

The Karchners' home sits on a sloping site. The lower level exterior is faced with stone, the perfect accent to the log walls. The roofing is a mix of shingles and metal. In every season, Melinda and David enjoy spending time on the porch, overlooking the pond, forest and pastures that surround them.



By Janice Brewster | Photography by Allen Mowery



# *A Step in Time*

*Logs, timbers and a passion for antiques come together  
in a Pennsylvania couple's modern-day homestead.*



A soaring stone chimney sits at the center of the home. The closed firebox burns wood efficiently while providing a view of the dancing flames.

opposite The kitchen cabinets are topped with chipped-edge honed granite. A reclaimed-wood countertop on the island adds character, as does the Elmira reproduction range.



**I**n Pennsylvania, the first day of deer hunting season is nothing short of an unofficial holiday. Throngs of hunters take to the woods. Schools are closed, as are many businesses, but of the stores that remain open, many hold “deer lonely ladies day” sales — an event the hunters’ wives seek out as much as their husbands search for that prize buck. Several years ago, a chance visit to a log home company on “deer lonely ladies day” was the start of a beautiful home.

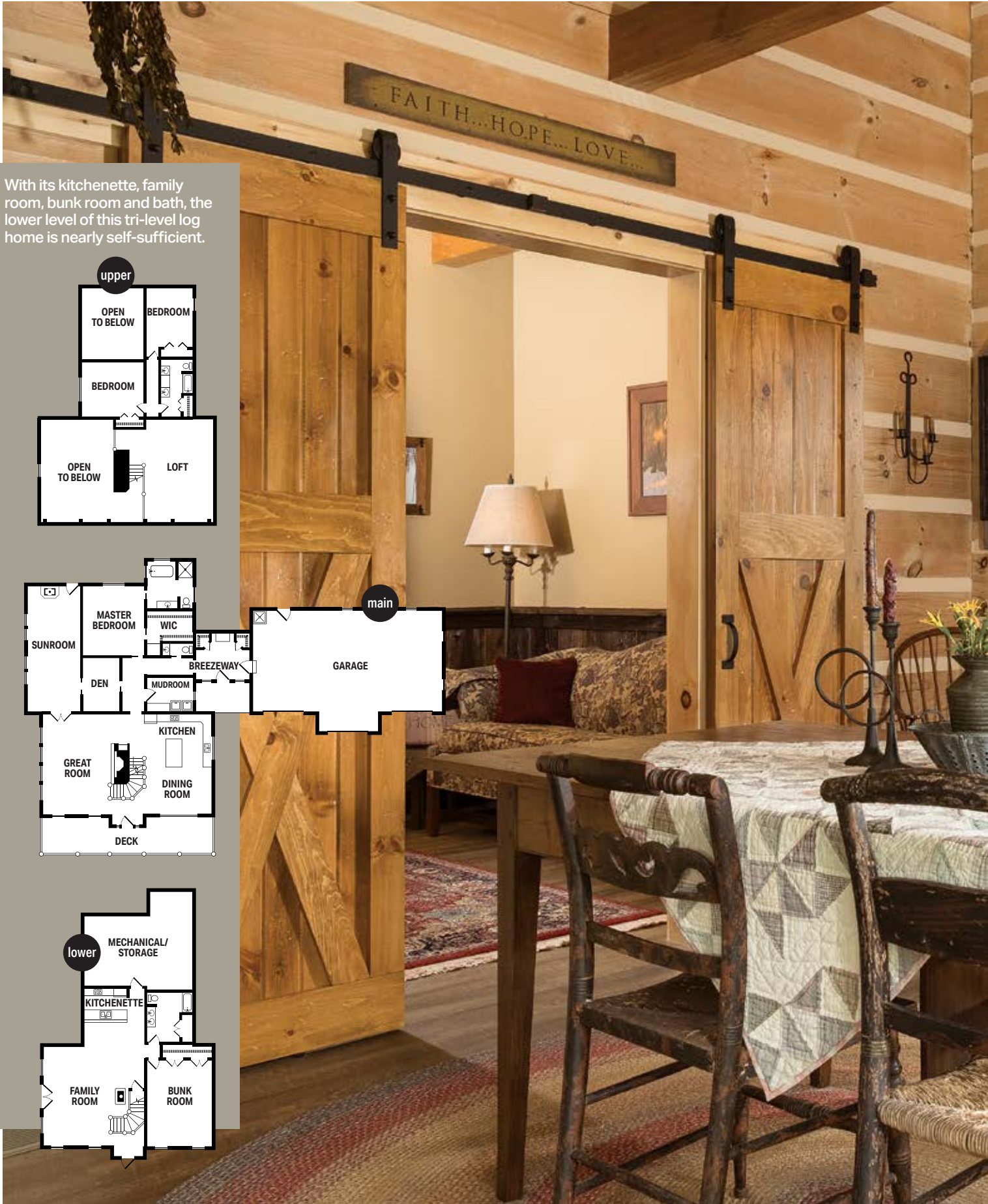
On that day, Melinda Karchner stopped by the offices of Timberhaven Log & Timber Homes in Middleburg, Pennsylvania. She met with owner Lynda Tompkins and explained that she and her husband, David, were hoping to build a house in the area for their retirement years. Melinda and Lynda immediately began to peruse the company’s stock designs, and, in the process, a vision began to form. Before long, plans were in place to build a new log home that celebrated the legacy of the Karchner family.

