

Be of Good Cheer

A couple's Christmas spirit proves there's no place like a log cabin for the holidays.

By Karen Marley | Photography by Mark Sorenson

Homeowners Melinda and Roland Hall absolutely love holiday decor. A wood-burned sign at the end of the driveway welcomes people to their "Christmas Cabin," and white lights, along with electric candle lighting in the windows, adorn the cabin year-round.

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left **Hardy spruce posts along the stairwell complement the delicate crepe myrtle railing design. Interior logs are stained with a combination of Minwax “English Chestnut” and contrasting, low-VOC Velvit oil for the white pine tongue-and-groove walls. Melinda and Roland’s love for all things Disney reveals itself in the castle-themed wrought-iron chandelier.**

weighing in at more than 4,000 square feet a piece.

The cabin shell, with its 32-by-20-foot first-floor footprint, is constructed of 6- to 8-inch diameter, D-shaped eastern white pine logs with a butt-and-pass corner system; a spruce post-and-beam interior; and a three-sided, 6-foot-deep wrap-around porch. It’s an open concept plan with a great room soaring 18 feet tall to a tongue-and-groove white pine ceiling. The catwalk bridge connects two sleeping lofts upstairs.

“We tried to be courageous,” Roland recounts. “We’re familiar with cities and beaches and wanted something with essence and history. Something wild and scenic.”

After shedding piles of excess belongings, Roland and Melinda loaded a U-Haul and moved themselves. That can-do attitude percolated into their home. With degrees in architectural drafting, they decided to do most of the cabin’s interior customization right down to the custom-milled, distressed 12-inch plank, eastern white pine flooring stained with Minwax “English Chestnut” and tongue-and-groove white pine walls.

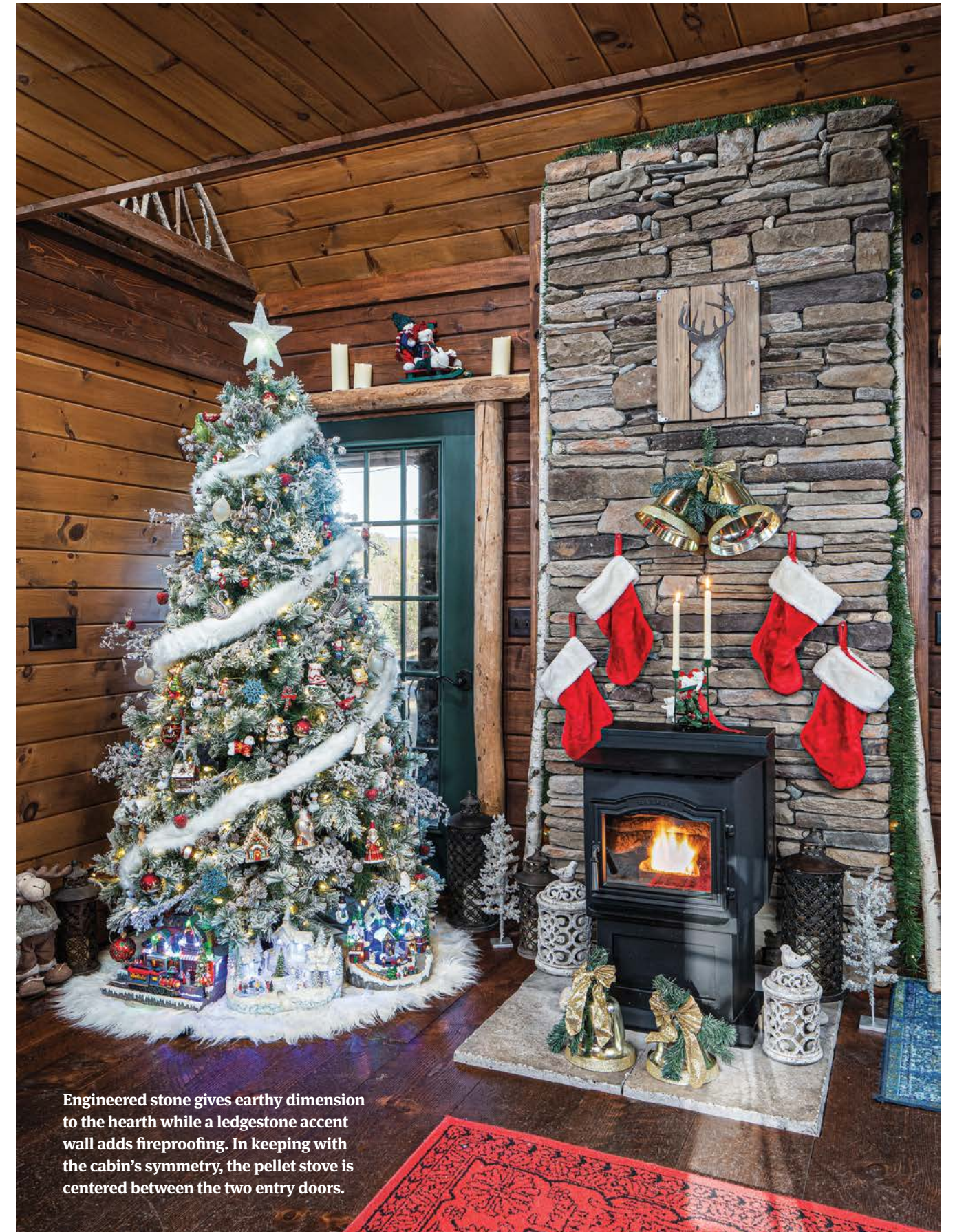
“Our dual kiln and air-dried process removes all moisture,” says Northeastern Log Homes builder/dealer Bud Santos. “The logs don’t shrink, and we seal

