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Windows above the sink in the kitchen and second-story dormer windows shed light onto a collection of antiques atop Amish-made cherry cabinetry.

OPPOSITE: The attached "silo" is a highlight of the home's barn-inspired design.

Wide Open Spaces

With stunning views and plenty of privacy, this barn-style home defines American beauty.

BY SUZANNA LOGAN | PHOTOS COURTESY OF OAKBRIDGE TIMBER FRAMING

During the week, James Whittaker spends his days in an office. Surrounded by the sights and sounds of the city, peace and quiet are a rare commodity. That's why, come Friday, the corporate attorney is ready to escape his concrete confines for wide open spaces.

And, escape he does — away from the city and down a country road to the getaway home he shares with his wife Jane. Situated atop a hill, the home rises into the sky like a beacon, promising rest. It's the perfect respite from city life.

"It couldn't be more different here," James says. "It's a great place to sit and ponder."

While the weekend home offers million-dollar views (and amply-sized front and rear porches from which to enjoy them), the country-loving lawyer can't sit still for too long during his weekend retreat. "I am always out splitting wood, cutting the grass, keeping the weeds down," he says.

Hard labor for a work-weary soul might not sound relaxing to some, but for James, it's the ideal escape. "After being in an office all week, I'm ready to do anything to be outside," he says.

Of course, not all of his time is spent enjoying the great outdoors. Every now and again, he retreats to the great indoors, i.e. the couple's 5,000-square-foot timber beauty where "living in a barn" is a good thing. The residence, complete with a silo, evolved naturally from James' desire for the home to match its rural surroundings. "I knew I wanted the exterior to look like a barn, but I also wanted to carry that look and feel into the interiors," he says

Inside, exposed oak trusses and beams span across the main living area, where soaring ceilings harken back to barn-construction ideas. "It has a spectacular feel to it, especially with the

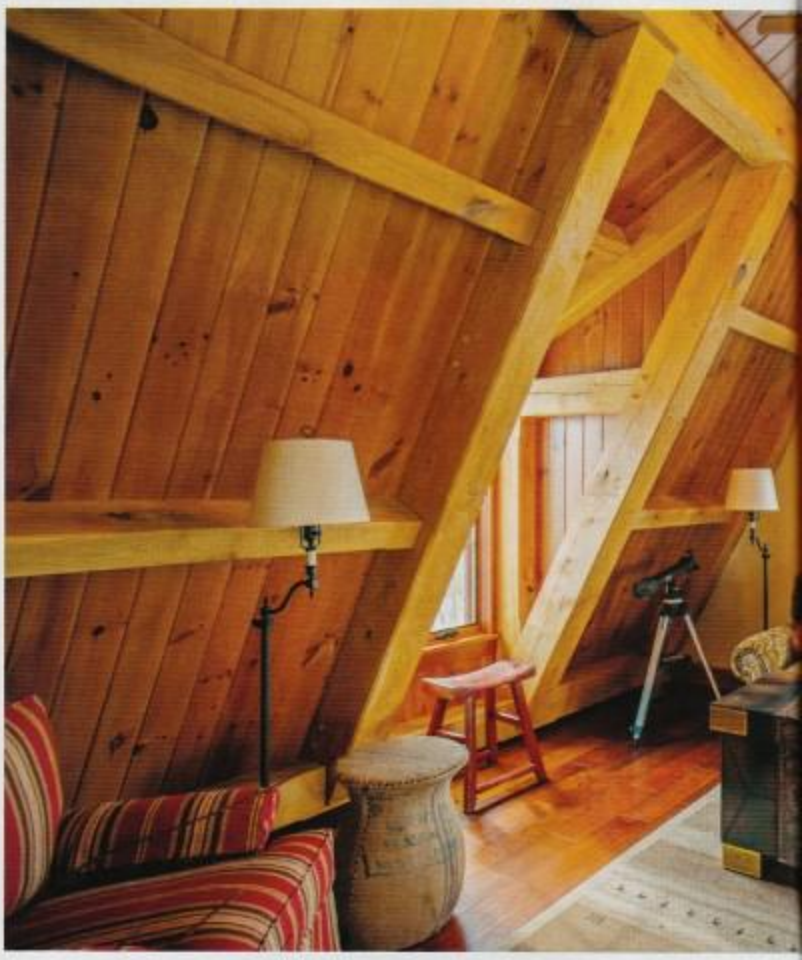
In the great room, a neutral color palette with restrained pops of red creates a sense of refinement. A sandstone fireplace framed with oak timbers anchors the area, as overhanging joists and rustic furnishings lend barn-inspired style.

home details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 5,000

BUILDER: Shrock Premier Custom Construction, 419-994-0004; shrockpremier.com

TIMBER COMPANY: OakBridge Timber Framing, 866-599-5711; oakbridgetimberframing.com



FAR LEFT: Open risers keep the staircase visually light, while the dog-leg design prevents an uncomfortably steep rise between floors.

LEFT: The addition of the loft gives the dining area below a more intimate feel. Overhanging joists add to the rustic feel of the room.

RIGHT: Siding painted the perfect shade of red, a steel roof and carriage-style garage doors are all in keeping with the structure's country aesthetic.

BELOW: For now, a popular spot for reading or a game of chess, the Whittakers hope the open loft will be used someday by future grandchildren.

spotlights shining down on the timbers at night," says James of the massive space. In the great room — as well as in the basement below — oversized French doors open up to the outdoors, mimicking the design of an old barn.

"The home has a rustic feel to it, but there are modern elements mixed in," says Johnny Miller, co-founder of OakBridge Timber Framing, the home's timber provider and co-designer, along with Joseph Shrock of Shrock Premier Custom Construction.

For starters, the open design appeals to contemporary sensibilities and allows family and friends to connect easily during weekend visits. In the common areas and throughout the four bedrooms and bathrooms, dry wall lends an up-to-date vibe, while dark cherry floors, cabinetry and railings bring depth and a sense of refinement. Subtle details like curved braces and slightly darker tongue-and-groove panels give the space "more of a finished look," James says.

Further playing up the home's modern side, tons of strategically-placed windows appear throughout all three floors. "They are on a pretty plot of land, so they wanted to see out and bring the outside in," Miller explains. On the lowest level, light spills into the basement, brightening the recreation, exercise room and guest rooms. Transom windows above the French doors in the great room, as well as dormer windows in the loft, suffuse light into the main living areas.

But of all of the places to take in the sights from the weekend hideaway, James says the best is the silo, an octagonal room surrounded by windows that looks out to rolling hills and pastures. With not a car, pedestrian or building in sight, the silo — like the home itself — is a perpetual breath of fresh air for the couple. "I can't think of a single thing that I would want to change," James says. "It's exactly the way I wanted it to be; it couldn't be more perfect." ▪