

Camp Chimney

178 Last Chance Rd

Sassafras Ridge

Camp Chimney was designed and built for Kathy and myself by Clair Knapp. Clair is a local general contractor, with an artistic talent for creating special homes. Clair also provided the initial design drawings for Camp Chimney. This design was based upon our prior collaboration with Clair in a previous home. Kathy and I were also actively involved during the planning and construction of our home from 2003-2006. Our plan was to live in this special home for many years and then possibly pass it on to our children given their fondness for the Cashiers area.

However before going into the many unique aspects of Camp Chimney's development, I must provide some background on how we found this special piece of property. In 1999 the entire undeveloped Sassafras Ridge parcel was offered for sale by the families that had owned it for the last 50 years.

Recent History

Our family entered into a purchase and sale agreement for the entire 230 undeveloped acres with a 90 day due diligence period. We knew there must be spectacular view from the ridgeline, but there was no access to the top short of blazing your own path. So that is what Kathy and I decided to do. Using a compass and a map we started at the end of the existing dirt road and hiked to the top of the ridgeline. I was able to climb a tree along the ridge a take a photo of Bald Rock. The views were more spectacular than we had even imagined. It was always my belief that the property that sat along the ridge at the base of Chimney Mountain would be truly a special home site.

We ultimately decided that we didn't know enough about property development to take on the full development of this project. A short period later McKee Properties developed Sassafras Ridge. After the developed lots were offered for sale we purchased lot 13 at the southwest corner of Sassafras Ridge. Our lot sits at the base of Chimney Top and is surrounded by National Forest Service and land Conservatory property.

Why This Land Is Special

Sassafras Ridge is a unique development for a number of reasons. It offers arguably the best long range views in the Cashiers/ Highlands area yet is only a 15 minute drive from the ridge top to the crossroads in Cashiers. Water is provided by a regional water utility company removing the biggest concern for most home owners in the mountains, water availability. I am not aware of any other area development with sites located at over 4000' elevation that has its water provided by a large regional utility company.

Our lot was appropriately named Azalea for the abundant flame azaleas present on our property. The lot also has an amazing grouping of all three rhododendron specimens, laurel, blueberry bushes and the rare pink shell azalea.

Home Design

The design of Camp Chimney was based on three primary concepts:

- Provide plenty of covered outdoor living space. We have found that uncovered deck space is not utilized nearly as much as covered space.
- Create a large open living area that facilitates parties with family and friends.
- Make each bedroom a suite with its own private bath and covered porch.

We wanted Camp Chimney to be unique, but offer a warm gathering place for our family and friends.

Kathy and I were actively involved with Clair Knapp in the design and finishing of our home. We are wood lovers as is Clair and we worked hard to incorporate many different varieties.

- Cherry – Spiral stair log steps, various counter tops, kitchen cabinets
- Maple – kitchen counter top and several other vanity tops
- Heart pine – all wood flooring throughout the house was from river recovered heart pine logs
- Walnut – Most of the large doors are Walnut from an estate in upstate New York.
- Sourwood – The hand railing for the spiral staircase came from sourwoods located on our property.

- Laurel – The pickets surrounding the interior balcony came from laurel trees cleared for the house site
- Redwood – siding in the master bath
- Oak – A large oak tree was used as main beam supporting the spiral stairs

The walls and ceilings are made of pine paneling. The ceilings in particular were quite challenging due to the many angles and log beams incorporated into the design. There are three custom designed sinks on the main level and two custom designed stained glass panels all done by local artisans.

The three primary fireplaces are fully masonry and the river rock used to accent the fireplaces was selected by Kathy and me.

There was a great amount of thought that went into the functional aspects of our home. Some of the more specialized treatments included the following areas:

Lightening Protection System - We engaged the preeminent lightening protection specialists in the western NC area to protect our home against lightening strikes

Lutron Lighting System – A virtual whole house lighting system that enables the user to set different light moods throughout the house.

Elevator – A three floor elevator

Whole House Generator – A generator backup system that automatically kicks in with a power failure.

Whole House Audio with room volume controls - Separate speaker and volume controls in all main rooms and outdoor decks.

Cameras in Place With Internet Access- Three camera and a DVR are in place to provide ability to check on the house through an internet connection

Separate Floor HVAC units – Each floor has its own HVAC units and thermostat. The first floor has an April Air dehumidifier built into the air handling system.

Whole House Central Vacuum System