It’s a magical moment: A few vigorous shakes to a wintry snow globe and you’re rewarded with a dreamy micro-world of pristine holiday charm. You can practically hear the sleigh bells and smell the gingerbread wafting from an adorable cabin snuggled into its woodland setting.

Melinda and Roland Hall have turned this idyllic image into bona fide reality. Officially named the “Christmas Cabin,” the two-bedroom, two-bath layout originates from Northeastern Log

Homes’ “The Sportsman” design and sits in New Hampshire’s Twin Mountains’ notch. A cascading river traverses the back yard along with a host of deer, rabbits and other forest dwellers.

The scene represents a dramatic departure from Roland and Melinda’s years of living in Texas and Florida. Infatuated with New England, the couple settled in New Hampshire after scoping out 63 properties from Kennebunkport, Maine, to Lake Placid, New York. Compared to the 1,054-square-foot cabin, their previous homes were behemoths,



Engineered stone gives earthy dimension to the hearth while a ledgerstone accent wall adds fireproofing. In keeping with the cabin’s symmetry, the pellet stove is centered between the two entry doors.

everything internally. You can mount cabinets directly to the logs, which is a huge plus.”

Melinda divided the first floor into thirds to demarcate the kitchen with a dining booth and guest bathroom, a great room with fireplace and a primary bedroom suite with a stackable washer and dryer. It’s a remarkable use of space. The cabin’s only closet is in the primary bedroom.

“We’re avid boaters and appreciate the space optimization that boat builders use,” Roland says.

Storage is achieved through cupboards and secret compartments. The basement stairwell wall hides a series of storage drawers and the flip-top “table” behind the dining booth reveals ample space for dog food.

“Our house is small, but it’s cozy, not cramped!” exclaims Melinda.

That toasty, cozy feeling comes from many aesthetic details. Big fans of Disney and the fantasy cottages of Thomas Kinkadee, the light fixtures reflect a combination of cabin and castle themes. Candlestick fixtures in the windows stay up year-round for a festive glow.

Kitchen cabinets in a raised panel design with a buckboard finish along with Mascarello granite countertops add to the warm vibe. The same buckboard cabinets are in both bathroom vanities with granite counters. The flooring, shower and bath surround are 12-by-12-inch natural blue-slate tile.

The great room features 150-year-old wormy chestnut timbers that frame the inside of the three exterior doors. Perfectly centered between the two front doors is a Harman pellet stove set against an engineered-stone hearth and wall of southern ledgestone.

Jewel-toned red-and-green trim adds

Because Northeastern Log Homes both kiln- and air-dries its logs, the moisture is removed, thus eliminating the risk of shifting and shrinkage. As a result, cabinets can be mounted directly to the logs. Charming cabin details, such as oil-rubbed bronze hardware and birdcage pulls and knobs, add to the cozy, cabin feel.



