

Hand-hewn logs provide the cabin with its one-of-a-kind profile. A 40-foot handpeeled log spans the length of the great room and a 34-foot-tall log emerges from the handcrafted kitchen island.





When Dennis and Susan Heebink recently built the log cabin of their dreams, they kept the ideas of home and family close. In fact, they kept them right next door to one another amid the rolling Hocking Hills.

“There’s a lot of family tradition associated with this land down here,” Dennis says. “That’s the reason we moved down here to begin with and the reason we’ll stay here.”

Situated on about 65 acres of land near Lancaster, their custom log home resides in the heart of a rich family history still being written.

In 1936, Susan’s parents, Bill and Jane Guthrie, bought their first 40 acres of land here. Bill, future dean of students at The Ohio State University, came to Hocking Hills in the 1930s to help run a boys’ summer camp. He hired a young nurse named Jane to work at the camp. A few years later, they married.

Although residents of Columbus, the Guthries fell in love with the area and added many more acres after those first

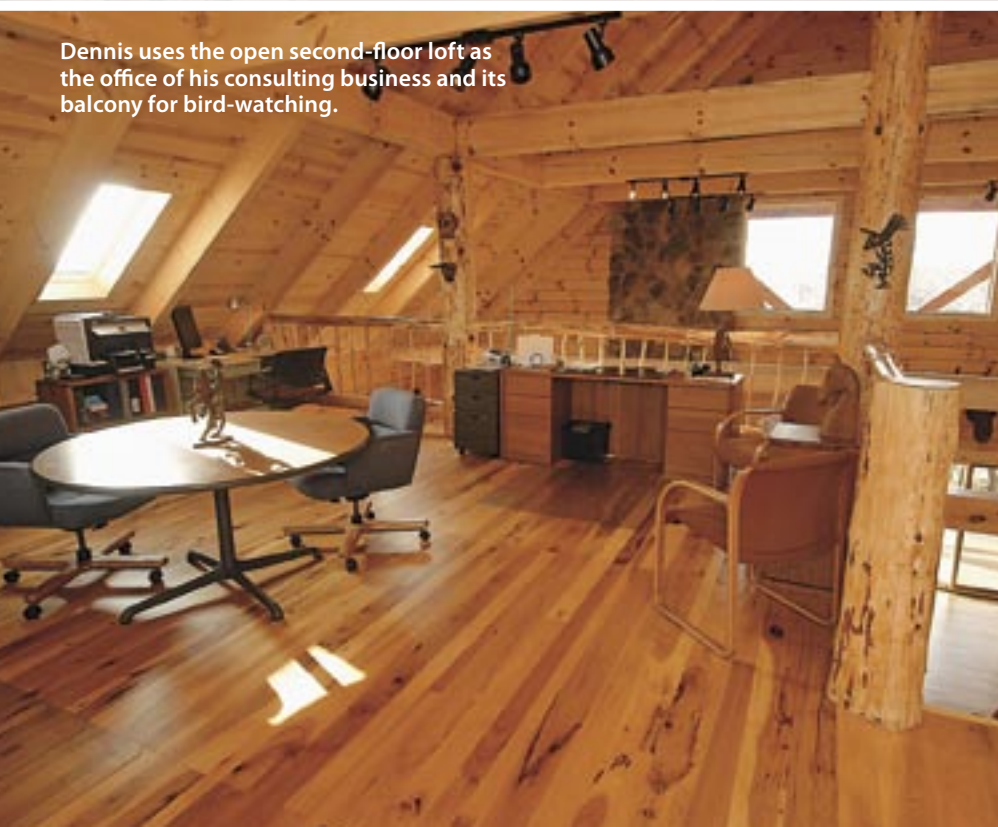
CLOSE AT HEART



Hocking Hills couple builds dream home on land rich in scenery, but more importantly, rich in family history



The second-floor loft spans the length of the home and offers a great view of the kitchen (opposite page). Dennis' favorite painting, which features a barn with the Mail Pouch Tobacco logo on it, can be seen on the wall next to the staircase.



Dennis uses the open second-floor loft as the office of his consulting business and its balcony for bird-watching.



The back deck spans the width of the home and overlooks a pasture where the Heebinks' horses graze.



40. As they raised a family, they spent summers and weekends at the property with its more than 100-year-old farmhouse, 1800s-era log cabin and cottage. Their love of the area passed to their children and their families.

“I can remember when I first started coming down here with him (Bill),” Dennis says. “I was probably in my 30s, and he was, at that time, probably in his late 50s. I couldn’t keep up with him. Twenty years later, I couldn’t keep up with him. That passion for this area followed the generations.”

Susan now calls her family’s vacation spot home. She and Dennis repurchased land her father had sold, and Susan and her brothers inherited her parents’ remaining 200-plus acres. The entire family estate, with its 300 or so contiguous acres, is now welcoming its fourth generation of Guthrie descendants.

