



The Roberts' entryway is inviting. Dressed with holiday greenery, Project manager Paul Miller describes this Beaver Creek, Colorado, home as a "mix between the grand national park lodges of the American West and the smaller-scaled Adirondack camps."



# Colorado Cabin Castle

Old World meets Old West at this Beaver Creek log lodge

Story by Dan Klingsmith Photos by Jeff Scroggins



The dining room, *this page*, and the kitchen, *opposite page*, were made for large-scale entertaining. The challenge of building a home grand enough for large social functions while keeping the warmth and intimacy of a cozy cabin was met beautifully.

“I wanted a little log cabin, and my husband wanted something larger,” laughs Jill Robert when referring to their 10,000-square-foot, stacked-log vacation lodge nestled into a hillside of Beaver Creek, Colorado’s, Strawberry Park. “We jokingly call it the ‘Log Mahal.’”

It’s a clever appellation, for it captures the inherent design dichotomy that faced the Robert family. How do you create a log home grand enough to hold large social functions or serve as a corporate retreat and at the same time impart the warmth and intimacy of a cozy cabin of yesteryear?

“It’s in the details,” confides Jill, who as proprietor of her own design firm, Marmalade Interiors, acted as her own client in addition to enlisting the services of RMT Architects and Beck Building Company, both located in Avon, Colorado.

Project architect Paul Miller agrees. “There were a lot of people involved in detailing this house,” he recalls. The Roberts wanted a residence that responded well to its natural environment, looked as though it might have been there for 100 years and also integrated special design themes. “The challenge was to create a cohesive whole so that it all could work successfully together,” reflects Paul.

RMT Architects’ solution was to use the outside expression of the architecture internally. “It was a unified design inside and out,” explains Paul. “Think of it as mix between the grand national park lodges of the American West and the smaller-scaled Adirondack camps of the eastern U.S.”





*This page:* The great room is filled with fine antique furniture and fixtures purchased at auctions and estate sales. *Opposite page:* The Roberts' 10,000-square-foot home is constructed from Colorado moss rock and dead-standing spruce logs from Montana.



## An infinite supply of large windows welcomes the Gore Range.

Substantial footings of Colorado moss rock emerge from the site to hold the spruce log structure constructed of harvested dead-standing trees from Montana. Embracing a knoll holding natural rock outcroppings which incorporate a waterfall streaming into the outdoor pool and spa tub, the residence transitions seamlessly into the surrounding natural landscape. A covered porch wraps around three-quarters of the facade to create outdoor living quarters on the home's southern and eastern exposures. An infinite supply of large windows welcomes the ever-enchanting relief of the Gore Range.

Inside, the same exterior materials are used: over-scaled spruce stacked logs in addition to generous amounts of natural rock and stone forming walls, archways and fireplaces. "For the most part the logs had their cambium layer left intact," explains Paul. "It makes them more difficult to handle during the construction process, but they give a weathered feel, more like a handcrafted home from a different era." Complementing the extensive use of spruce is hefty, planked Douglas fir flooring, hand distressed and treated with seven layers of tongue oil to lend an overall aged effect.

To further instill a vintage atmosphere to the various spaces, considerable thought went into the lighting program. "Notice the lack of recessed fixtures," points out Paul. "We used sconces, chandeliers, pendants and old-fashioned lamps to maintain that feeling as if it's an old building absent modern technology."

Moreover, the Roberts had purchased at auctions and estate sales many signature pieces of fine antique furniture and fixtures prior to design and construction—items that Jill in her self-proclaimed "obsessive creativity" had acquired with an eye toward influencing the



lodge's overall character. "I wanted a rugged, natural looking place—really American West with Old World European antiques," she comments. "And it had to have a sense of humor, a friendly home where you can put your feet up anywhere...in rooms that engulf you by a whole world, an entire feeling."

Yes, these rooms have personality. Consider the great room, nearly 1,000 square feet of rustic sophistication with 20-foot-high vaulted ceilings, graced with massive "character log" rafters and trusses and a commanding two-story-high fireplace of rough moss rock. The adjoining kitchen is distinctive too, dressed with tall cabinetry of knotty alder, lightly honed slab sandstone surfaces, and copper sink basins. "I was really picky about everything looking old and western," admits Jill.

Persistence has payoff, and nowhere is this more evident than in the six themed junior suites with matching bathrooms. The master bedroom tips a Stetson to True Grit sensibilities, with a striking bed fashioned after a Ralph Lauren design, distressed leather chairs, carved armoires, kilim carpets and old saddles as decorative accessories. A master bath crafted of slab-stone and rock adds to the suite's cabin-in-the-woods ambience.

Soft neutral tones ensure a calming, contemplative demeanor to the Navajo bedroom, set with a commodious log bed and furniture, and accented with Edward Curtis photographs in addition to primitive Native American artifacts. A peek into the Adirondack bedroom reveals a comfortable retreat reminiscent of a rustic camp decorated with a plaid motif and outfitted with twig and bark furniture.