The compact cabin forgoes a traditional dining area in favor of this diner-inspired booth. The spot behind the booth hides one of the cabin's many secret storage compartments.

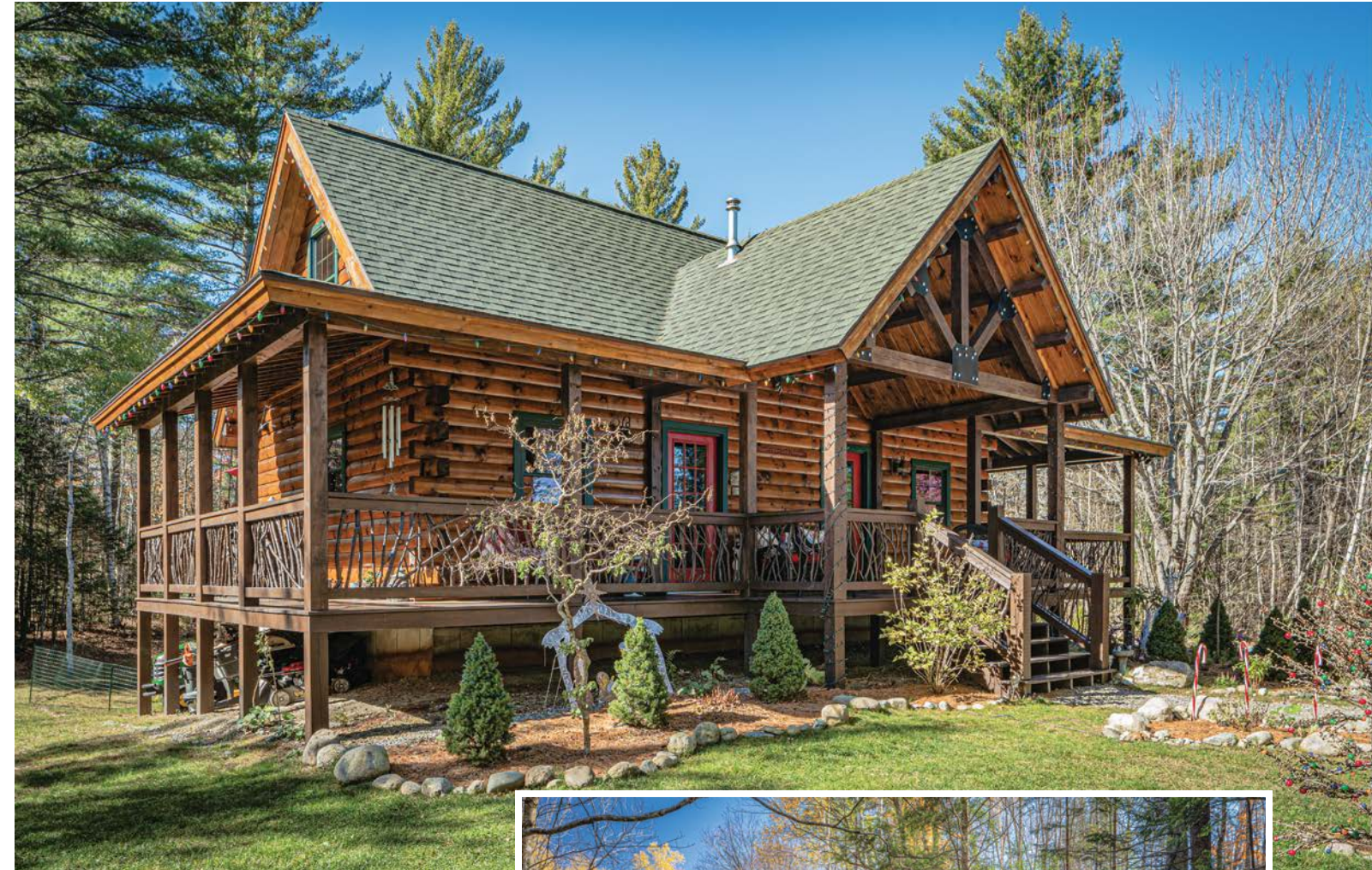


to the cabin's festive nature. Forest green asphalt shingles complete a traditional mountain cabin touch. Bringing a bit of Florida to the White Mountains, Melinda and Roland personally constructed the interior and exterior railings with wood from Florida's crepe

myrtle trees. Exterior railings carry a Behr "Padre Brown" semi-transparent stain, while the interior branches were left natural. Notes of Florida also fill the house in the form of Tiki, the couple's pet parrot who enjoys singing along with holiday carols.

