



This lakefront log home has everything you need for a good time — and a few extras you didn't know you needed.

PARTY central in the Poconos

BY Suzanna Logan | PHOTOGRAPHY BY Brett Hosterman

The home isn't just big in size. It's got character to spare! The contrasting timber details pop against the darker-stained pine logs, while the stonework adds another point of interest. The mixed-materials roof — architectural shingles topped by standing seam metal — rounds out the home's layered look.



Step inside Tom and Christine Nikles' grand log home on the edge of Pennsylvania's Lake Wallenpaupack and one thing becomes immediately clear—this house was made for partying.

The well-stocked, backlit bar that stretches across the great room is your first clue. Then comes the full-size stage set with instruments ready and waiting for an impromptu jam session to break out.

Next, the game room, outfitted with billiards, darts and Skee-Ball continues the fun.

The spaces outside the walls deliver the final flourish, where a timber-covered deck (with a fireplace) leading to a terraced outdoor living area, ringed by a fire pit, waterfall and hot tub, promise to keep the good times going all night long.

ABOVE Carefully curated furnishings add warmth and character to the great room. "When you're doing a rustic home, you can't just go to Target," says Christine. Throughout their 20 years together, the couple had been collecting antiques and unique finds. "We had all these really cool pieces in storage, just waiting for the right place," she says.

OPPOSITE, TOP In the foyer, a welcoming display area for family photos and mementos serves a dual purpose—it's also the backside of the great room's built-in bar (shown above).

BOTTOM The covered deck is one of the Nikles' favorite spaces through all four seasons. "Everyone loves being out there rain, snow or sunshine," Christine says.





ABOVE A mix of wood tones, including oak flooring and maple cabinetry, brings warmth to the cozy kitchen. A well-placed window above the sink, glass-front cabinets and a combination of recessed and pendant lighting keep the wood-rich space feeling bright and inviting.

INSET In the pantry just off the kitchen, built-in bookcases are one example of the home's thoughtful custom details. "I have been collecting cookbooks and magazines for years, so I dreamed of having bookcases near the kitchen to store them," Christine says. An antique baker's rack that Tom had fitted with glass keeps canned goods within easy reach.



ABOVE Despite the home's grand scale, each space maintains an inviting feel, including the dining nook, with its lowered ceiling. "Even though it is a large home, it's still so cozy," affirms Christine. "We wanted it to be big and functional for our family and friends but still be intimate."

For the couple, happy vibes have always been a part of their Poconos experience. Both Tom and Christine have fond childhood memories of vacationing with their families in the area. "We would have family reunions, and the grandparents would be playing polka on the accordions," recalls Tom. Hoping to continue the memory-making traditions with their own grandchildren, friends and family, the couple purchased an A-frame cabin about five minutes from the lake in 2014.

But like a siren's song, the water continued to call them closer. The couple began a search for lakefront properties but found, as with most waterside settings, the lots were "right on top of each other," according to Christine. They knew their vision needed space—

and lots of it. So, when a sprawling 8.8-acre lot with 300 feet of waterfrontage came on the market ("unheard of in this area," declares Tom) they couldn't resist.

They sold the A-frame and moved into the existing 700-square-foot hunter's cabin on the property. "We always knew we wanted a log and timber home," says Tom. Christine adds: "Once the property fell into place, we began searching for the right team and materials for our dream home."

They linked up with Timberhaven Log and Timber Homes through local representative Bob Romano, who visited the Nikles' site with builder Gille Roy for their initial meeting. "I had no idea the scope of the project when we showed up," Bob admits.



ABOVE Themed like a medieval castle, the primary suite features a granite accent wall with narrow, period-appropriate windows. "If you look closely, you can see the sparkles in the stone," says Tom. To accommodate the weight of the rock, a support wall had to be added in the basement. "Some areas of the stone are 4 inches thick," he continues. "It was amazing watching them chip away at the rock to get the stones to fit just right."

"We were sitting in a little log cabin, and Tom pulls out a drawing of this grand log home. It was like going from one extreme to the other."

Ready to take the next step—choosing their materials—the Nikles met with Timberhaven's owner Lynda Tompkins. "They wanted a heavier look, so we went with large pine logs, aggressive beam work and a hand-hewn style," she says of the log structure with a beam-and-purlin roof system.

The scale of the materials matches the sheer size of the home, which includes an impressive 8,800 square feet of living space. The design goals for the sprawling spaces were twofold. Knowing this would be their forever place, the Nikles were intentional about one-level living. In addition to placing the primary suite on the main floor, they also included an adjacent laundry room and office. "This is where we see ourselves growing old together, so we have



TOP The statement-making soaking tub mirrors the granite-alcove treatment of the adjoining primary bedroom.

BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT Even the small half-bath is given the royal treatment. A stone vessel sink is mounted on an open live-edge slab, while the plumbing is cleverly disguised beneath.

Inspired by the home's wooded setting, a forest-themed mural that Christine found on Etsy serves as a serene backdrop in the guest bedroom she calls "the white-tail room."

RIGHT Many of the pieces in Christine's main-floor office were handcrafted from hickory wood by local Amish artisans.

BELOW The rear covered deck has a prime view of Lake Wallenpaupack. The generous space is perfect for grilling and enjoying casual outdoor meals, thanks to the built-in bartop behind the seating area.



“everything we need on the main floor, with no steps at all from the garage,” Christine says.

