

# southern revival

THE APPALACHIAN HOMESTEAD CABIN IS REBORN  
WITH A FOCUS ON SIMPLICITY IN DESIGN, LOCAL  
MATERIALS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP.



STORY CHRIS WOOD PHOTOGRAPHY F&E SCHMIDT



**Left:** A connection to the land, a desire for simplified living and the whimsy afforded by a slower but more satisfying pace of life is on show on the porch, where a 19th-century wooden table is adorned with baskets, antique jugs and the bounty of the surrounding natural environment.

**Below:** Though seamlessly blending into the topography of its natural environment, Doug and Susan David's custom Appalachian-style cabin features a modern kitchen, three bedrooms and two baths, and a fieldstone chimney.







**d**oug David knows first-hand the frenetic, mass-media pace of 21st-century living. As a journalist turned cable executive, David helped with the launch of HBO and was the marketing manager for CNN before working for Cox cable and then building his own mini-cable empire. Upon retirement, he and his wife Susan traveled across the globe, climbing the Matterhorn and Mt. Kilimanjaro before finally realizing that what they really yearned for was a return to the simplicity and quiet solitude of their own mountain retreat. They found that with their 19th-century homestead-styled custom wood cabin.

It's nestled in a hollow on the 1,500-acre Anderson

Creek Retreat in Ellijay, Georgia, and according to Doug, "The land is a microcosm of Southern Appalachia." His family has held the majority of the acreage since the 1840s. "It has diverse topography of creeks, mountains and fallow fields. There's mountain laurel, rhododendrons, pine, hemlock and wild flowers feeding off the headwaters, streams, creeks and springs in a rich and unspoiled setting."

Near one of the largest of those fresh-water springs, and on the surviving cornerstones of an original homestead cabin, the Davids built their three-bedroom, two-bath, 2,350-square-foot home. Styled on Southern Appalachian mountain cabins of the 1800s, the Davids and architect Bill Tucker of Fredericksburg, Virginia-





**Above:** The living room features a collection of antique wooden furniture with the fieldstone fireplace acting as a natural focal point. Dark, natural stone and stained woods contrast with heart pine flooring for an elegant simplicity, and higher ceilings increase breathing room without sacrificing rustic intimacy.

**Left:** Milk-washed tongue-and-groove white pine clapboard is reversed and butt-jointed for an "imperfect" look. Custom built-in bookshelves are kept purposely simple to maintain the subtle vernacular of 19th-century Appalachian cabin design.

**Opposite:** A wrap-around porch features bark stripped poplar columns cut from trees on the property.



## southern revival





**Opposite page, left:** Historical design, a strived-for architectural simplicity and connection to outdoor spaces culminate in the dining room, where divided-lite transoms increase light and air circulation while remaining in proportion to the "window vocabulary" of the home, says architect Bill Tucker.

**Inset:** Turn-of-the-century gas lamps outfit the kitchen (and other rooms in the home) but have been electrified. Dark green stained kitchen cabinetry and vertical clapboard help to extend headroom in a space that features a lower ceiling.

**This page:** Historical emulation need not sacrifice modern luxury: Waterworks fixtures and stainless steel appliances offset a rustic kitchen with custom cabinetry. Use of modular furniture as a central island can turn the kitchen into a social gathering area and pocket doors can close off the space until its dishwashing time.

“It’s a larger house than you would imagine from the outside, because we played with scale a little bit, but always following the architectural language to lay out the house simply and modestly.” —BILL TUCKER, ARCHITECT





*The David's homestead features a spacious downstairs master bedroom. Doug cherishes the solitude of his cabin, but keeps a secret satellite TV and internet connection hotwired in the bedroom. "I love natural spaces and beauty," he says, "but I also love my DSL."*

based William B. Tucker Architects took painstaking efforts to recreate a simple design by incorporating the local materials and craftsmanship that homesteaders would've relied on nearly two centuries ago.

White pine siding was milled from logs cleared onsite by three generations of the Wishon family in nearby Ellijay. The planks were rough cut and milled to create a thicker, hardier profile. Recalling historical regional architecture, the Wishons also recommended the porch columns be cut from poplar. The poplar bark itself—used in the 1800s as an alternative to chestnut bark for roofing material—gives way to Galvalume steel snap-lock standing-seam roofing, which retains a rustic and simple profile while giving greater protection from rain and better

heat reflection of the southern sun.

