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# LOG HOMES

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When decorating a second home, colorful furnishings complement the wood and keep it from overpowering the interior.

# Interior Motives

Getting the most from your second home

By Cindy Trimble Kelly

**S**econd-home living was a huge education for me when I opened my design studio in a beautiful, little resort town in North Georgia. Blue Ridge is only an hour and a half outside Atlanta, but the rapid growth of second homes over the past several years has been astounding. Our mountainous and picturesque landscape has been developed to support many second homes of all sizes and styles.

If you have dreamed of owning a second home and don't know where to start, you are not alone. In fact, my first second home was a 600-square-foot log home perched over the rapids on Fightingtown Creek in north Georgia. Cozy it was, scenic it was, and a piece of heaven it definitely was. The five years I owned it, I turned it into my personal retreat where I could escape to recharge my batteries, reflect on my past and enjoy nature, the peace and quiet. And best of all, it ended up being one of the best investments I have made in years.

Second homes are very different from a primary residence unless you plan to spend equal time in both homes. How you are going to use the home is so important when starting to design it. Second homes are purchased either for vacation purposes or as an investment. You need to ask yourself a series of questions before you set off to purchase or build your second home.

- How are you going to use this house? How much time will you spend here compared to your primary residence?
- Who will use the house? You and your family only? Any strangers?
- Is the home going to be on a rental market?
- Will you allow children under 18 without an adult?
- Will you allow pets?

In terms of design, we separate second homes into two classifications: personal and impersonal. "Personal" second homes are used by the owners only. They are products of the owner's personal style and tastes. They are loaded with personal belongings, such as family photographs or artwork, and contain personal collections and decorative items that speak of the owner. They also contain items that are near and dear to the owner's heart and if broken, lost or stolen will be missed.

Personal furnishings tend to be more delicate, fragile and expensive since the owners tend to take care of their own belongings much better than a stranger would. You would not put out your favorite hand-crocheted throw that your grandmother made by hand if your home is a rental. Nor would you leave your expensive linens or dishware if you don't know who will be using your cabin.

**The informality of second homes makes them great places to show off collections.**

My cabin was very personal. I did rent it some, but only to people I knew. I wanted to have the Heinkle knives, the fur throw on my bed and all-wool rugs. I knew if people used the cabin whom I did not know, they would not use my things with care. Even some of my family and friends will not use my belongings the way I would. This is important to know.

“Impersonal” second homes are those that are enjoyed by both the owners and strangers. They are typically on rental markets and are usually investments for the owners. They are furnished with much hardier furnishings, less breakable, easy to clean and maintain.

We recommend furnishing these rental homes with items that do not contain any sentimental value if they break or disappear. You should also not furnish an impersonal second home with something that cannot be replaced. If you want expensive artwork, then install or secure it so it is safe. This does not mean you decorate with cheap furnishings, but with smart furnishings that will perform the way they should.

If you elect to put your home on the rental market, you need to make it special so that guests will have a lasting



memory that will make them want to come back. Your cabin will be a more successful rental if you design the home for the market that will rent it rather than for yourself and your personal taste. This can be a difficult concept for some people, who have an image of what they want in a rental cabin and miss what the market is looking for.

Second homes can be the most rewarding and enjoyable experience you can have. My cabin very personal and was filled with family treasures that we had collected over many years and never pulled them all together until I had this rustic retreat. The main room was 25 feet tall, and I covered it with collections of all sorts, including family artwork, photos and mementos. I put up shelves to support some of my grandmother's old cooking utensils. I also hung an open shadow box on the wall and organized one of my son's nature collections in it. On one wall was an old painting of my family crest next to a collage of 1996 Olympics items I had collected, next to an oil painting of a cabin my grandmother had started but never finished. It was “my place.”

Someone who did not know me might feel uncomfortable if they stayed there because the cabin was so personal. When real friends stayed there, however, they would inquire about my mementos, all which had interesting stories connected to them.

Many of our clients own homes that they stay in rarely, if ever. These homes are an investment and are intended to rent and make money. For this type of



Second homes can be very personal places that are filled with belongings near and dear to the owner's heart.



If you're thinking of using your second home as a rental, durable and low-maintenance furniture is a must.

PHOTO: WOODS & WATSON

home, we take a business approach and perform a competitive market study. We look at other homes in the area that will be competition. We evaluate the individual lifestyles that would rent this home. How will they use it? What do they need to thoroughly enjoy their time here? What will create a lasting memory that will drive them to want to come back and rent again? A well-designed rental home will rent more successfully and be more profitable than one not designed for the marketplace. Renters (or vacationers) are looking for an escape—an environment different from their everyday lives.

We pull the design together using unique items not readily available on the open market. Each home is created using decorative items that complement the surrounding environment reinforcing the guest's experience. Durable and low-maintenance furnishings are the key to a successful rental home since they need to withstand high use and will be cared for less than a personal home.

Log homes are a favorite for second homes, whether personal or impersonal. They bring in the nostalgic quality of how living "used to be" with the exposed structure and fresh smell of wood. We caution our clients about using too much wood and not balancing color in an all wood home. Brown

and gray, for instance, can have a negative psychological effect. We encourage the use of colorful furnishings or integration of multiple materials with the wood to create interest and complement the beauty of the wood.

So many types and styles of furnishings and themes are comfortable in a log home. Just because your second home is log does not mean you have to have heavy, masculine furnishings and traditional log and wood furniture. You can have fun and integrate an eclectic array of furnishings in an assortment of colors and styles. Spanning the decades of interior design inside an architectural structure that has lasted longer than any other building style is a winning solution. Although historical in its roots, the log home can be designed to support the highest modern décor while incorporating the latest in technology residential features. **HH**

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