Outside, the couple enjoys spending time in their gazebo and fire pit. A basement walk-out seating area under the deck is another place for them to absorb the mountain views.

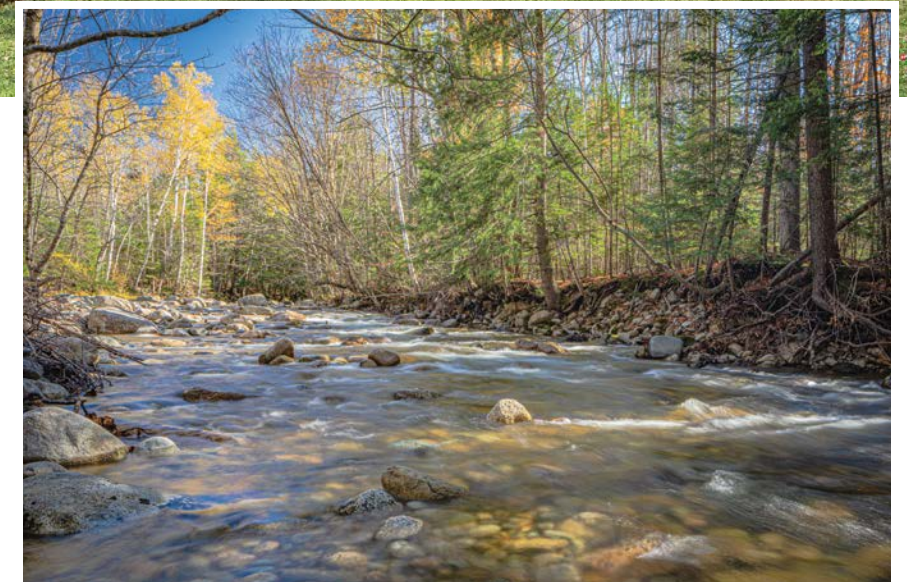
Landscaped plantings are abundant as is the "Winnie the Pooh" vegetable



garden constructed of post timber, white birch, chicken wire and iron-hinged swinging gates. Melinda and Roland plant extra veggies outside the garden for their resident snowshoe hare who they named "Peter." A nature trail with whimsical features leads to the river.

"My vision is a robust, Thomas Kinkade cottage-style garden," Melinda says. "We are spellbound by Disney and Kinkade."

As an homage, the cabin's great room features a large Thomas Kinkade print, "Bambi's First Year." It's an enchanting print incorporating four seasons, a mountain background, and woodland animals. Much like the Christmas Cabin itself.



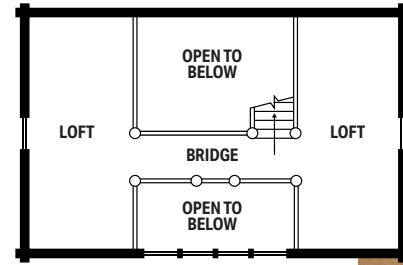
top The wrap-around porch hugs three sides of the cabin. Melinda and Roland intentionally choose the 6-foot-deep porch over the 8-foot option to maximize natural light in the cabin's interior. The original wooded lot had to be cleared to accommodate the house, and the homeowners wanted just enough open space for their home and garden while retaining the woodland setting. A short walk through the woods and Melinda and Roland get to enjoy the peaceful river that enhances their property. (inset)

