

ROSY'S RETREAT

A timber home for many generations exhibits the power of family.

BY REED KARAIM | PHOTOS BY ROGER WADE | STYLING BY DEBRA GAHL



ROSY was the patriarch of a family that, like many, has spread across the country. "My dad's dream was to have a place where all his kids could gather with their kids," says one of Rosy's granddaughters who asked to remain anonymous. She now has grandchildren of her own. "When we were able to do it, we named the house after his father:" Rosy's Retreat.

The family wanted a vacation home that wasn't ostentatious but could comfortably hold as many as two dozen people from four generations. The first decision was location. They found Balsam Mountain

Preserve, a development with only 354 homesites on 4,400 acres in western North Carolina, and within driving distance for many family members.

Next was an architect. The family chose Shawn Leatherwood of the Architectural Studio in Waynesville, North Carolina, because he was open to ideas and was willing to get right to work. "The first time we met him, he said, 'you all come back tomorrow and I'll have two sketches done and you can tell me what you think,'" says Rosy's granddaughter.

The detailed woodwork, apparent here in the entry hall, gives Rosy's Retreat the feeling of a home that's been there for generations, even though it's only a few years old. The wainscoting is taller than usual to match the scale of the high ceilings.

OPPOSITE: The exterior surfaces of Rosy's Retreat are intentionally low-maintenance. The metal roof, local field stone and poplar bark shakes mean the family shouldn't have to spend their visits patching, repairing and painting.





ABOVE: The dining room is a study in country elegance. The table, made out of recycled wood and meant for casual use, can seat 12.

OPPOSITE: The great room – the owners call it the family room – manages to be both majestic and intimate. The fireplace features an oversized firebox while the ceiling soars more than 20 feet high. Yet warm rugs and upholstered furniture grouped for conversation make the space feel relaxed and cozy.

Leatherwood grew up in the region but also studied in Europe. Rosy's Retreat shows both influences. "There are some sort of English country cottage rooflines and details in front," Leatherwood says, "but everything I do is tempered with the Appalachian vernacular."

Appalachian homes, he explains, are usually modest in size and are often a collection of additions. Rosy's Retreat is 6,000 square feet and has six bedrooms, but approached from the front it looks like a cottage. Leatherwood used changes in roofline, varied exterior materials and the placement of a guest apartment and the garage in a separate structure to reduce the sense of scale.

From the rear, where all three levels are visible, the size of Rosy's Retreat becomes clear. The back also highlights the stone and timber-frame construction, which along with expansive spaces for outdoor living, make the home part of its natural surroundings.

Inside, the challenge was to design a floorplan that could hold a crowd, yet still feel intimate if only two people were staying there. "We made sure that none of the spaces were too incredibly large, but most opened up on each other," Leatherwood says.

The timber-frame design was also critical, providing a vertical sense of space.

The family had decided that wood and stone were going to be unifying elements in the design, inside and out, so a timber frame was the logical choice. "Using all that wood kind of brought the outside inside," says the family member.

Harmony Timberworks of Boone, North Carolina, celebrating its 31st year in business, made the timber frame. The company provides timber frames for about a hundred buildings annually. Dan Kiser, a senior designer, says a Harmony Timberworks' specialty is taking on complicated jobs. "We don't work directly with homeowners, but with architects," he says. "Because of that we have the opportunity to do stuff that's outside the box. I think you can really see that in this project."

The timber framing on Rosy's Retreat is cedar outside and Douglas fir inside. A unique feature is the "double-member" beams. Rather than one beam, Leatherwood designed pairs of beams with the vertical posts sandwiched between them. "It gives a really good look," Kiser says, "but it does come with engineering challenges."





A big family means many cooks, requiring a lot of elbow room. The kitchen has granite counters with a triple main sink, able to swallow a holiday gathering's worth of dishes, plus an additional island sink. The painted custom cabinetry is from Banner Cabinets in Newland, North Carolina.



ABOVE: The vacation retreat is enjoyed by four different generations. The master bedroom is wheelchair accessible and was centrally located on the main floor.

ABOVE, INSET: Marble and a dark, colonial-red paint adds elegance to the master bath, which includes an oversized, wheel-chair-accessible shower and an alcove for the tub that takes full advantage of the home's secluded location.

LEFT: The 6,000-square-foot home presents the modest scale of a country cottage when approached from the front. The owners wished to avoid any signs of ostentation for their comfortable, multi-generational family retreat.

To make sure the connections stayed tight, essential for the twin beams to work together, Harmony Timberworks used bolts rather than pegs. That decision also added another interesting touch to a design that abounds in perfect details, from the painted oversized wainscoting to the custom locust-and-laurel deck railings.

To build the home, the family chose Clark and Leatherwood of Waynesville, North Carolina. (Builder Ron Leatherwood is no relation to architect Shawn Leatherwood.) The builder has been in business since 1988 and handles commercial and custom residential construction. A deciding factor was also the firm's reputation for on-time construction; the family was planning a big gathering and wanted to be in the house by a set date.

"From the time we broke ground to the time they actually moved into the house, it was 13 months, which is quick for a house like this," says Josh Best, project manager. "It was challenging coordinating everything. But the family was really great to work with — quick to make decisions, got along well with each other. You couldn't ask for better customers."

Rosy's Retreat was ready for the big gathering. "The first Thanksgiving in the house, my parents were there, all three kids, most of the grandkids. My son had a new baby, so there were great grandchildren as well," says Rosy's granddaughter. "We had 24 people in the house, and it was a dream come true." ■



Home Details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 6,000

ARCHITECT: Architectural Studio

TIMBER PROVIDER: Harmony Timberworks

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE "FIND IT HERE" ON PAGE 66.