Once their personal plans were set, they shifted their sights to the second part of their goal: creating a welcoming place for friends and family. “We had this dream of having a place where everyone wanted to be, a gathering place where we could entertain,” says Christine. “Every inch of this home is custom-designed with that in mind.”

In addition to the made-for-fun features, a number of over-the-top custom details add to the home’s undeniable appeal. From the soaring, timber-covered entry and hidden doorways disguised as bookcases to the themed bedroom suites, the home’s “wow” factor is palpable. And, according to Tom, the reactions never get old. “Everyone that stops by is blown away,” he says.

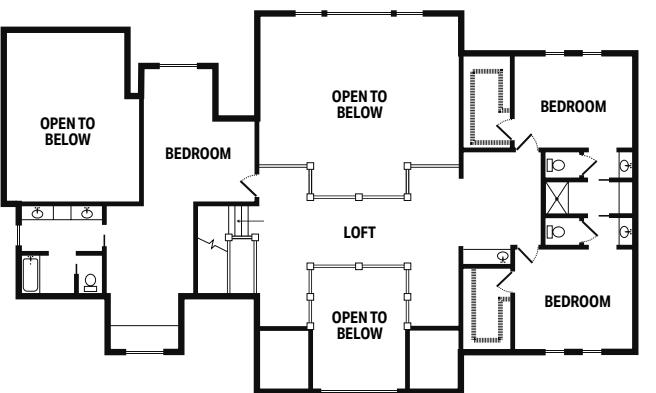
And they aren’t the only ones. “When I wake up every day, I have to pinch myself,” Christine says. “It’s everything we hoped for and so much more.”



Behind hand-carved wooden doors from Great River Door Company, the home's grand two-story foyer includes a vaulted ceiling with a timber truss, a Canadian-made antler chandelier and Christine's prized antique finds.



ABOVE The footprint of this super-sized house is sprawling by design. Christine and Tom wanted all the necessary spaces on one level for future accessibility, but the layout also affords expansive views of the lake that lies just outside their back door.



DETAILS

HOME

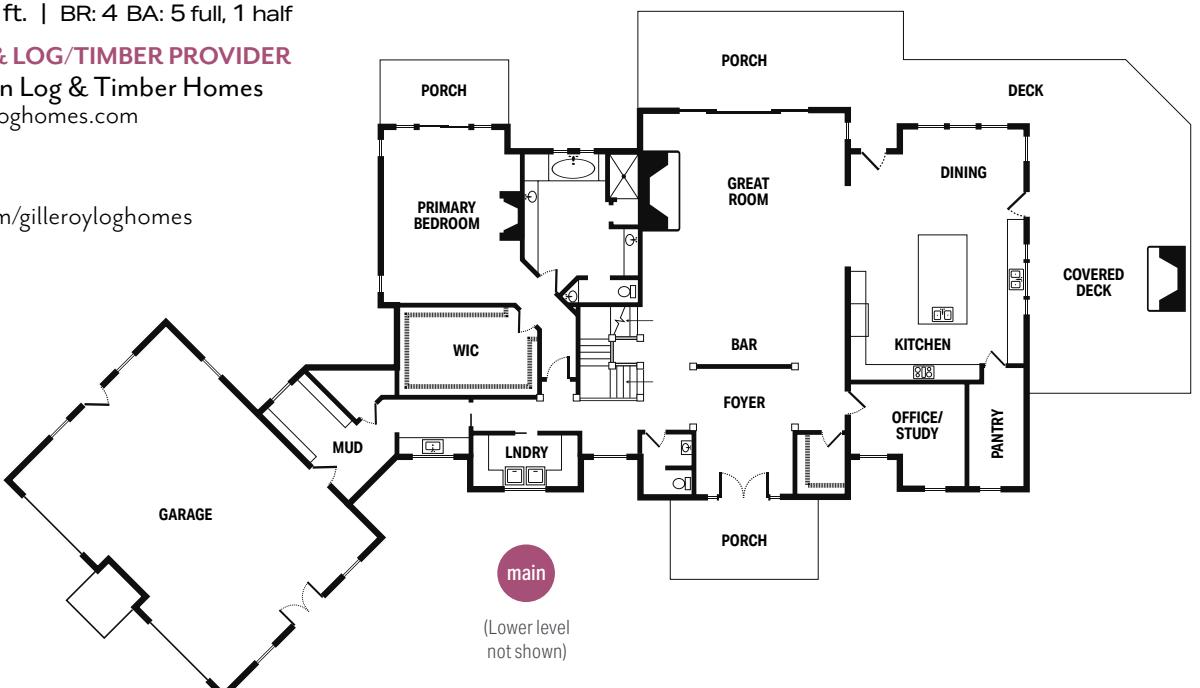
8,800 sq. ft. | BR: 4 BA: 5 full, 1 half

DESIGNER & LOG/TIMBER PROVIDER

Timberhaven Log & Timber Homes
timberhavenloghomes.com

BUILDER

Gille Roy
facebook.com/gilleroyloghomes



LEFT The treads of the heavy-timber staircase that connects the three levels are lit for safety as well as effect.

ABOVE A casual seating area, located near the stage lets friends and family take in the show or the fireplace from the comfort of overstuffed leather chairs.



ABOVE "There is something fun for everyone on the bottom floor," says Tom of the lower level, which features a bar, stage, game room and living area with fireplace. "My son can be playing music and my grandson doing video games, while we are playing cards," he says.