MELINDA AND ROLAND'S

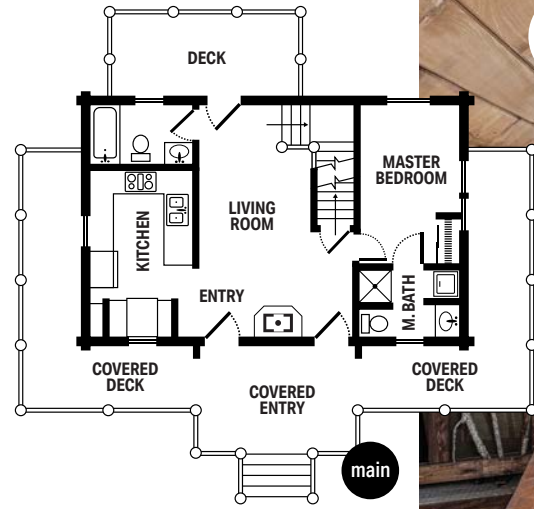
special spaces



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upper



main

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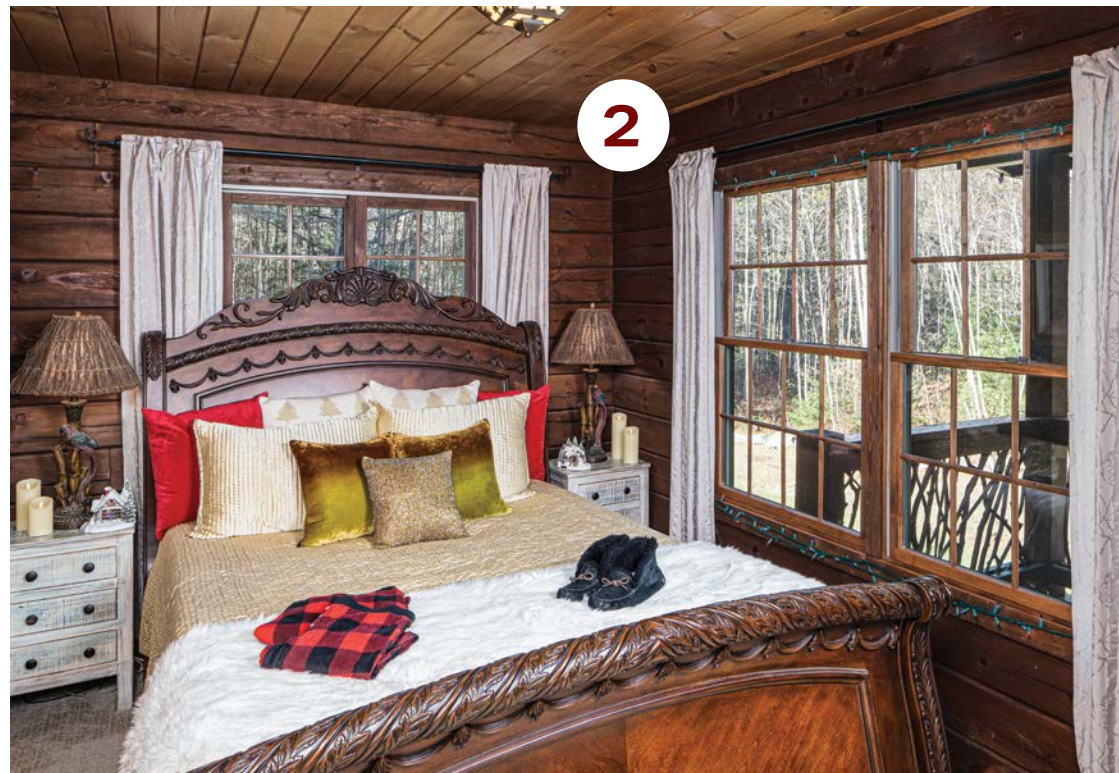


HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE 1,054
BEDROOMS 2-3
BATHS 2

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1 The porch and back deck total 668 square feet, which is larger than the 640-square-foot first floor! Melinda and Roland spent months making the railings from Florida's crepe myrtle trees. It's a lovely spot for lounging in the nature-themed furniture and enjoying a morning cup of coffee. 2 Small but perfect, the master bedroom treats Melinda and Roland to gorgeous views off the back deck. The carved bed is fit for a fairytale. 3 The primary suite bathroom hides a stackable washer and dryer, sized just-right for Melinda and Roland. The granite countertop is in a pattern called "Cosmos." 4 Symmetry reigns supreme with the bridge walkway that connects the home's two lofts. Skylights keep the upper level full of light.



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