

Log house holds plenty of surprises . . . and fun

By MEIRA ZUCKER
Post Correspondent

MONROE TWP. - Drive up Buckwheat Hollow Drive in the summer. Pass by the working farms, their fields dotted with cows. Glide along the old walls that have defined the fields for a century. Then approach the crest of the hill.

An unexpected sound is heard - not the crows in the fields, or the cows calling for one another. Laughing. Music. Glasses clinking. Champagne corks popping.

It's another party at the Cabin on the Hill!

Debbie and Bernie McDonald, owners of Charlie Brown's Restaurant in Plains, have made this unique log cabin the place to share their joy in entertaining. Throughout the summer, they invite guests for their raucous shindigs. They met five years ago, and last summer they celebrated twice: Debbie threw a surprise 50th birthday party for Bernie, and a week later, they were married.

Both huge parties took place on their four acres, and the design of the house and grounds easily took to the challenge.

Over 200 people surprised Bernie McDonald on his birthday. The band UUU played by the pool, and some members sang while in the water. The restaurant-sized grill cooked kabobs all day, and a lanai wet bar provided drinks. Guests lounged in the hot tub, and line danced on the four levels of outdoor decks.

At the McDonald's wedding, over 1,000 balloons decorated the grounds. Guests enjoyed the spectacle from the two gazebos, each of which is connected to the pool's apron by a delicate wood bridge. Another gazebo provided shelter, and the spray in the outdoor fountain was programmed to form a heart.

The McDonalds are the fourth owners of the home. Steven Sordoni built the cabin. Al Eidam, of Eidam Cadillac owned it, then Richard Rosental, and then Bernie McDonald. The McDonalds made many improvements, including the extensive deck and gazebo system. "It's a fun house to entertain in," says Debbie McDonald.

"We live out here!" adds McDonald. As soon as the weather warms each spring, she and her husband plan new events. The McDonalds were attracted to the setting of the home. "We have cows for neighbors," laughs McDonald, and those cows don't complain if the dancing carries on too late.

As much as the exterior of the house is ideal for large parties, the interior is suited for warm family life. The full log cabin boasts paneled ceilings and hand-hewn exposed beams. Upstairs, a cozy sitting room, with its own balcony, leads to the master bedroom, which is centered around a brick fireplace. Downstairs, a



An impressive stone fireplace in the living room is one of two in the house. The other one, in brick, is in the master bedroom.

Just the facts

The log home on Buckwheat Hollow Rd. has about 2,000 square feet under roof, four bedrooms, two baths, a two-car garage and a full finished basement. It's set on about four acres of land. The in-ground pool is 20' by 40', and features all the decks and cabanas anyone could ever want. The house has its own well and septic system. The asking price is \$299,500. For more information, call the McDonald's broker, Joseph A. Moore at M.E. Moore & Sons, 288-1401.



separate wing holds two bedrooms. "As they got older, the kids got their own privacy," says McDonald.

The living room has its own stone fireplace, and the inviting kitchen and dining room are warmed by wood shutters on their windows. Hidden storage and built-in shelves make wise use of the alcoves of the log cabin design. Over 38 windows, of many sizes and shapes, illuminate the interior through the winter, and open for breezes in the summer. They need no air-conditioning in the summer, reports McDonald.

This time of year, the house takes on a new feeling. The wind lifts the scattered leaves, and evergreens shelter the home. As if on cue, a doe pauses in the front

"We have cows for neighbors."

Bernie McDonald
Home owner



It's just a nice log house from this angle. But don't be fooled, this house loves to party!

meadow, and then leaps the low stone wall that defines the long driveway up the hill to the house.

Maybe, when built, the log cabin was a summer home, but now it is home year-round. Sections can be closed off to save on heating. Two fireplaces, a stove, and an emergency generator provide security. The street below is a state road and plowed regularly. "We're removed, but not removed," says McDonald.

Dallas and Tunkhannock are just 15 minutes away, but they seem worlds apart. From the hilltop, just trees and ridges are visible. From the bedroom balcony, they truly are the "Endless Mountains."

Debbie McDonald tells of being "marooned" at the house after one furious snowstorm. They just lit the fireplaces, and settled in, warm and safe, in their log cabin on the hill. But it is summertime that they will remember. Says Debbie, "The saddest thing will be missing the parties." With luck, the new owner will invite them back.



The pool, decks and cabanas are impressive in quiet moments, above. But they're ready anytime to erupt into a raucous party. Fortunately, the neighbors, mostly cows, don't complain.



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- 6:30-7:00 Social Security retirement income.
- 7:00-7:30 Rolling over a lump sum distribution
- 7:30-8:00 Choosing your investment options

PRESENTERS

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Social Security Administration
- Gary Crisci Financial Consultant, Merrill Lynch
- Mary Beth Bonczek Financial Consultant, Merrill Lynch
- Nicholas Tellie Esquire
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