



# A HAND BUILT FAMILY LEGACY ON BURNTSIDE LAKE

**N**estled between the main body and the North Arm of Burntside Lake near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota you'll find a hand scribed, Swedish cope, log home stands 120 feet above the water in a forest of enormous white pine trees. Some of the trees (according to a state forester) date back to the Civil War era.

The property is surrounded on three sides by thousands of acres of unspoiled federal and state land. It was deemed "unbuildable" due to the elevation from the water to the building site and the fact that there is no road to the property, access is by water only.

The owners, Virg and Pat, were determined to build a family retreat. At the time, both of their professions







were profoundly social and people intense, and they needed refuge and respite. “Laughingly we said that this was cheaper than a psychiatrist, which has been very true.”

“We had been going up to visit friends at their cabin on Burntside annually since 1980. We loved the lake so much that by 1986 we were convinced that this is where we wanted to establish a family retreat to build family memories.

“When this 17-acre property, with its privacy, seclusion, and views, was put on the market in 1989, they bought it immediately. “What was attractive was that we could not see any cabins from the location and we loved the view of both the main lake and the North Arm. Views and seclusion were our priorities.”

They found the perfect land in 1989, there were significant challenges, “but it was, we believed, the most beautiful site of all with 200-year-old pines and spectacular views of the lake”. There was no road to it (boat access only) and sold as an unbuildable lot ideal for a Yurt or tent platform.







The parcel was too steep; 120 feet high. There were setback challenges, no construction vehicles could get to the construction site, and back then there was no electricity at the property.

“In our minds, this ‘unbuildable site’ was begging for a beautiful home, a getaway, the perfect spot for that log cabin we had both been dreaming about all our lives. We just needed to figure out how to do it!”

Everything had to come by boat, from the custom windows and doors to the gourmet kitchen appliances and custom furniture commissioned for the home. The first summer they built a dock and construction deck to have a place to receive the construction materials they hauled by boat.

The next summer they began construction of a heavy-duty tram with 40 foot “I” beams suspended on piers of hand mixed concrete to transport materials and people. Step by step during the winter they would dream up how to meet the challenge to be undertaken the next summer.

The third summer they built a 25x25 foot guest cabin to live in while construction began on the main structure.

Red pine logs used to build the home were harvested between 1992-1995 in Voyagers National Forest from a stand of trees designated for log builders. All the logs were floated to the site to a flume system devised to skid the 70-foot logs to the top using an old Navy winch to do the pulling. It took ten summers to build the 4500 square foot log dream. They had a multi-year approach, went slow, and thought through how to do things safely.

“The ‘cabin’ became integral to the fabric of our lives. Our two adopted children learned to fish, build tree houses, fly kites from the boat, explore the 1000s of surrounding acres; especially Chant Lake just behind that property, a great place for picnics, trout fishing and swimming. They also got to know their grandparents and family and spend quality time with no distractions.

“Over the years invitations to the 4th of July have been a big deal to family and friends. The Ely parade





and fireworks over Miners Lake are icing on the cake. Decorating, putting up the family flags representing nationalities represented, campfires, scavenger hunts, fishing, tubing, bean bag toss on the front deck, hiking, canoeing to the North Arm and portaging to Crab lake on the West end into the BWCA are just a few of the activities and traditions.

"Some of the very best memories for our entire extended family are Christmases at the cabin. Getting the older family members on snowmobiles, experiencing a traditional Swedish Christmas with all the trimmings and foods, and decorating the 14' Christmas tree are things that everyone talks about as their favorite Christmases ever!

"One of our all-time favorites is to watch the beautiful sunsets in the 12x30' screen porch where some of our most memorable conversations have taken place. Countless cups of coffee, hot chocolate, and adult beverages have been consumed in this setting while

taking in the incredibly beautiful views of the sunset streaming over the water.

"Another favorite is to get a cup of freshly brewed coffee and go down to the boathouse early in the mornings and watch the sunrise across the bay. The solitude and morning sounds of birds, whispers in the pines, and watching the loons is unforgettable." Now that is Cabin Living.

Virg and Pat are entering retirement phase of their lives and desire to pass this treasure on to someone who will love and cherish this special place and have another family begin making their memories in northern Minnesota.



***The log home includes 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 1 workshop/guest cabin, 4,625 sq ft. Please contact Lisa Janisch, Janisch Realty 218-780-6644 Lisa@JanischRealty.com for more details.***