

Country's Best  
**cabins**

# Floor Plans

& ANNUAL DESIGN GUIDE

**Award-Winning  
Cabin Plans**  
*our 2011 contest*

**30  
Plans**  
**UNDER  
3,000  
SQ. FT.**

**4 INSPIRING  
HOME TOURS**

**ACCESSIBLE  
HOME DESIGN**

**PLUS:**  
**Modify  
a Stock  
Plan**





When selecting a floor plan, Lou and Daniele Covotsos wanted to make sure the home looked nice from both the front and back. "We saw a million different plans," says Daniele. "I liked the Waterford a lot, and [when] I found out it could be adapted and expanded upon, then we just really liked it."



# Accessible Elegance

**A Chicago couple designed their retirement cabin in the Wisconsin woods with accessibility in mind.**



A solid mahogany front door with wrought iron straps welcomes guests into the home. The shape of the door is mirrored in the front entry archway, an element installed in the foyer and dining room to enhance the home's cozy feel.





The great room, featuring a cultured-stone gas fireplace and a piece of 100-year-old wood as a mantel, is the central focus of the home. "You can't help but use this space," says Lou. "It just sort of is the center of the room ... It all flows together that way."

**D**aniele and Lou Covotsos had more in mind than looks when they designed their dream retirement cabin in the woods of Door County, Wisconsin.

The Chicago couple, who moved up to the cabin full time in 2010, worked with Green Bay, Wisconsin-based Wisconsin Log Homes to modify its Waterford floor plan to meet the needs of their family — in particular their middle son, Michael. Nine years ago, Michael sustained spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries after a fall while climbing in the Colorado mountains; the accident left him a paraplegic.

"The whole idea of having a [cabin] was really contingent on our son, Michael, being independent enough for us to move away," says Lou. "Once we found out he was able to be on his own — he's come tremendously far — we were then able to pursue our dream of coming up here. It was built around his recovery, [and] around his accessibility as well."

With Michael in mind, Daniele and Lou converted what would have been an attached garage in the original floor plan to a space they call "Michael's wing."

"It's got a den and an accessible bathroom — fully ADA-compliant — and a bedroom for him," says Daniele.

Converting the garage also gave the Covotsoses room to play with above Michael's main-level wing. In what would have been the garage rafters, they created a bonus room to accommodate other family members — namely their grandchildren — who like to bring friends to the cabin from time to time.

The addition of the bonus room, as well as the size of the cabin, reflect another of the Covotsoses' goals — making room for four children and five grandchildren.

"For the two of us, a 4,000-square-foot-plus house is pretty big," says Lou.





LEFT: The whole family gathers in the kitchen to cook, eat and just hang out, so the Covotosos wanted to make sure the area was inviting. Three counter levels give the space added dimension.

ABOVE: The dining room is one of the few rooms that was not designed around the couple's existing furnishings. It's a favorite because diners feel they're floating amid the trees.

"We not only built it around Michael's recovery and disability, we built it around the future of our kids and grandkids."

The couple also made room for family by converting what would have been a screened porch into a four-season breakfast room, making a section of outdoor porch into Daniele's office and adding a custom dining room.

"We wanted to be able to make this our legacy to them so they could have this as a family house," says Lou. "Our grand-

children and great grandchildren [will] have this for a place to live and hang out long after we're gone."

#### Functionally Beautiful

Although a functional, accessible space was the primary design consideration, the couple wasn't about to give up the cozy cabin look they were after.

"There was no question it was always function over form, but we didn't want to sacrifice form for the function," says

Lou. "That is a really important statement for us, to be able to say we can combine beauty and accessibility at the same time."

The combination is evident throughout the home, starting with an entryway that is flush with the paved semicircular driveway.

"To us, handicap accessible doesn't necessarily mean anything but beautiful," says Lou. "We wanted to make it beautiful without it screaming 'ramp for wheelchair.'"





Six large windows, a wood-burning fireplace and ceramic-tiled floor define the space the couple refers to as the breakfast room. In the original plan, the area was reserved for a screened porch but became a four-season room for the family to enjoy year-round. "We do spend a lot of time in there, especially in the winter," says Lou. "The entire wall on the right of that room is windows. We raise the shades, and it's like being outside."

Although the couple opted not to install an elevator or chair lift, they created an exterior path for Michael to access the walkout basement, which is currently unfinished. The couple also made sure doorways on the main level were wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, and added little touches to make life easier for Michael while adding elegance to the interior space.

The unusually shaped granite break-

fast bar in the kitchen, for example, adds a third level to kitchen countertops and juts out into the great room at wheelchair height.

"That was not part of the kitchen design. That was to accommodate the wheelchair," says Lou. "It has no legs — a beadboard just supports that granite."

In addition to accessibility, the couple kept in mind their own furnishings when customizing the floor plan. Lou, a stained-

glass artist, also wanted to incorporate some custom pieces throughout the decor.

"We knew this was going to be our permanent residence, so we had pieces of furniture in our house in Chicago that we knew we wanted to have here," says Lou. "We had a window in the great room eliminated so we could put a piece of furniture there, we had certain walls in the bedroom extended a bit knowing there were going to be pieces of furniture."



The end result is a highly personalized space that the Covotsoses and their entire family can enjoy for generations.

"[When planning the home] we had the personal goal of Michael's needs, family needs, and furniture and art — the house was built around those ideas," says Lou. "It's very meaningful to us because it represents the goal we were hoping for, which was to have him become more independent."

The original floor plan called for an attached garage, which the Covotsoses converted to an accessible space for their disabled son. "Michael's wing," as they call it, contains a bedroom, sitting room (shown here) and accessible bathroom.



Reprinted with permission from *Country's Best Cabins* Floor Plans & Design Guide 2011.

©2011 Home Buyer Publications, Chantilly, Virginia, 800-826-3893.

## RESOURCES

**Square footage:** 4,353

**Bedrooms:** 4

**Bathrooms:** 3 full, 2 half

**Cabinetry:** Prestige Custom Cabinetry, Green Bay, WI (800-884-6210; prestigecab.com)

**Designer; general contractor; log provider:** Wisconsin Log Homes, Green Bay, WI (800-678-9107; wisconsinloghomes.com).

**Flooring:** Joski Tile and Carpets, Green Bay, WI (920-468-6613)

**Front door:** MAI Doors, Wylie, TX (800-394-6680; mouldingassociates.com)

**Guest bathroom countertop:** Cambria, Eden Prairie, MN (866-226-2742; cambriausa.com)

**Guest bathroom fixtures:** Kohler, Kohler, WI (800-456-4537; kohler.com)

**Landscape designer:** Vande Hey Company, Appleton, WI (920-788-6344; vandeheycompany.com)

**Powder room vanity:** Native Trails, San Luis Obispo, CA (800-786-0862; nativetrails.net)

**Windows:** Semco Windows & Doors, Merrill, WI (800-933-2206; semcowindows.com)