From the back deck of the pine-scented 3,300-square-foot cabin, there is an unspoiled view of the pasture where horses roam in better weather. To the left are undulating hills and a loose canopy of mature oaks. To the right are more hills dipping into the horizon. Caves, hollows and rock outcroppings dot the landscape.

Dennis says foxes, turkeys and heavy-weight woodpeckers are just some of the wild residents that make this an everyday hideaway from city life. Binoculars hang at the ready to spot wildlife, and a salt lick waits for deer near the tree line. The grandchildren even have their own koi-filled swimming hole in the cabin’s front yard. Three cats and Akita the dog round out the property’s non-hominid tenants.

The cabin is the Heebinks’ second home in the area. Previously, they lived around the bend in a 4,200-square-foot custom home with a horse farm. They re-

cently sold the home and horse farm with a 130-acre portion of land before “scaling back” to their new home and remaining acres.

The new homestead is called High Meadows after their former horse farm, a name that fits the lay of the land like a horseshoe. The new, smaller piece of property that makes up High Meadows has its own six-stall barn with four horses.

Jubach Company built the Heebink cabin. Jubach specializes in producing custom high-end log cabins in the Hocking Hills area. The company builds turnkey homes only, which means it takes care of all phases of building, from land acquisition to getting permits to putting in the kitchen shelves. The family-owned builder produces everything in-house, from hand peeling the logs to creating custom countertops.

Although the home is large, the Heebinks utilize only 1,600 square feet of main floor living space on a daily basis. The 34-foot-tall great room, dining area and stainless-steel-appointed kitchen are located on this floor, along with the master bedroom and a bathroom. When visitors come — usually at least once a month and for the holidays — they stay on the lower level, which has its own heating and cooling system. Thanksgiving last year found the Heebinks with 21 guests — 16 overnight. The Heebinks say most of their eight grandkids, ages 2 to 20, enjoy piling into the largest of the three downstairs bedrooms and camping out on the floor packed with air mattresses.

The home’s third level is an open loft that spans the width of the house, which Dennis uses as the office of his consulting business. Susan commutes to the

A beautiful web of wood beams and joinery work to hold the roof and walls in place. RIGHT: One of the Heebinks' favorite activities is to curl up in front of the fire with a good book or to watch an OSU football game.



Columbus area for work.

Features that bring the outdoors in give the home its one-of-a-kind identity. A 40-foot log (peeled on the property) suspends horizontally above the length of the main floor, and another colossal log seems to grow in the middle of the kitchen's island — from the hand-fired and hand-painted tile floor to the ceiling.

The floor plan manages to be open while remaining warm and cozy. In part, this is due to the hilltop light pouring in from at least a dozen windows, giving every surface a gold-hued glow. The hand-sanded, planed and polyurethane-coated logs inside allow the natural grain and buttery color to show through. The clove-stained pine on the exterior gives the cabin's profile a rich reddish color, while stone provides the exterior footprint. Together, these natural materials give the feeling that the home is just a

living, breathing part of the landscape.

The cabin was built using multiple species of wood, including pine, oak and hickory. The double tongue-and-groove D logs that make up most of the home are custom-cut, locally harvested white pine. The exterior side of the D logs is round, while the inside wall is flat. A complex and beautiful web of wood joinery works in tandem to hold the walls and roof in place.

The cabin's interior decor, like its location, illustrates strong family ties. A giant corkboard lines an asymmetrical wall in the kitchen along the stairs. Mementos of loved ones are push-pinned over the cork like wallpaper.

The art on the remaining walls consists largely of oil paintings done by family members. Dennis' favorite painting was done by Susan's father and features a barn with the Mail Pouch Tobacco

logo on it. Aside from family art, Dennis collects black-and-white photographs reminiscent of his Western upbringing. He says capturing that feeling of the West is a big part of why they chose to build a log home here, but he is quick to add that California weather can't match the drama of the seasons in Hocking Hills.

And as a big fall wind blows over his hilltop home to rustle the pastoral scenery, it's easy to see what draws an outdoorsman, such as Dennis, to make his home here. As part of the local tourism board, he is an encyclopedia of what the area has to offer its growing population, from parks to restaurants to the Washboard Music Festival he helped to organize.

Swinging on the porch swing in front of his dream cabin, Dennis surmises that this probably will be the last home he and his wife will build.

"My next pine home will be about eight feet long," he jokes.

His hope is that this cabin and the dwellings on the family's property, along with the land itself, remain a part of family history and tradition for generations to come.

In the meantime, he'll make sure the family keeps coming to High Meadows as long as he can. As he told his daughter, who held Christmas at her home while the Heebinks were waiting for their cabin to be completed, "Have fun, because this is the last one (holiday at your house) you get. When I can't do it anymore, you can take over."—AH

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