

A COMBINATION OF Natural Elements & Creativity Meet

WRITER KAREN VANDER WERP • PHOTOGRAPHER MIKE DRILLING



entry

The homeowner and his father built this unusual dome-shaped door.

The homeowners weren't aware of the term "Parkitecture." It's a unique term used to describe homes that have been designed and built patterned after National Parks. "Parkitecture" homes are true to the manner of the environment, using materials that are rustic and natural, with interiors that utilize an abundance of natural timbers. This seems to be the perfect description of this three-story home built two miles west of Traverse City on the highest, most densely tree-covered hilltop, also known as Radio Hill. "From the top floor looking out, the trees are so close you feel as if you are in them," share the homeowners.

The home, which appears smaller than it actually is, integrates linear elegance, rustic flavor and European flair. The homeowner shares, "Most people come in and are surprised at how the space, totaling 5,000 square feet, is used."

Builder Chris Mason, of Mason Construction, describes the home as "rustic elegance." Copper gutters, a custom-domed entry door, and log railings accented with iron detailing, showcase the exterior elegance.

After extensive travels in Europe and developing a fondness for the architectural interest of domed entrance doors, it became a must for this country dream home.

The homeowner and his father built the door which layers top and bottom Douglas fir over ¾-inch plywood. A heavy-duty door jamb was built to match. The rivets were purchased from a hardware store in Austria.

The challenge of this spectacular site, with its five acres of pines and hardwoods, was the driveway and maintaining as many as trees as possible. The drive takes a 90-degree turn at the bottom of the hill. To make the drive safe and user-friendly during the winter months when it is covered with ice and snow, a two track was added as a safety measure at the curve to prevent any slide-offs.

The owners give Mason credit as a master builder and master craftsman. They

boast the fact he is on the building site every day, and adapts easily to making the unexpected changes that were required in using unique building materials. For example, there were no specs for the rough sawn cedar timbers and beams. The homeowners described what they wanted and Mason was able to create, to a tee, what they described.

Because the lower level ash timbers didn't have the manufacturer's prefabricated stamp required by law to meet building requirements, the building inspector wouldn't give his approval. An engineer's approval was needed for them to pass inspection. "He told us the timbers would hold up three houses the same size," shares the homeowner.

The respect for nature is also displayed in the home's wood floor, which is constructed of simple-styled maple boards hand nailed with exposed square head nails, along with its pine and cedar walls, and ceilings.

According to Mason, the finished product has an element of surprise and a grand flourish of style. "I have built rustic homes and elegant homes, but this is the first to combine elements of both styles. I have to say, it worked amazingly well." □

kitchen

An irregular shaped island is a unique feature in this custom kitchen.

eating area

The panoramic view of the woods—which is often filled with wildlife—is the icing on the cake for this dining and preparation area.



“Travels abroad instill an appreciation for unique detailing”



fireplace

Rustic and charming, the fireplace will keep the room toasty on even the most chilly northern evenings.



dining & living room

The distinctive railings add dramatic flair to this open floor plan.

den

The den, complete with fireplace and custom-built bookcases, is outfitted with furnishings that add comfort to this cozy space.



bathroom

The spa-like ambiance makes this bath a tranquil oasis every day.



bedroom

A guest bedroom offers a view of the exceptional setting.



master bedroom

The master bedroom, with its splash of color, is spacious and offers all of the amenities one would want.

master bathroom

The master bath boasts an exceptional view from atop Radio Hill.





rec room

The lower level timbers, custom made by Mason, attest to his exceptional craftsmanship and ability to adapt his skills to unique materials.

Mason Construction Inc.

PRINCIPAL OWNERS: Chris and Tara Mason

NUMBER OF YEARS IN BUSINESS: 10

EDUCATION: Northern Michigan College,
business management courses

YEAR BUSINESS STARTED: 2003

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

Treat every client as you would want to be treated and respect their home and property as if it was our own. We always go the extra mile for clients.

WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?

Communication is the key in today's busy world; we pride ourselves on communicating from start to finish with all our clients no matter how big or small your project may be.

We listen to what our customers are looking for in products and services, and we deliver on those desires. We try our best to stay current on today's changing markets by always looking for products that are tried and tested to best fit our customer's needs.

We schedule everything that we do. This helps to cut cost and time, but not service and quality. Our customers know before we ever start their job when it will be finished. That is a big deal for us as we know that construction process is disruptive to their already busy lives.

We work hard to take the stress out of the construction process. Our philosophy is to spend 2/3 of the time planning and 1/3 executing. This is how we finish on time and on budget again and again.

We hear often from customers about the stress of past construction experiences they have had, so we learned early on to keep it simple and just "do what you say you're going to do."

Every day we work hard to make that happen.

HOBBIES, VOLUNTEERISM, ETC. :

As a young kid, I enjoyed spending my summer at the local lumber yard that my grandfather owned and seeing what he did.

Sometimes he would let me help him fill orders. As a family, we always seemed to be building or renovating a home to live in or sell. When I graduated from high school, I joined the Navy. I was stationed in Atsugi Japan with squadron VS-21. I was an aviation electronic technician working on the S3-B anti-submarine aircraft. I was attached to the USS Independence and then the USS Kitty Hawk, where I did three tours to the Persian Gulf. When I left the Navy in 2001, I felt the calling to go back to what I knew. I moved to Northern Michigan and worked for a contractor out of Empire. I always looked up to my grandfather and what he did for a living and how he helped people and seemed to love what he did. He inspired me to start my own business in 2003. I love what I do for a living, and they say if you love what you do you will never work a day in your life. I met my beautiful wife in sixth grade and married her eight years later. We welcomed our first daughter in 2004 and our second daughter in 2006. My wife and I recently celebrated our fourteenth anniversary and I feel blessed every day I get to spend with her and our two beautiful daughters.

I enjoy salmon fishing on Lake Michigan, deer hunting, and farming on our small family farm.

I also enjoy serving as school board president at Traverse Bay Christian School and serving on the safety team at church.

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER & WEB ADDRESS:

For additional information, call (231) 642-0724 or visit www.masonconstructioninc.com.