The couple wanted their home to

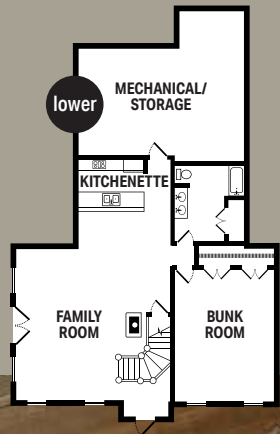
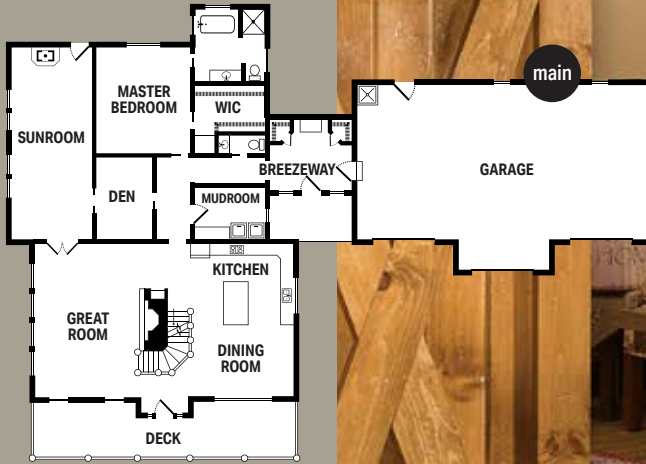
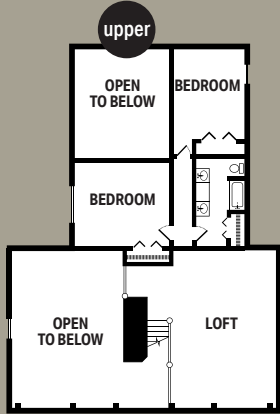
have a timeless feel. They chose square, hand-hewn logs accented with chinking. Timber framing and ceilings lined with reclaimed wood add even more rustic charm. “It’s hard to decide between logs and timber framing,” Melinda says. “We have the best of both.”

“Based on their location, the Karchners wanted a more traditional farmhouse-style design,” Lynda adds. “It’s evident as soon as you see the stacked porches on the front.” Timber accents and classic dormered windows reinforce the motif.

The couple looked forward to furnish-



With its kitchenette, family room, bunk room and bath, the lower level of this tri-level log home is nearly self-sufficient.





French doors from the great room open out onto an expansive sunroom. Behind the rustic-chic, space-saving sliding barn doors is the den.

ing the nearly 6,000-square-foot, four-bedroom home with family heirlooms and antiques, so this intention was never far from their minds during the design phase. As they revised their plans, they even made space for a nook on the lower level that mimics an old-time general store. Jars of food they canned themselves and penny candy line the shelves. “The grandkids love to sneak into the candy jars,” Melinda says with a laugh. An antique cash register rests on the counter.

Instead of new vanities for the home’s powder room and three full bathrooms, Melinda chose antique furnishings and had them fitted with sinks. “One had been my grandmother’s buffet that was part of her dining room set,” Melinda says. An old ice chest from David’s mother’s home now serves as a vanity, too.

While they spent the years before retirement at their home in Connecticut, the Karchners enjoyed vacations at their log home. Holiday gatherings, summer getaways and Penn State football weekends in the fall found them entertaining family and friends frequently. To make sure they could accommodate a crowd, Melinda and David outfitted the home’s lower level with an oversized bunk room. Their sloping site allows for a walk-out lower level filled with natural light.

Upstairs, the kitchen makes meal prep easy whether they are cooking for two or 20. For the cabinetry, the Karchners chose an Amish supplier, Martin Custom Cabinets in Port Trevorton, Pennsylvania. “We went to their shop; there’s no internet,” Melinda recalls. “They pulled out graph paper and asked what we





On the lower level, a mini general store set-up is filled with antique treasures and jars of penny candy, much to the Karchner grandchildren's delight.

# HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE  
5,985 including basement

BEDROOMS 4      BATHS 3.5

LOG PROVIDER  
TIMBERHAVEN LOG & TIMBER HOMES  
[loghome.com/timberhaven-log-homes](http://loghome.com/timberhaven-log-homes)

wanted.” Martin Cabinets worked with Melinda to find just the right mustard color for the painted cabinets that comprise the island. In the dining area, a 9-foot, live-edge walnut table handcrafted by the couple’s nephew ensures everyone has a place to enjoy a home-cooked meal.

At the center of the home is a fireplace with a soaring stone chimney. A wood-stove insert offers efficient heating while its glass doors keep the fire visible. “It’s just wonderful,” Melinda says.

Because the Karchners are both Pennsylvania natives, they were eager to find property that took advantage of local natural beauty. More than 240 acres surround their home. Much of it is leased by local farmers who plant crops, but there are plenty of trees and a stream that flows behind the house.

“During the summer, when we’re out on the porch, the views are simply beautiful. In the morning, we have coffee. In the evening, we have a glass of wine,” Melinda says. An outdoor-speaker system brings music to the porch. And David always keeps a pair of binoculars handy for spotting deer and other wildlife.

“No matter the season,” Melinda sighs, “it’s just so peaceful here.”



MELINDA AND DAVID'S  
*special*  
spaces



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1 With grandchildren in mind, Melinda and David created the perfect home for family life. The antique “general store” is a frequent hangout. 2 Hand-hewn log walls with bands of chinking create a warm, timeless feel in the home’s front entry. 3 Aglow in twilight, the Karchners’ Pennsylvania home welcomes friends and family, while overlooking a generous pond. 4 The loft is one of the family’s favorite places in the home. Here, they relax, put their phones away and spend quality time together. 5 The bunk room on the lower level features a barnwood-lined ceiling and serves as overflow lodging for guests of all ages.

