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Architect Alan Clark enclosed what would've been the dogtrot's breezeway and added a vintage door to turn the space into an inviting entry between the living and dining rooms.



CABIN FEVER

Old Meets New

A rejuvenated 1800s log dogtrot inspires an updated addition.

By Roland Sweet

CLYDE SMITH RESCUES LOG CABINS for a living and couldn't resist a dogtrot from Jasper, Georgia, that was in disrepair but had sturdy logs, all heartwood, hewn by Cherokee Indians around 1829. Smith found evidence it was once a tavern, maybe also a post office. He took it apart, stacked the logs and chimney stones, and ran a for-sale ad in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. A couple in their 60s replied. They said they owned land in a remote wooded area and had always wanted a log cabin.

Smith sold them the dogtrot for \$20,000, stipulating that they hire him to move and rebuild it. He soon saw that no matter how he re-assembled the logs, the dogtrot wasn't going to be big enough for the couple to accommodate the children and grandchildren they hoped would gather there.

In their day, dogtrots were plenty big. Instead of one small cabin, they're two — like having two levels, only side-by-side instead of stacked. Dogtrots developed in the Deep South, where cooling houses was a challenge. The two halves shared a breezeway, which gave dogtrots their name — dogs trotted there to escape the heat. The Jasper dogtrot was a rare two-story dogtrot; even so, it was too small for modern living.

Determined to keep the historical cabin intact, the dogtrot's owners contacted architect Alan Clark of the Atlanta firm Clark & Zook Architects. They asked for an addition

Deborah Fleishel photos

RIGHT: The enclosed breezeway flows seamlessly from the dogtrot into the addition. A staircase provides an eye-catching transition, and the light, beamed ceiling reflects light from the new part into the old.

that was in harmony with the dogtrot and included a master suite, a family room, the kitchen and a rustic staircase. They got that and rooms to spare.

The biggest challenge, Clark recalls, was unifying the new part and the old, both structurally and aesthetically. The solution was to create a vaulted space running from the dogtrot breezeway through the addition and to use windows in the addition to draw the eye from the front door. To downplay the size difference between the new and the old portions, the addition sits on the steeply sloping lot, where its greater size doesn't dwarf the forward-facing dogtrot, which was built on a flat spot.

The dogtrot contains the living room, dining room and an upper-level bedroom. The living room ceiling opens to the roof. The design encloses the breezeway, creating the ideal entry for a handsome door that punctuates the porch and opens to a long foyer. Opposite the entry, a rear passageway leads from the dogtrot to the addition, which is a good three times the size of the original and considerably brighter. The prominent staircase introduces the addition, whose exterior sheathing is wavy board. The siding clearly isn't log, although its horizontal irregularity distinctively echoes the cabin's alternating logs and chinking stripes. Adding a broad rear deck maximizes enjoyment of the surrounding mountain views.

The mountain home incorporates many sustainable and green features, starting with the 200-year-old logs and the original chimney fieldstone. Reclaimed and recycled barn wood was used as finish material, including for all stair components, paneling for the music room and bathroom walls, fireplace mantels and ceilings. Antique interior doors and reclaimed period hardware, such as knobs and hinges, were also used. It also has geothermal heating and cooling, high R-value insulation in the addition, low-flow toilets, a composting area next to the



The addition provides room and modern comfort, while the original cabin adds distinction and proves that you can teach an old dogtrot new tricks.

garden and a water reclamation system. Clyde Smith also built all the handrails for the front porch from branches of dogwood trees on the property.

When the home was finished, the owners moved there full time from the

Atlanta suburbs. Their family joins them throughout the year, especially for holidays. The addition provides room and modern comfort, while the original cabin adds distinction and proves that you can teach an old dogtrot new tricks. ►



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Leaving the living room open overhead allows the fieldstone fireplace to soar dramatically and benefit from upper-level light. Heating registers are installed in the new floor to avoid compromising the 19th-century logs. The dining portion of the dogtrot has a lower ceiling, but painting it white lets light reflect through the room. The shorter fireplace is characteristic of dogtrot layouts, which had fireplaces at the far ends of both halves. The staircase, seen from the addition, reveals a completely different look from the dogtrot view.



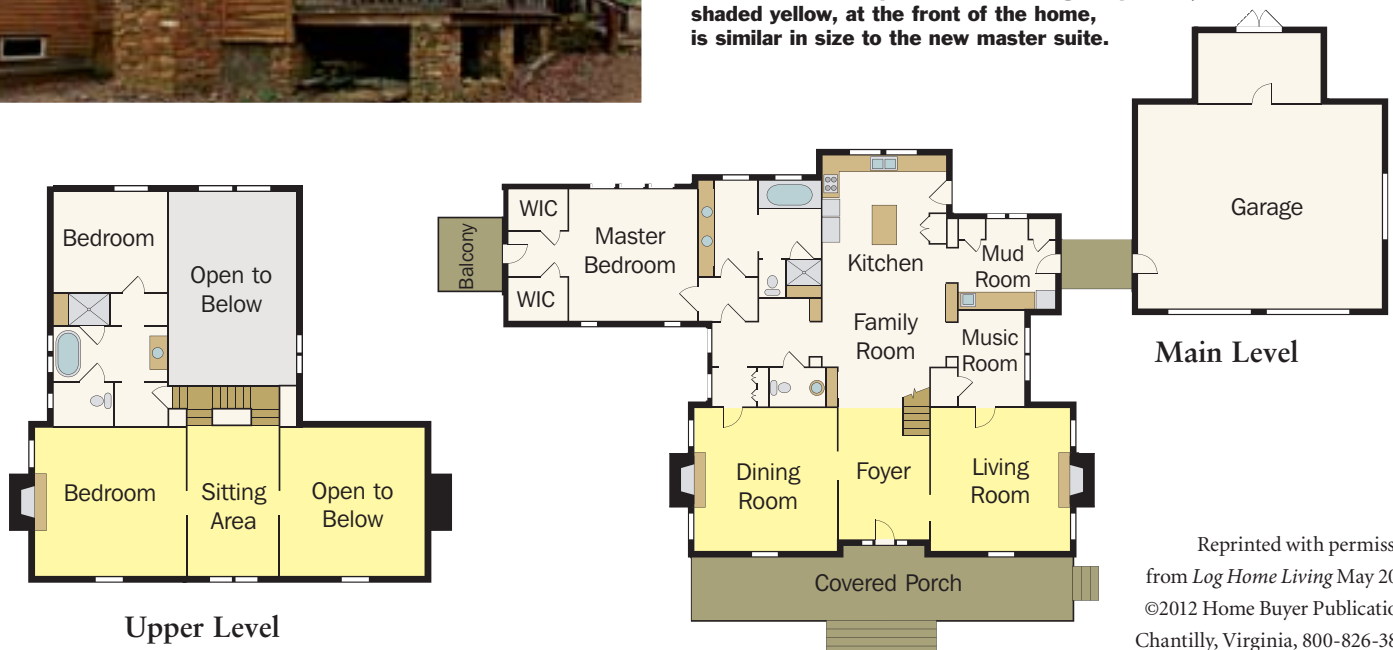


The original dogtrot wouldn't have included a kitchen, but as part of the addition, it is a roomy, cheery space able to handle the owners' day-to-day cooking needs and accommodate family gatherings.



ABOVE AND LEFT: The exterior was designed so the old dogtrot would harmonize with the larger addition.

BELOW: The floor plan shows the dogtrot portion, shaded yellow, at the front of the home, is similar in size to the new master suite.



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