Windows and doors were slightly enlarged to give the home a smaller appearance and visual impact in conjunction with its natural surroundings. "We tried to draw from this subtle vernacular of mountain cabins," Bill says. "It's a larger house than you would imagine from the outside, because we played with scale a little bit, but always following the architectural language to lay out the house simply and modestly."

Interior construction and finishes were also accomplished with an eye towards simplicity and historical accuracy. The walls are white pine, tongue-and-groove clapboard that's reversed to hide the groove and, instead, butt-jointed and milk-washed, a technique based on the interior of the Tully Smith historic farmhouse outside of Atlanta. Likewise, the kitchen was inspired by the same structure. Although Doug acquiesced on modern fixtures, and stainless steel appliances instead



*On the front porch, storage maximizes both efficiency and élan, with baskets to organize gardening tools and odds and ends while waders and a fishing pole stand ready for what luck the nearby Anderson creek bestows on resident anglers.*

of a pot-belly stove, the custom, poplar box cabinets emulate 19th-century styling and efficiency.

Kitchen pocket doors enable a larger common area open for entertaining or, when closed off, create a comfortable and warming intimacy in the living room. The David's collection of antique wooden furniture sets off the heart pine plank flooring, and turn-of-the-century gas lamps (now electrified) add to the home's quiet sense of nostalgia.

"It's really my favorite room in the house, sitting next to the fire, having a cup of coffee," Doug says. "The whole house and property is about having a beautiful place where two people can go and have a quiet conversation. We think that's kind of nice: an enduring chance to enjoy a peaceful setting in a preserved, natural environment." **CWH**

### home bio:

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 2,350

3 bedrooms, 2 baths

ARCHITECT: William B. Tucker Architects

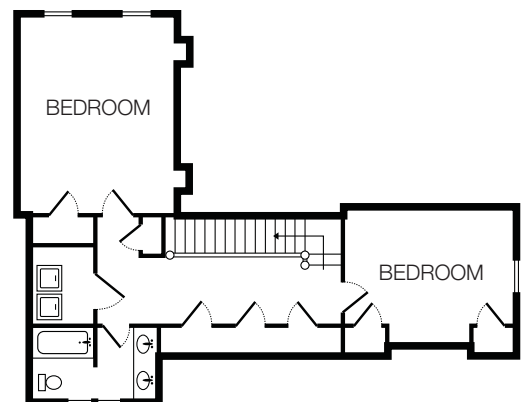
BUILDER: Wes Stone/John Wesley Hammer Construction

FLOORING: Heart pine planks

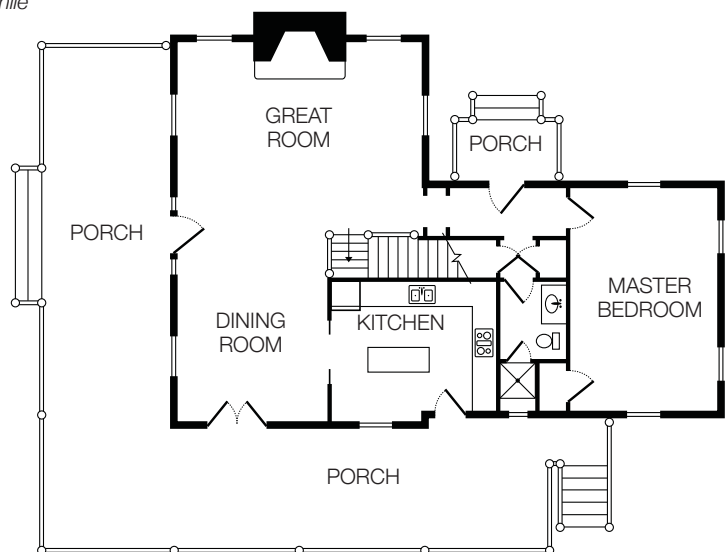
ROOFING: Corrugated metal

SIDING: Rough cut white pine

WINDOWS: Custom



UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL