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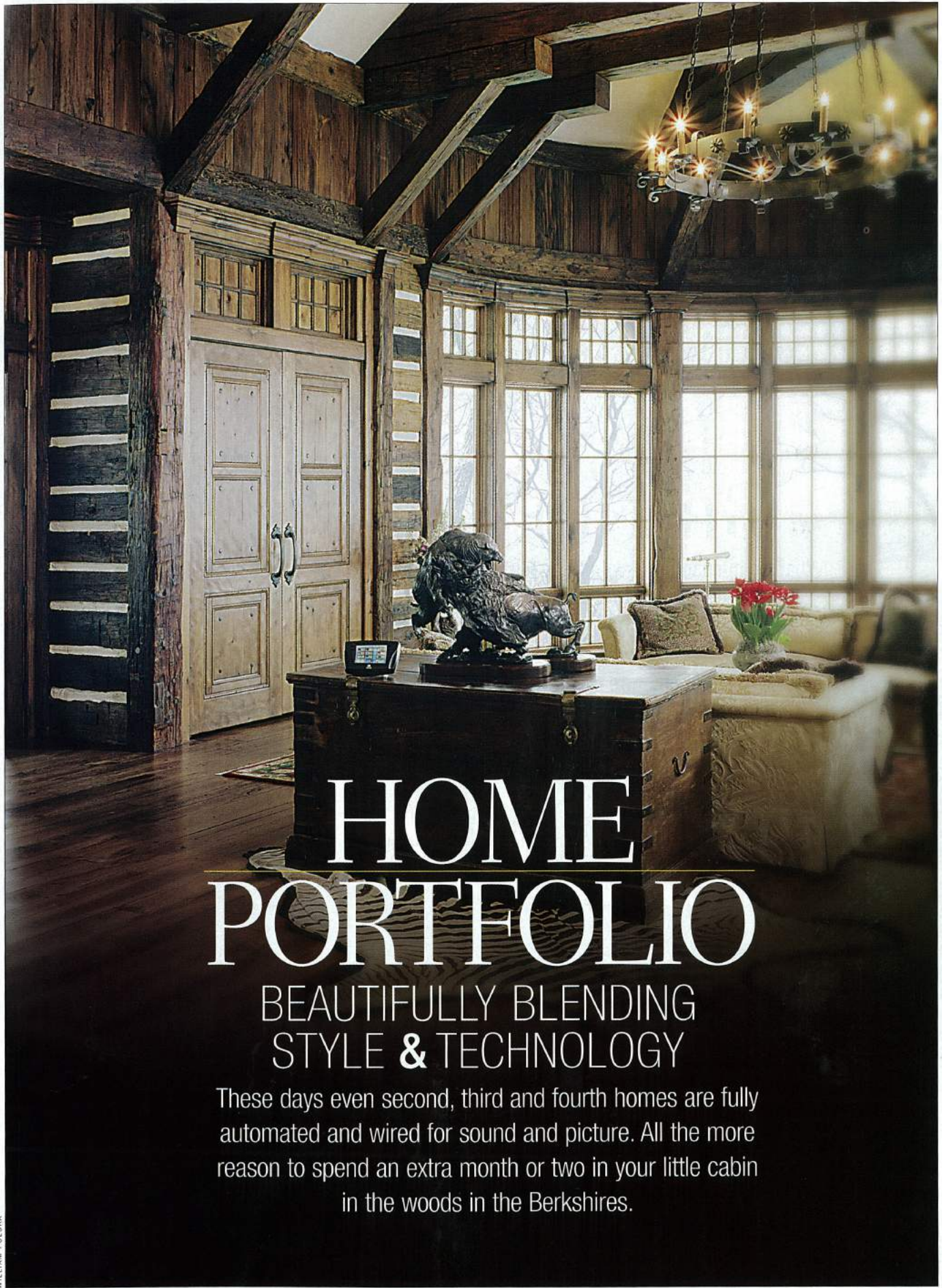
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HOME PORTFOLIO

BEAUTIFULLY BLENDING
STYLE & TECHNOLOGY

These days even second, third and fourth homes are fully automated and wired for sound and picture. All the more reason to spend an extra month or two in your little cabin in the woods in the Berkshires.



RUSTIC GRANDEUR

What's a husband and wife to do with their hunting expedition bounty—he for wild game and she for antiques? Build a rustic-style lodge like none other, complete with the creature comforts of a home theater and a whole-house automation system.

BY JEAN PENN PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM PSOLKA

Over the river and through the woods is a familiar refrain for the owners of this luxury Bavarian-style hunting lodge nestled on 26 woody acres in Far Hills, N.J.—about 60 minutes outside New York City. The homeowners, both of whom are proud hunters of wild game, fish and antiques, always dreamed of having a country place to showcase their proud finds. They hunted, of course, for nearly 10 years to find the perfect out-of-the-city hideaway.

The beauty of the estate lies in its timelessness: Very little has changed since the turn of the century when New York City's railroad and industrial money established their grand hunting estates in the verdant, lush New Jersey hills. Part of the property's charm is the journey—driving up the winding, three-quarter-mile entry road that leads up the mountain to the 14,000-square-foot lodge perched on the pinnacle.

Constructed of reclaimed barn timber and New England cottage stone, the lodge overlooks Ravine Lake, which sits 100 feet down the mountain. The bright-orange sunsets that reflect across the lake inspired architect Jeff Beer, of Beer & Coleman Architects







in Piscataway, N.J., to give the home a western orientation.

Concealed within the home's rustic grandeur and varied textures is an elite automation system orchestrated by custom installer Joe McNeill of Electronics Design Group (EDG), also in Piscataway. The fully integrated AMX control system—complete with wireless touchscreens in the master bedroom, great room and theater—communicates with the balance of the home's many systems, including the multiroom audio system, the Lutron lighting system, the heating and air conditioning system and the security system.

The man of the house, a self-proclaimed techie, demand-

All the requisite technological trappings are integrated into the cozy, rustic decor. The theater's overhead video projector is concealed within a custom hush box that contains the noise produced by the projector's fan. Compartments for speakers and other equipment nestle cozily into the custom-built cabinetry. In keeping with the home's Ralph Lauren inspired look, a bright plaid was selected to upholster the chairs, adding a touch of color and drama to the space.

ed that his cabin in the woods be equipped with a top-shelf sound system, but neither he or his wife wanted the 30 pairs of speakers to be even slightly visible. That charge in itself was McNeill's biggest challenge. Working in tandem with a high-end millwork company, EDG created custom wrought iron and wood grilles that blend into the cabinetry.

Since this is the homeowners' first home theater, McNeill helped them experience the various levels of audiovisual systems he could design by touring them through several homes automated by EDG. "With the newest sound and visuals, [a home theater] is much more exciting than being in a real movie theater," the husband says.

The tavern-like theater accommodates 12 guests with ease. Its knotty pine and timber beam design with 12-foot-tall ceilings complements the Bavarian hunting lodge theme nicely. Chairs are upholstered in a Ralph Lauren Adirondack plaid, selected by the wife, who designed the interiors of the space with the help of their



Beamed ceilings and wood-and-plaster walls add visual interest to the inviting breakfast sitting room, which is part of the extended kitchen.

The 27-inch Sony Wega TV that's set within the antique hutch is one of 20 TVs in the home. The Tiffany ceiling fixture of emerald and amber glass reflects the hues of the leaden glass windows in the kitchen. Dried, wheat-like beer hops found on a trip through California's wine country are wired into a valance that tops the breakfast room windows, which open up to Ravine Lake.

daughter. Today, family and friends gather in the home theater regularly to enjoy movies and sporting events—that is, of course, when the grandchildren are not monopolizing the space for video game escapades.

To prepare the site for construction, access roads were carved out of the wilderness and 30,000 cubic yards of rock and dirt were moved to the top of the mountain to

create a level foundation. From the moment that construction began, the dream cabin became “a three-year, every day project,” says the wife, who hunted for antique treasures from Key West to Maine and Montana, and used her finds in nontraditional ways. For example, after she became enamored with dried beer hops she saw during a trip to California's wine country, she wired them into a



Inspired by the grand lodges the homeowners have visited during various hunting trips, from Alaska to Africa, the great room features high efficiency windows caulked in rough framing and walls of reclaimed barn floor wood and plaster.



The master suite's plasma TV is contained in an antique armoire from Atlanta. Its mate was disassembled by a carpenter and used to build the elaborate bed frame. The draperies are a blend of Ralph Lauren taffeta and antique French needlepoint.

valence that tops the breakfast room windows. "Every room had to have charm," she says, adding that the best antiques took place in what she calls historic New Jersey. "[We used] special things we found in our travels."

The architect, meanwhile, still waxes poetic about the 100-year-old reclaimed wood that lines the entryway's ceiling. Rescued from a Midwestern mushroom factory, the nearly petrified wood, used for mushroom storage bins,

boasts tremendous texture. Walls and floors throughout are composed of logs and more reclaimed wood, rich with knotholes and blemishes.


The home's spirit of coziness is established in the great room. Walls are clad in an ingenious pattern of 2-inch-thick barn flooring and cement plaster. The airy space is framed with Arts and Crafts-style windows, which provide a front-row view of the magnificent sunsets, the architect says.

The installer and millworker collaborated closely to ensure that the home's 20 TVs and audio system tuck into the custom cabinetry without notice.

Intentionally devoid of draperies, the main living areas welcome in the stunning vistas of Mother Nature. Woven into the space is a 57-inch high-definition Sony XBR television accompanied by six speakers and a subwoofer, all of which vanish behind the doors of the custom cabinetry when not in use. Three pairs of speakers from the Sonance DR series hide within the beamed ceilings.

In addition to the rustic Ralph Lauren look, the husband's love of outdoor sports is incorporated throughout what he calls the "Orvis room," which is framed by huge ceiling beams and accented with a canoe suspended from the ceiling, as well as a pool table and fly-fishing rods, guns, hunting and fishing scenes by artist Priscilla Smith. While the women of the house are most definitely welcome in the Orvis room, the wife has her own special sanctuary next door, which she affectionately calls the "Americana Room." It boasts red lacquer walls, pictures of presidents, flags, commemorative plates and games for the grandkids.

Beer, who also designed the couple's Mediterranean-style home in Hobe Sound, Fla.—which is accented with old beam ceilings, lots of texture and hand-painted tiles—says he fell in love with the Far Hills project because of its magnificent setting. "It's absolutely majestic," he says. "People who come here are totally in awe." But what pleases him most about the final product is that it's a direct representation of the homeowners and their passions.

"We live in Florida during winter, so this place is really about coming home to our huge family," the wife explains. "It's so awesome, even to us." For a list of preferred architects and interior designers, please visit our website at hemagazine.com. 



"From the onset of the project, the client's primary request was that he, his wife and anyone who entered his house could operate the home's automated control system with confidence."

—Joe McNeill, custom installer

TECH TALK: A LODGE THEATER

When Joe McNeill of Electronics Design Group Inc. in Piscataway, N.J., first met the homeowners, they were considering two areas of the house for their home theater. After reviewing their criteria for size and acoustic isolation, the installation was designed for the lower level of the home, which had 18 feet of space from the floor to the bottom of the first floor. "We were able to float a ceiling above the theater that was completely isolated from the floor above," McNeill says of the six feet of overhead space used for mechanical heating and cooling. "And build a room-within-a-room for the theater so sound didn't disturb any of the other rooms on the lower level."

In addition to sonic isolation, the owner also wanted "to recreate as much of a theater experience as possible in his home," McNeill says. "It was important that he have a really nice big screen, but the picture also had to look as close to film as we could get it." With that in mind, a **117-inch Stewart Luxus Deluxe ScreenWall** became the screen of choice, and was paired with a **Sony VPH-G90Q CRT video projector**.

Audio is provided with **Lexicon's MC-12 Music and Cinema Processor**, chosen for its performance and uncompromising integration with the system's **AMX control system**, and **Genelec HT210 and HT206 speakers** and **HTS3 powered subwoofers**. McNeill raves about the Genelecs: "They have a lot of presence, they're very fast, they're very accurate, but when you need them to give you that oomph when the action kicks in, they deliver." For a full equipment list, please visit hemagazine.com.—Dennis Burger

RESOURCES

Architect: Beer & Coleman Architects of Piscataway, N.J. (908.757.7007)

Custom Installer: EDG of Piscataway, N.J. (908.757.7007, www.edgusa.com)

Interior Design: the homeowners

Active loudspeakers: Genelec (508.652.0900, genelec.com)
AM/FM tuner, CD player, DVD players, great room surround-sound processor, video projector: Sony (800.222.7669, sony.com)

Control system, HVAC, multiroom A/V touchscreen remotes: AMX (800.222.0193, amx.com)

In-ceiling and outdoor speakers, multiroom amplification: Sonance (sonance.com, 800.582.7777)

Lighting control: AMX (800.222.0193, amx.com), Lutron (610.282.3800, lutron.com)

Phone system: Panasonic (800.211.7262, panasonic.com)

Plasma TVs: Hitachi (800.448.2244, hitachi.com)

Racks: Middle Atlantic (973.839.1011, middleatlantic.com)

Rear-projection HDTV in great room: Mitsubishi (800.332.2119, mitsubishitv.com)

Satellite receivers: RCA (317.587.3000, rca.com), Sony (800.222.7669, sony.com)

Screen: Stewart Filmscreen (310.784.5300, stewartfilm.com)

Stereo preamplifier: Rotel (800.370.3741, rotel.com)

Surround-sound processor in theater: Lexicon (781.280.0300, lexicon.com)

Surge suppressor: Panamax (707.283.5900, panamax.com)

S-VHS VCR: JVC (800.252.5722, jvc.com)

Video amplification: Tributaries (tributaries.com, 800.521.1596)

Video switching: Extron (800.633.9876, extron.com)