

the VIEW from the TOP

In this West Virginia cabin retreat, weekends mean more than getting away from it all; they mean getting back to what really matters.

The wall of glass along the rear of the home offers prime viewing of the area wildlife. "We sit on the couch in the great room and watch the birds just soar. They don't even have to flap their wings because of how the heat rises along the ridge," explains Kris. The couple intentionally stepped away from traditional woodsy cabin decor, instead choosing modern pieces with timeless style.





Extending the oak cabinets to the ceiling was a must for Kris. "We put in glass fronts, and our plan is to add LED lights and some special glassware," he says. The darker tones of the quartz countertops continue the natural, warm feel of the space where everyone loves to gather.

Five days a week, Kris and Emily Waite live in the hustle you'd expect of a young family residing in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Kris works as an engineer for Amazon, while Emily shuttles their 8- and 10-year-old daughters, Zoe and Amy, to a rotation of extracurricular activities. "We are suburbanites to the core," Emily says with a laugh.

But come Friday evening, the hustle fades as the family loads up the kids and their pair of Shih Tzus then heads two hours west to their slice of paradise: a log home set on 20 acres in the hills of West Virginia. There, time seems to melt away as million-dollar views come into focus accompanied by the scent of pine and a to-do list scrawled only with "together time." It's a realization of a dream Kris has carried since childhood.

"Growing up, we would visit my grandma in Colorado every summer," he says. "She had three acres of land in nowhere-ville where we would spend all day exploring, catching toads and lizards. It has always been a lifelong dream of mine to have land of my own like that."

But unlike some couples who set their sights on retirement, Kris and Emily wanted to give their daughters a place to create their own childhood memories of outdoor adventure. The family began looking for land in 2021. At first, their main criterion was staying within a two-hour radius of their primary home. But not long into their search, the parameters—and the priorities—shifted.

"While we were visiting one property, I was tromping through the woods with my daughters. We were having a great time, until my youngest daughter started crying, saying that a spider had landed on her," Kris explains. "Turns out, it was a tick, and so we rushed out of the forest... and between the three



ABOVE The log walls and tongue-and-groove ceilings bring warmth and a sense of continuity into the main floor bedroom, while the drywall adds another layer of visual interest. “It gives a pop of color and a little contrast,” says Timberhaven representative Brad Mercer.



ABOVE In the primary bath, blue veining in the countertop picks up the hue from the accent tiles and infuses personality without overstepping the home’s minimalist aesthetic.

of us, found a total of 85 ticks.” From that point on, Kris adopted a “tick infestation test,” walking each property to ensure an all-clear. “That basically became number one on our priority list,” he says.

During a weekend visit to West Virginia, Kris discovered a gated community with 20-acre plots. The site they visited passed the “tick test” with flying colors, but it also offered so much more. “It was nice and flat, with hints of a view through the trees,” he says. Once the lot was cleared, the family was greeted with “one of the best views in the entire community,” he says.

Ensuring those jaw-dropping views were accessible throughout the home became the driving force behind the design for their new getaway. After touring a local log home by their builder Jason Hughes, the Waites were inspired by the structure’s minimalist aesthetic and, most importantly, features that put all eyes on the views. An elevated design placed the main

living on the second floor, while wide-open interiors and a shed roof creating vaulted ceilings maximized interior views through a rear wall of glass. “We liked that there was this big space with lots of light,” says Kris. “But because it’s log, it still has that warmth from the wood.”

Another bonus of the raised layout was the opportunity to add a walk-out lower level—a factor that would significantly increase the main floor’s 1,800 square feet of living space and ensure the home would be accessible and comfortable for friends and family. “When we first started out, the idea was to have a small hunter’s cabin in the woods,” says Kris, with a chuckle. “But the more we talked, the more things changed. It started with, ‘We might want to have grandparents over for the holidays,’ and then we said, ‘The cousins would want to come, too.’ So we added another bedroom, then another and more living space. Things just kept getting bigger and bigger.”



ABOVE The expansive screened porch, complete with a convenient gas-fueled fireplace, is easily accessed from both the kitchen and dining room. But it's the big views that steal the show.

The final tally includes two bedrooms and bathrooms on the main floor for Kris and Emily and their daughters, with an additional pair of bedrooms and a bunk room on the lower level for guests—an arrangement that's ideal for all ages and physical abilities. In addition to the open kitchen, dining and living area on the main floor, the large recreation space on the lower level promises room for the whole crew.

The other go-to gathering area for the Waites and their visitors is the 2,000 square feet of outdoor living space, which include an

open-air deck, covered patio and screened-in porch with stone fireplace. "It's our favorite place to sit, make a fire and relax," says Emily.

The property itself also invites exploration. While Kris says his girls don't hunt lizards like he did as a youth, they've found their own form of outdoor fun. Archery, paintball and exploring the miles of trails on their ATV all draw the family together every weekend. "This is where we go to escape suburbia," Kris says. "You can't see any neighbors. You have the views and the smell of the timber. It's such a peaceful place."

DETAILS

HOME

3,484 sq. ft. | BR: 3 to 5 BA: 3

BUILDER

Bryson Homes
brysonhomes.net

LOG PROVIDER

Timberhaven
Log & Timber Homes
timberhavenloghomes.com

BELOW Timberhaven representative Brad Mercer, who worked alongside Jason and the couple, shares details about the eastern white pine logs used to build their modern log home: "The Waites chose a 6-by-12-inch premium engineered log. The benefit of these engineered logs is that there is virtually no checking or settling, and they're inherently stronger than one solid log. The Dutch lap profile has a little slant on the top, giving a subtle 3D-effect." Simple dovetail corners round out the look.

