

# Colorado FOUND

AFTER YEARS OF SUBURBAN LIVING,  
A MINNESOTA FAMILY PUTS DOWN ROOTS IN A  
SMALL MOUNTAIN TOWN—MOOSE INCLUDED.



Schelley and Jeff Olson's home marries rustic charm with European elegance.

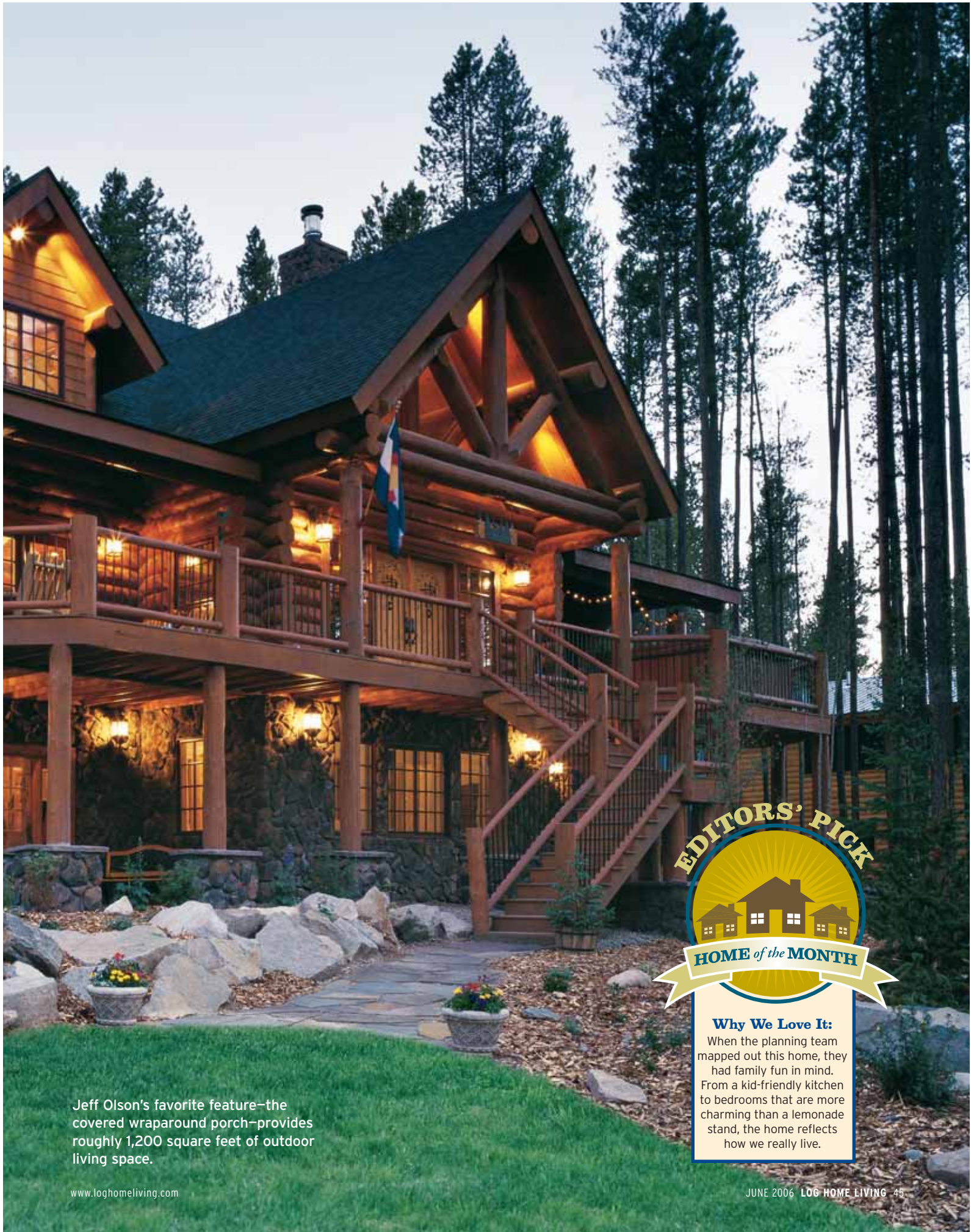
**M**ost building projects, log home or otherwise, have their challenges. But it's safe to say that few involve moose claiming the construction site or a disturbed local citizen attacking the nearest concrete plant with an armored bulldozer.

However, when Jeff and Schelley Olson decided to build a log home in Grand Lake, Colorado, they quickly had first-hand evidence of how the unexpected is to be expected when constructing a house. They also found out how little those challenges ultimately matter when it comes to building your dream home.

"We love it," says Jeff, "not only the home, but the property, going from a suburb to a small town. It all turned out really well."

STORY BY Reed Karaim • PHOTOGRAPHY BY Carter Photographics





Jeff Olson's favorite feature—the covered wraparound porch—provides roughly 1,200 square feet of outdoor living space.

[www.loghomeliving.com](http://www.loghomeliving.com)



**Why We Love It:**

When the planning team mapped out this home, they had family fun in mind. From a kid-friendly kitchen to bedrooms that are more charming than a lemonade stand, the home reflects how we really live.

Double entry doors lend a touch of Southwestern style to the Olson home.





The soaring fireplace of manufactured stone at the center of the living room brings family and guests together on cold Colorado nights.





The kitchen, which combines the rustic warmth of skip-peeled logs and distressed pine flooring with modern conveniences and openness, is Schelley Olson's favorite space in the home.



## Embracing the Rustic

For Jeff, a log home was something he'd dreamed about since growing up in Minnesota. "We used to visit Colorado virtually every year to go skiing," he remembers. "At some point, I decided that I was going to live in the mountains. And if I was going to live in the mountains, I wanted a log home."

Jeff, a partner in manufacturing companies in Boulder, originally intended to build a second home in the Rockies. But he and Schelley soon decided the house would be their main residence.

They chose a builder they knew from work he'd done in the area, Keith Austin of Highland Log Systems in nearby Fraser. Keith, a cheerful Scotsman who has been building log homes in the United States for 17 years, is a representative of Summit Handcrafted Log Homes, which became the log provider for the Olsons.

Summit, formed in 2003, averages

about 25 log homes a year. The Boise, Idaho, company "offers both handcrafted and milled logs, but probably 75 percent of our business is handcrafted," says co-owner Robert Lockerby.

Summit uses Douglas fir and western red cedar from British Columbia for its handcrafted homes. It specializes in full-scribe designs, which don't use chinking but depend on matching the contour of each log to the one below it. Cut and designed properly, a full-scribe log house actually gets tighter over time.

Robert and business partner Tim Miller prefer the full-scribe method for the way it preserves the natural contours and beauty of the logs. "Mother nature has already made each tree in its own unique way," says Robert. "We try to keep it that way." The Olsons chose one of Summit's designs, the Breckenridge, after considering roughly 30 plans. "We wanted a master suite on the main floor and

**ABOVE:** The master bedroom suite on the main floor includes French doors that open to the wraparound porch.

**OPPOSITE:** The rustic logs, deeply veined granite and ornate mirror frame combine to create a rich mix of textures in the bath.

bedrooms upstairs for our girls," says Schelley, "and because the house is on a sloped lot, that model also fit the land."

They decided on skip-peeled logs, which leave patches of the wood's Cambrian layer visible, giving the logs distinctive spots of color. "We felt skip peel was a great look, and we wanted the home to be as rustic as it could be," Schelley says.

But that inclination didn't stop the Olsons from seizing on innovative building options. Their roof is constructed of structural insulated panels from Eagle Panel Systems Inc. The prefabricated panels come with the tongue-and-groove ceil-







**LEFT:** The Olsons chose a floorplan with plentiful space on the top floor for the couple's two daughters. The bedroom of the couple's oldest daughter, Haley, 7, reflects her love for horses.

**BELOW:** Four-year-old Peyton's room is as bright as a mountain meadow.

ing already glued on one side, and provide superior insulation against winter's chill. They also can be laid quickly in place with a crane.

"Within a seven-day period, we had this house up, enclosed and weather-tight," says Keith. "If we'd been using a regular roof system, it probably would have taken another six weeks."

### Where the Moose Roam

Before the happy house-raising week, however, came two unique interruptions to the project. The first occurred when a man, disgruntled about a local zoning decision, commandeered a bulldozer and went on a rampage in nearby Granby,



smashing several buildings, including the local concrete plant.

The Olsons, who'd decided to spend part of the year back in Minnesota while their new house was being built, found the project delayed three weeks near the beginning because they couldn't get the concrete they needed.

Once building started again, it was discovered that their lot was smack in the middle of a moose trail. Moose, it seems, are stubborn about sticking to their route. "They don't jump a fence—they go through it," says Keith. "They jumped into the hole we'd dug for the house. It wasn't until we got the logs in place that they said, 'All right, we have to walk around.'"

Despite these complications, Keith says building actually was uneventful as it went on. Schelley, who chose the interior appointments, made most of her purchases online from Minnesota. Keith kept in touch via phone and email, scheduling the arrival of fixtures and posting photos on the Internet so the Olsons could track construction.

The result is a warm, welcoming home that combines a rustic edge with a European ambiance. "I tried to go with more Old World European fixtures," says Schelley. "I didn't want the look to be too heavily Western."

Among the house's distinctive features are a steam shower, which Schelley says takes the edge off the dry mountain air, and floors made by Palo Duro of heavily distressed Capistrano heart pine so that scratches from dogs and children "just blend in."

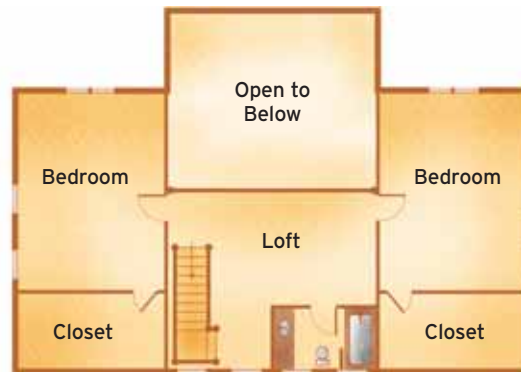
One key change the Olsons made to the Breckenridge design was incorporating a wraparound porch and covering most of it, making the outdoor space more livable.

Now that they're in, the Olsons even enjoy the moose that cross their property. "We see them daily," says Jeff. "It's great to be able to get out on the deck and enjoy the outdoors. We couldn't be happier. It's a user-friendly house."

Even for Colorado's intrepid moose population. ■

## HOME DETAILS

- **Square footage:** 4,170
  - **Builder:** Highland Log Systems
  - **Designer:** R.C.M. Cad Design Drafting
  - **Log producer:** Summit Handcrafted Log Homes
- For more information, see Resources on page 92.*



**Upper Level**



**Main Level**



**Lower Level**