



# Architectural Digest



## Soulful Solitude

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY JOHN THOMAS

"I remember standing here with my Dad and watching four or five deer walk up that hillside." That's Mike Incorvaia talking about the property up on Bailey Hill Road that he and his partner Don Matre are developing. When Mike was a boy he spent many happy hours hiking around this hilltop. As he grew up Mike became a successful businessman, and in the early 90's purchased the land and began plans to subdivide the property into five-acre parcels.

We are standing in the second house of their new development: Lofty Mountain Grandeur. Situated up around two thousand feet on the side of Bailey Hill, it boasts mountain views, and forested lots. The development is being created with nature trails, a fishing pond with a picnic shelter, and a second pond with a waterfall. The homes will be situated on the lots and far enough apart so that no one

is looking into their neighbor's house. "We are looking to give people a home close to the slopes and downtown (Ellicottville) and still have a back to nature experience." Mike tells me. Because of his boyhood experiences here Mike has a personal relationship with the site, the house, and the development most builders can only dream of. He has personally overseen virtually every detail of the site preparation and home construction; wanting to keep the area as unaltered as possible. Even the rough hewed fence that borders the development is made from the few Locust and Pole Pine, cleared for construction.

The house reflects this attention; wherever possible reclaimed and recycled wood are used in the construction. Massive pine beams hold up the cathedral ceiling in the main room. The beams are joined by black walnut pins; eliminating nails, screws, and bolts. In the corner a stone chimney holds the gas fireplace. The mantel is reclaimed wood from Allegheny

State Park. The French doors open to a deck with a view across to the mountains.

Over in the kitchen is where the use of the reclaimed wood really pays off. The handsome cabinets are made from 125-year old oak from a barn. The wood originally had been crudely finished and now sanded and re-stained they still reveal the original saw marks and nail holes. Amish cabinetmakers built them; the hang of the doors and the fit and finish on the joints is extraordinary. Trimmed with black walnut, they are probably the most beautiful kitchen cabinets I've seen. A black marble counter encloses the propane fired stove, and steel sink. The island counter features a butcher-block maple counter top, and on the other side is a pine breakfast bar. The cork floor in the kitchen and dining area picks up tones from the cabinets and counters. The ceiling is 100-year old hemlock. This hemlock makes up the floor for the gorgeous den overhead on the second floor. Here the



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massive beams are close enough to touch. The windows on the far end look out to the forest.

We move into the master bedroom and Mike points out a massive beam over the bed. "It's the biggest beam in the house," he says. It's at least a foot tall and almost as thick. The ash-trimmed window looks over to



the same view as the main room. The master bath is beautifully finished with stone tile, and the vanity is finished with the same barn wood and black granite as the kitchen. For relaxing there is a Jacuzzi tub and a large glass shower.

The main room downstairs is divided by an archway. The section by the walkout French doors would make a great sitting or entertainment room. The other side of the room is big and open enough to hold a pool or ping pong table. Or, there's plenty of room for your ginormous 100-inch flat screen TV.

It's more than obvious that Mike has put his heart and soul into this house. The care with which he has chosen the woods,

and fixtures for the home, has really come from the heart. Unlike so many cookie cutter developments, this home has soul. High in the rolling hills and less than 15 minutes from downtown Ellicottville, this home offers a quiet seclusion and natural living experience most people only dream of. The slopes of Holiday Valley, HoliMont, and the downtown restaurants are easily accessible. But just steps outside your front door are nature trails, woods, ponds, and the ever changing colors of nature. As if to prove the point, as Mike and I are leaving we spot two deer strolling just yards from the house. For more information contact Amy DeTine at ERA Vacation Properties, 716-583-3769.



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