It's the perfect place to catch a nap, read a book or take in the view.**

opposite **The floor-to-ceiling granite fireplace, James' favorite space in the home, draws family and friends together in the living room. The inner workings of the fireplace are accessible from the basement stairs, and home theater electronic components are housed within its framework.**



left Knotty alder cabinets in a semi-transparent-dove gray complement the dark granite counters in the efficient kitchen. The L-shaped, dual-height island sports a pair of stools for a quick bite. Schoolhouse-style pendant lights are the perfect accent to brighten the snug space.



left from top The epitome of casual quarters, the dining area adjoins the kitchen and living room, as multiple windows allow relaxing vistas of the wooded area leading to the pond. Five-inch-plank hickory flooring contrasts with the lighter, natural tones of the eastern white pine walls.

The master bedroom is a study in comfort, according to builder Dundee Nestler, who says the entire home is just the right size for a cozy retreat. James added a private loft to maximize the volume of the room. The loft is accessed by a custom ladder that Dundee fashioned from an ancient hemlock trunk. Dundee also cut the birch-branch hand grips from trees on his own property.

The guest bath is accented by wood and coordinating 12-by-12-inch porcelain tile, while the washbasin-style sink adds to the homey, comfortable feeling that permeates the Riter retreat.

opposite A generously appointed wrap-around porch adds inviting outdoor space in traditional New England style. The extra log courses James requested increase the height of the structure, creating a more stately facade as well as additional headroom for the 6'4" owner.

HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE
1,573

BEDROOMS BATHS
3 2 full

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Taking a hands-on approach to building his home made the experience all the richer for James. “I’m proud to say that I carried every log and building material except the large roof supports,” he says with a smile. “I’m also 6’4”, and I didn’t want to feel confined under the loft in the kitchen, so the first level is two logs higher, and the second is one log higher than the standard package calls for. There was also enough leftover material to outfit a man cave in the basement. It has a log bar with a Brazilian rosewood top and tongue-and-groove walls.”

Dundee, a retired electronics engineer, was already a veteran of log home construction when he agreed to work with James. “For a year after I retired, I just hung out at the home that I built in 1980 on the other side of the pond,” he shares. “Then, we subdivided some land and built a spec log home that sold right away. I really enjoyed building that and another log home on our property that we rent out. Jim liked them so much that he asked, ‘When I’m ready, will you build for me?’”

The team effort produced outstanding results, and Dundee is quick to praise the log package. “It was the first time I had used a Coventry kit,” he admits, “so I made several trips there, asking questions about how they process logs. I wanted to make sure that James was going to get what he wanted to build. During the experience, I realized that they have a beautiful product and package at Coventry — well-made and well-thought-out with no problems whatsoever.”

In the end, James has more than a comfortable retreat. Moose Rock Lodge is an heirloom; a treasure that is sure to establish a lasting family legacy years to come.

