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The design of the home, with its varying rooflines along two wings, gives the impression that it was added onto over time. A prow was placed at the rear of the home to not only open up the view from within, but to provide protection from the elements for a patio and hearth located at the base of the double-sided stone fireplace.



Gathered Together

Creating a family oasis in North Carolina



Some people make good mothers, and others good fathers. Robert Barbee broke the mold when it comes to being a great uncle.

Like many people who reach retirement age, Bob decided to explore his roots and get familiar once again with old haunts. He was born in Stanley County, a small rural hamlet about 30 miles east of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Although the home is located on 120 acres in the heart of North Carolina, it was designed to resemble a rustic lodge. Guests find refuge from the elements under an expansive porte-cochere created out of stone, timbers and trusses similar to those found in the great lodges of the West.

As he grew older, business interests drew Bob away from his rural upbringing to the more urban Charlotte. Although he lived most of his adult life in Charlotte, Bob was beginning to feel a strong desire to spend more time with his brother, two sisters and a slew of nieces and nephews back home. He began entertaining thoughts of buying a large tract of land where his family could come to meet and play.

Three rustic-style hammer-beam trusses grace the ceiling over the great room. Lightly stained spruce decking provides a nice contrast to the darker finish used to coat the wood of the Douglas fir timber frame. Light fixtures along the lower edge of the ceiling showcase the woods' rich patina.



The great room's wood-burning fireplace extends 26 feet to the peak. Constructed from Tennessee fieldstone, the fireplace is located in a prow at the rear of the home. Windows and French doors surround the great room, providing light and views of the surrounding countryside, along with access to a stone patio that surrounds three-fourths of the exterior.





A sitting area, known as the keeping room, is located underneath the loft. The floor of the loft was timber framed to not only provide continuity between framed and unframed sections of the home, but to double as the sitting room's ceiling.





To give the sense of walking from a newer part of the house into an older part of the house, thick doorcase openings—like those often seen in older buildings—were used between sections of the home.

Homecoming

Shortly after retiring from his business, Bob took a drive around Stanley County and was surprised at how undeveloped the region still was. “There is a lot of green space and nice open areas there,” Bob says. Soon he began to yearn for his own piece of the beautiful hills that roll through this part of the state.

With those thoughts in mind, Bob contacted a real estate agent and began the process of looking for land. Bob’s agent found what he was looking for about eight months later—a 120-acre farm whose acreage was divided pretty evenly between dense wooded areas and open fields. “It had beautiful topographical features that appealed to me,” Bob says.

With his land in hand, Bob began to think about the type of home he wanted to build on it. Besides having a place where his nieces and nephews could come to play, hike, camp, ride and fish, he decided he would also build a large home on the property that would serve primarily as a family gathering place: where Christmases, Thanksgivings, Fourth of Julys—and especially birthdays—could be celebrated.

The Lodge Look

Since Bob’s dream home had to accommodate at least 35 to 40 people on a regular basis, he thought a home in the lodge style with expansive, open rooms would best handle a large crowd. Lodges aren’t typically found in North Carolina, so Bob consulted books on the great lodges of the West to learn more about the style. “All of (the western lodges), by and large, are timber frame by design,” he says.

While Bob didn’t intend to build a timber frame home, after attending a log and timber frame show in Charlotte, he knew that a home with some sort of timberwork in it would give his home the lodgy, rustic feel he was after. “I felt that the whole rustic setting and purpose for the home fit that image,” Bob says.

By chance, Bob met his home’s designer, Shawn Leatherwood, a residential designer for the firm of McClure, Nicholson and Montgomery, while visiting a restoration project that was underway in the county. When Shawn (who was one of the designers working on the project) learned that Bob hoped to build a unique lodge-style home,

Since it was built for entertaining, the home was constructed with two dining areas to handle both large and small groups. The dining room featured here is used primarily for entertaining a smaller crowd, while the dining area in the great room can seat up to 40 guests.





This room, which is known as the library, was finished with an easy-to-maintain marble floor. It is one of two rooms (the master bath being the other) fitted with an in-floor radiant heat system.

he jumped at the chance to submit sketches for the project.

Bob told Shawn what he was looking for: a home with plenty of open spaces for entertaining large crowds, a commercial-style kitchen and a lot of windows so guests could enjoy the beautiful view. He also told Shawn of his desire for a lodge with some timber framing elements in it. “Those things more or less drove the interior design of the home,” Bob says.

An Expanded Barn

After receiving some preliminary drawings that were right on track with his vision, Bob asked Shawn to design his home. They discussed the type of timber framing that could be included in the home’s structure. Shawn suggested they drive over to Harmony Exchange, a timber frame producer out of Boone, North Carolina, with whom Shawn’s firm had previously worked. “We didn’t visit any of their homes,” Bob says, “but we saw a lot of their portfolio pictures.”

Impressed with what he saw at Harmony Exchange, Bob left it up to Shawn to work out the type of framing system that would be

included in the lodge’s 4,350-square-foot structure, which resembles a cross with one long central portion and two wings on either side. Knowing that it would be too expensive to fully frame a home that large, Shawn recommended that the framing be limited to the long central portion of the home (the section that begins with a porte-cochere and ends with prow at the rear of the home).

The wings that flank either side of the home would be conventionally built. “We wanted the main part of the house to feel like it could have been an old barn that was timber framed and got refurbished, with wings added on either side as the home was expanded over the years,” Shawn explains. “To give the sense of walking from a newer part of the house into an earlier, older part of the house, we created thick, fat case openings between sections. Like those that can be seen in older buildings.”

After coming up with a basic design, Shawn sent the plans over to Mark Howell, a sales manager at Harmony Exchange, to figure out how to fit a dramatic, lodge-like frame into the structure. Mark’s design team started with the roof over the great room



To suspend the loft from the roof (which is covered with insulated panels and spruce tongue-and-groove decking), the design team at Harmony Exchange created a system of three tie trusses.



The master bedroom, which was outfitted with an alcove that serves as Bob's in-home office, is the picture of rustic elegance. The master bedroom is located in a section of the home that was built using conventional construction techniques.

placing three massive hammerbeam trusses above the space. The trusses would not only support the roof above this section of the home, but would add a bit of drama to the space as well as soak up some of the volume.

To give the room the feeling of a barn, a full timber frame bent was used to divide the dining area from a sitting room located under the loft. The team tackled the loft space next since it needed to be suspended from the roof. Using three timber-framed collar tie trusses, the loft was secured to the structure.

And finally, to maintain continuity between framed and unframed portions of the home, Mark's team even timber framed the loft's floor system, leaving the floor joists exposed to the sitting room below. "It's a very efficient way to build a loft," Mark says, "since the ceiling acts as the floor above."

With the amount of framing to be included in the home decided, the next question was what type of framing should be used: decorative or structural. "We priced it both ways," Shawn says. Surprised by the reasonable estimate they received, they decided to use structural timbers. "When

you factor everything in, it's really a wash in price," Shawn says. "Plus you have experts in timber framing putting it up."

Framed and Ready

When the blueprints were ready, Bob arranged to have builder Terry Whitley, in nearby Oakboro, finish the home after Harmony Exchange's crew was finished erecting the framed portion of the home.

Bob, ever the good uncle, has made his home open to his family members whatever the occasion. He couldn't be more satisfied and pleased that he is able to share his good fortune with the ones he loves the most in this world. "The concept was to build a house that could become a family gathering place," Bob says. "It is beautifully serving its purpose." **THI**

RESOURCES:

Harmony Exchange:

www.harmonyexchange.com,
(800) 968-9663

Leatherwood Custom Homes:

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