



Three *Bear* LODGE

A Classic Story Woven in Rustic Grandeur

WRITER ELIZABETH BOOTH O'TOOLE • PHOTOGRAPHER A & M PHOTOGRAPHY

When surrounded by woods, hills, lakes and the wildlife of Northern Michigan, the next logical step—and the ultimate dream for thousands—is to build a log home. For Michael Belanger and family, this dream became a reality and the resulting structure embodies both rustic warmth and five-star living.

With full round logs, cherry wood doors and master stonework, this 4,500-square-foot home blends seamlessly into its surrounding alongside Northwest Michigan's Chain of Lakes known worldwide for its beauty and wildlife. Named Three Bear Lodge after Belanger's three children, the house teems with life: family and friends easily fill the seven bedrooms and even all the extra bunks. Favorite gathering spots include the massive kitchen island, the cathedral ceiling great room and

the screened-in three-season porch furnished to the nines right down to stone fireplace and an outdoor flat screen TV.

Accomplishing "rustic grandeur" is no easy feat, but between Eric Render of Render Construction and his team of talented subcontractors, the mission was accomplished. The fireplace alone is an artistic masterpiece and successfully anchors the entire house. Each stone was placed to appear as though they would in nature. The largest of all is a huge pink boulder unearthed during Three Bear Lodge's excavation and is now positioned in a place of prominence halfway up the wall.

Wide variegated black walnut planks dress the kitchen floor but most of the main level is floored with Idaho Silver flagstone. The shimmering stone slabs create a dramatic castle ambiance but, thanks to toasty in-floor radiant heat, no stone castle chill. A bridge stretching



across the living room ceiling warms the room and adds another element of interest and drama." We had extremely high, vaulted, 28-foot ceilings," recalls Render. "So to break up the height and to create a third level we built a bridge between the north wing and the south wing of the house, accessed by a circular staircase and woven limb railing." The limbs, too, were scavenged from the adjacent woods and whittled into a work of art winding up the staircase.

The warmth and the amenities continue outside with a 600-square-foot lake-side patio area built from granite flagstone and furnished with a grill, bar sink and 12-person hot tub all crafted from the same stone work as the house. While the Three Bear Lodge was clearly created to entertain, the heart behind the build was to create memories that will last for generations. The front entryway doors underscores Belanger's ultimate sentiment: hand-carved double doors—which took almost a year for the artist to create—depicts three bears: one bear representing each Belanger child. And as for the squirrel carved into the door off to one side? Well, of course, the little squirrel represents the family dog! □

PREVIOUS PAGE:

Three Bear Lodge was named after the owner's three children who are symbolized by the three carved bears in the grand double entryway doors of this up north getaway.

THIS PAGE

ABOVE: All natural materials, including black walnut floors and cherry wood doors, reflect the surrounding north woods territory and bringing the outdoors in.

BELOW: The beauty is in the details and the intricate copper sink and bronze fixtures complement the warm woods and stone throughout.



The towering fieldstone fireplace reflects a natural riverbed pattern and anchors the great room with a magnificent center point.



The Home Embodies Rustic Warmth and Five-Star Living

ABOVE: It's warm, rustic and remote, yet boasts all the creature comforts for entertaining including a hot tub, screen porch, multiple seating areas and an ample lakefront for summer fun.

MIDDLE: The bridge and custom staircase add artistic flair.

BELOW: Cozy deep seating and a majestic stone fireplace combine to create the ultimate screened porch.



THIS PAGE

ABOVE: One of many bedrooms reflecting the grandeur of vaulted ceiling supported by full round logs.

BELOW: The hand-carved front entryway doors took almost two seasons to craft. They depict not only the owner's three children, but also the family dog, as depicted by the squirrel in the tree.

Granite: **NORTHERN GRANITE**
Plumbing Supplies: **WITTOCK SUPPLY KITCHEN AND BATH**



Render Construction Inc.

PRINCIPAL OWNER (S):
Eric Render

NUMBER OF YEARS IN BUSINESS:
12

YEAR BUSINESS STARTED:
1999

EDUCATION:
Studied construction management and business administration at Michigan State University.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:
At Render Construction, we believe that truly superior homes are built by people of strong character, whose values are marked by honesty, accountability and dedication to doing things right the first time. Based on these timeless principles, our goal is create long-term relationships, to treat every project as if it were our own and to stand behind everything we say and do. This is our passion, our mission and our commitment to our clients.

WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?
Render Construction is the proven source for high-quality custom building and remodeling. We are Northern Michigan's authorized distributor of Rocky Mountain Log Homes. We belong to an elite national custom builder group, The Hammers Club, sanctioned by the National Association of Home Builders. Membership in this club is limited to 20 U.S. companies. In addition, our on-staff craftsmen have an average of more than 20 years of experience.

HOBBIES:
Eric Render enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons, skiing, fly fishing, mountain biking and other outdoor activities. He also is an active member and supporter of a number of conservation and community groups including Anglers of the Au Sable and Trout Unlimited. He is also a volunteer for community events and the annual Au Sable River cleanup.

He is a board member of the newly formed Downtown Development Authority in Lewiston.

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER & WEB ADDRESS:
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