



OPPOSITE: Whimsical touches can be found throughout the home, including this ornate mirror in the foyer. The reflection shows the detailed craftsmanship of the mountain laurel twig railings.

ABOVE: The facade of the home mimics the peaks of the mountains beyond. According to homeowner and builder Brett Schewbke, it is the mountainous landscape that influenced his design.

NATURE'S BOUNTY



A North Carolina timber-frame home mixes local materials and eco-friendly methods.

STORY BY TRACY M. RUFF | PHOTOS BY ROGER WADE | STYLING BY DEBRA GAHL



AT the foot of Grandfather Mountain in northwest North Carolina sits a home designed to mimic the landscape of the mountainous region. “It’s the land that dictates the design,” says homeowner and builder Brett Schwebke. “When you’re building in the mountains, you want your home to look like it belongs there.”

The home’s exterior follows the lines of the mountain range with its varied peaks. Brett installed rustic bark and cedar shingles to blend the home with the rugged site. Organic in appearance, the home features innovative and green methods. He used structural insulated panels (SIPs) in the roof for increased insulation, added a hydronic heating system beneath the flagstone entryway and side porch, and filled the stud-framed walls with a soy-based spray foam. “It’s an Energy Star-rated home,” says Brett, owner of Tynecastle Builders in Banner Elk, North Carolina.

Brett’s resourcefulness reaches even deeper. He harvested lumber from the building site and turned it into usable materials throughout the house. “Whether it be the tongue-

and-groove ceiling or the oak flooring or the mantels,” Brett says, “I try to bring some back in.” For instance, all of the oak flooring on the upper level came from the site, as did the spalted maple, cherry and buckeye wood that covers the ceilings.

For his home, Brett assembled a team of professionals to make the project successful. After coming up with the initial design, he handed it off to Grace Puckett-Strange Design in Newland, North Carolina. Grace brought the project up to code and made Brett’s ideas fit within the given footprint. Her drawings were passed to High Country Timberframes and Gallery Woodworking in Boone, North Carolina, to integrate the actual timber frame into the design. Once all the tweaking was complete, the crew at High Country cut the lumber. Brett, who has worked with owners Tom Owens and Peter Jankowski for more than a decade, relies on their framing expertise. “The tag I use for them is that their only limit is my imagination,” Brett says.

The 5,000-square-foot home features a Douglas fir timber frame. Each hand-hewn

ABOVE: A fresco of the Cumberland Gap, just 10 miles from the home site, fills the dining room wall.

OPPOSITE: In the great room, an eight-and-a-half-foot fresco of Daniel Boone’s wife, Rebecca, brings the enormity of the fireplace to scale. A mantel made from wood harvested on the site anchors the fireplace.

and distressed timber looks centuries old. To further this effect, the frame was exposed to the elements for 60 days. “I started the project and stopped for a while, and just let it rain on the frame until I got the look I wanted,” Brett says. Mortise-and-tenon joints fastened with oak pegs secure the frame.

Brett selected all the finishes for the home. Throughout the main and lower levels, hydronic floor heating warms the Bronte flagstone. A 3,500-pound tub carved from a boulder makes a statement in the master bathroom along with chiseled-edge boulder sinks. In the



kitchen, he topped wormy chestnut-and-walnut cabinets with slate on the island and granite elsewhere. “I like to mix textures and colors, and take the same material and make it look different,” he says.

Brett hit the builder’s jackpot while renovating a 1920s property. “When I got into the walls, I realized that every stud in the house was wormy chestnut,” he says. “And that’s not been around since the 1940s.” To replace the chestnut studs, Brett propped the roof, removed the chestnut and replaced the studs with lumber from the local building supply store. All of the trim in this new house and a large portion of the rails of the cabinets came from that lumber.

To temper the wood tones, interior designer Pam McKay of Dianne Davant and Associates in Banner Elk brought a thoughtful touch to the decor. “I used a lot of leather combinations with fabrics to soften up all that wood in the timber frame,” the designer says. She plays off the earth tones in the wood to bring nature inside the house. More elegant pieces of furniture mix with more rustic ones for balance.

Artwork plays a major role in the home. On the great room’s fireplaces, life-size frescoes of Daniel Boone and his wife, Rebecca, stand in homage to the region where the home sits. Another piece in the dining room shows a Cumberland Gap landscape with horses and Native Americans. These pieces were completed on-site. Local artist Roger Allen Nelson of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, used an age-old fresco technique to create permanent pieces of artwork in the home. “It’s quite the undertaking,” Brett says about the process. “It took Roger about a year from the first OK. Roger started with half-scale drawings, then full-scale drawings and color studies. Then, when he’s finally ready to come to the house, he’s already got 1,000 to 1,500 hours in each one. Then it takes anywhere from 13 to 18 days to finish each one at the house.” Roger’s sketches for the frescoes are framed and hung throughout the home.