The upstairs office also follows Adirondack styling, this time more regal, more masculine. Patterned after a study Jill found in an old photograph, this modern-day homage even

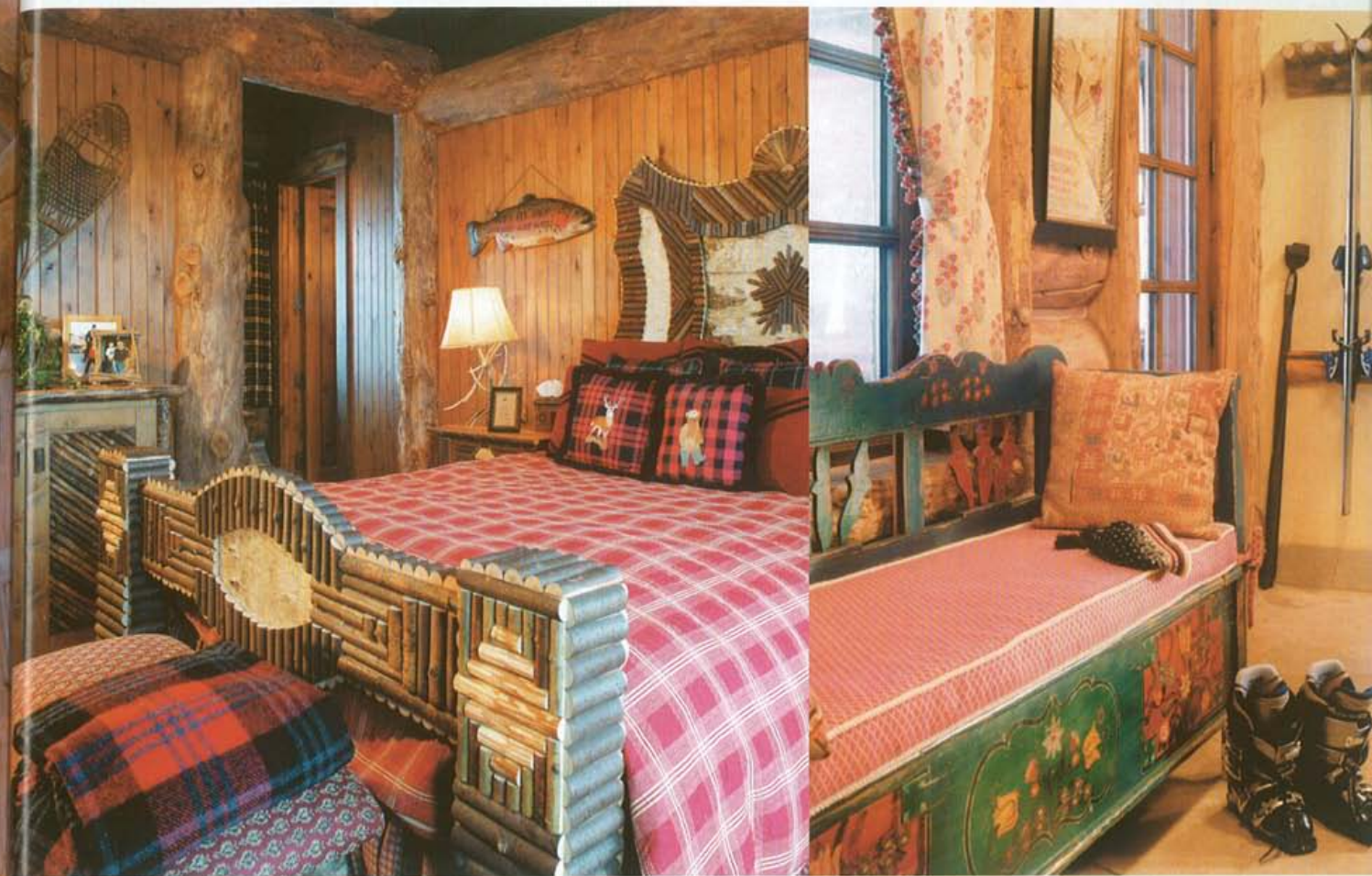


*This page:* The master suite is a study in Western sensibility, with a mix of European furnishings, kilim carpets and old saddles as decorative accessories. A master bath created of slabstone and rock, *opposite page*, adds to the suite's cabin-in-the-woods ambience.





*This page:* Large spruce logs and moss rock make for an impressive entryway. *Opposite page, left:* A guest room has a distinct Adirondack feel, with its rustic twig bed and accessories. A separate ski room, *right,* makes it easy to get ready for a day on the slopes.



“I was really picky about everything looking old and western.”

includes a replica of the fireplace, its engaged log columns holding an elaborate mantle set with an antique taxidermy scene of a majestic mountain lion. The camp-casual atmosphere is further enlivened by vibrant Persian carpets and a magnificent antique bibliotheca. The study's bathroom continues the ruggedly chic scheme with a log sink and walls upholstered with imitation bear fur.

Mosey to the lower level to enter yet more Old West milieus. Stroll into the game room, scan over the billiard table to take in the Gore Range, then belly up to the bar recalling a splendid saloon of a western boomtown. Constructed of white oak finished to a gray patina, the bar's design stems from a photo Jill found in an old *Look* magazine.

After a libation, saunter into the “Lucky Luke” theater. Modeled after Aspen, Colorado's, famed Wheeler Opera House, this entertainment venue is luxuriant with High Victorian detailing: heavy, red curtains for the stage-cum-screen, tufted navy-blue velvet ceiling, leather wainscoting, and seating for nine in soft, burgundy-colored leather chairs.

And dare if you will to discover the downstairs secret passage to the wine cellar, which Paul calls “one of the finest rooms in the house.”

Inspired by European castle keeps, a stone hall illuminated by flickering flame-like lanterns leads to an antique door where behind a tasteful hideaway waits. Beneath the vaulted stone ceiling rest racks for 750 bottles of wine—all softly glowing from inset low-voltage lighting that also illuminates a grand wine-tasting table and the wonderful antique hutch nestled into a niche.

Oh, and there is another secret room as well, but that will have to remain this Colorado cabin castle's mystery. ■