This house, the third timber frame that Brett has built in the Tynecastle community, is a place to finally call home — at least for the time being. “My family and I are going to move in for a couple of years and let everything settle,” he says. “Then use it as a basis for the next round.” ■

The kitchen features a masterful mix of materials. Stacked stones surround the double stovetops. Countertops vary from slate on the island to granite for the other surfaces.

LEFT: The breakfast room off the kitchen offers a serene spot to take in Grandfather Mountain.





Because of the enormity of the boulder bathtub – 3,500 pounds – special care had to be taken. “We built a pedestal where the tub would be, flew the tub in on a crane and put a box around it,” says homeowner and builder Brett Schwebke. “Then we basically built the whole house around the tub.”

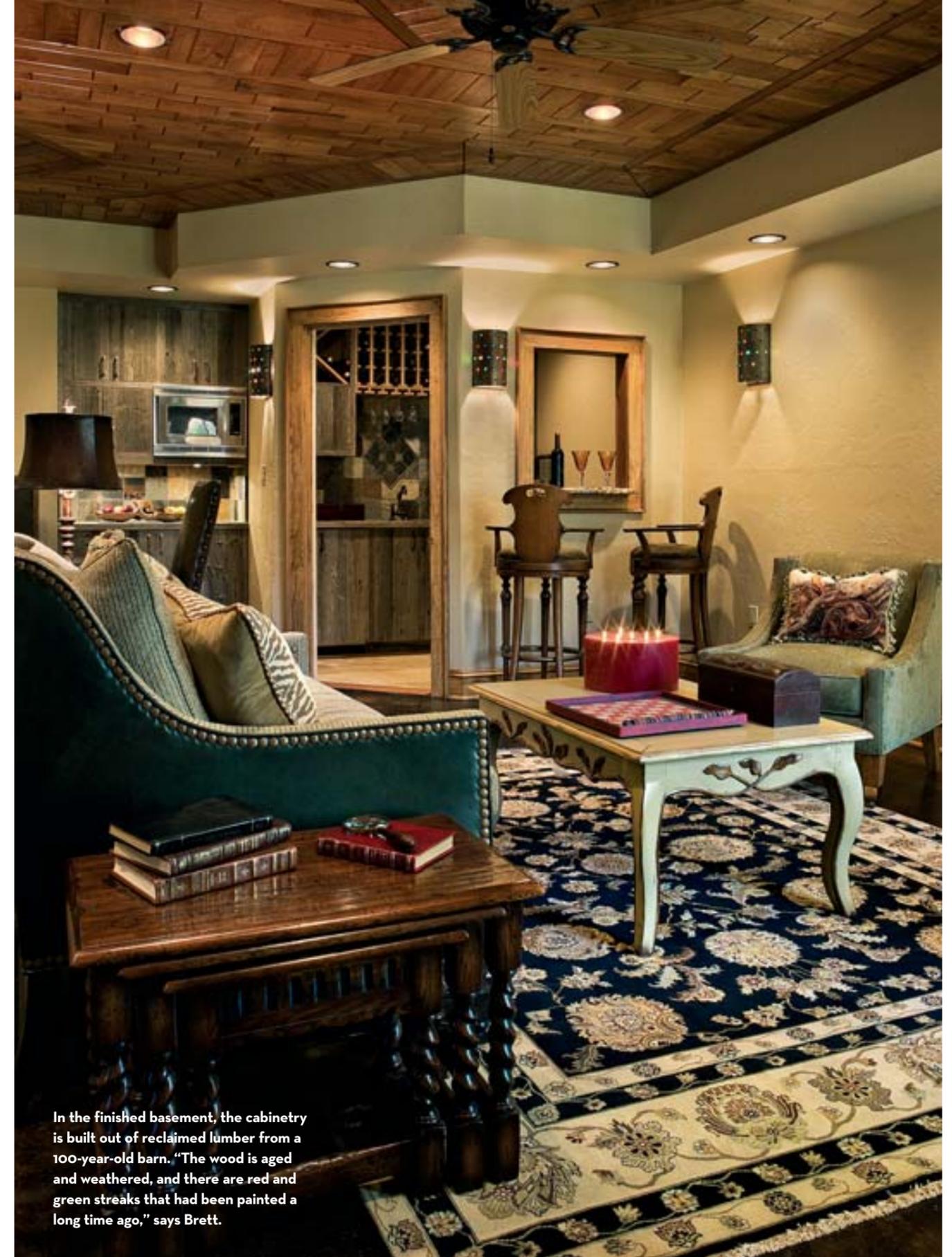


Wood recovered from a guitar manufacturer is set in an interesting design on the master bedroom’s ceiling. The fireplace warms the bedroom on one side and the private porch on the other.



Home Details

SQUARE FOOTAGE 5,000
BUILDER: Tyncastle Builders
TIMBER PROVIDER: High Country Timberframes



In the finished basement, the cabinetry is built out of reclaimed lumber from a 100-year-old barn. “The wood is aged and weathered, and there are red and green streaks that had been painted a long time ago,” says Brett.