

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETREAT

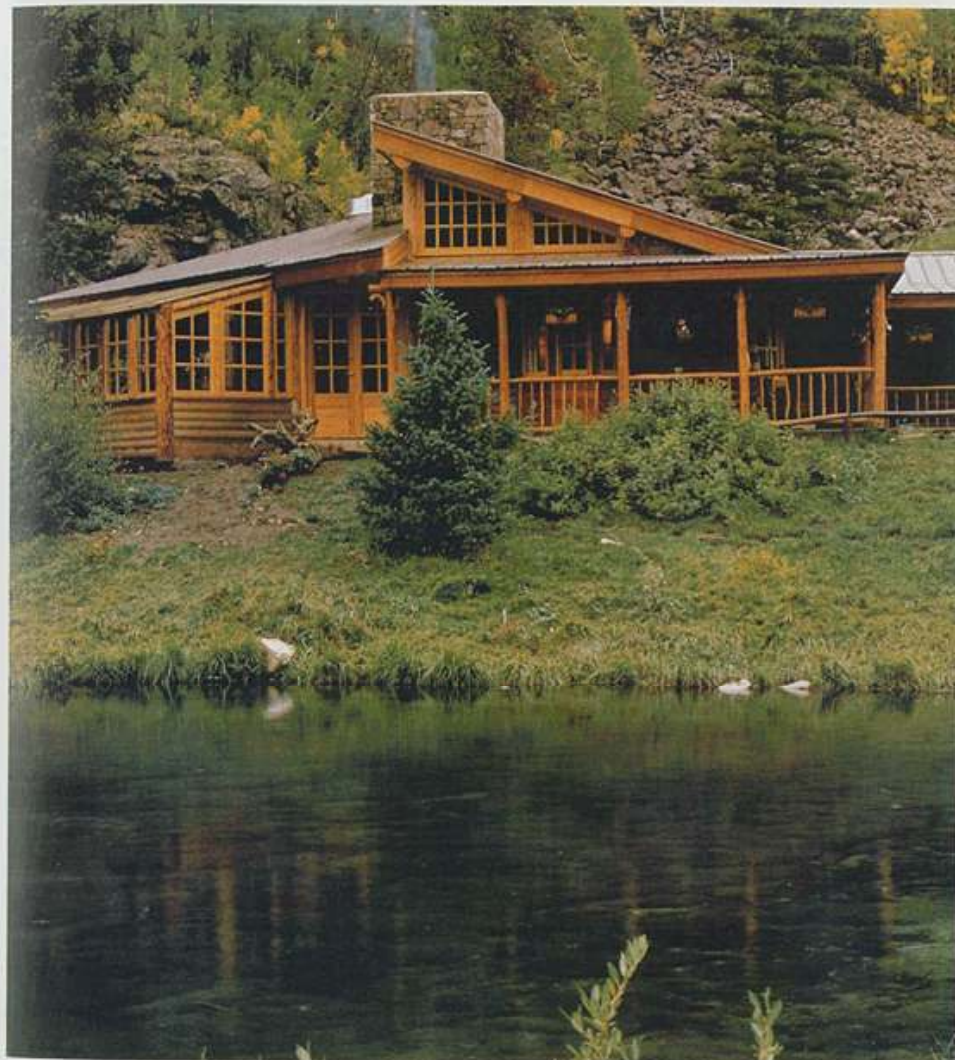
High in the Colorado mountains, where elk and bighorn sheep roam and lupine grows wild in sunny openings between clumps of lodgepole pine, there is a cabin that has stood for more than six decades. Built on land that was once a gold claim, it was at first little more than a shelter against the winter snows and the crisp winds that blow down the mountain slopes in early spring. Later it served as a summer home for Mr. and Mrs. Perkins Sams and their growing family. Then, with grown children and grandchildren, they decided to make extensive changes—partly for their own comfort, partly as the starting point for a complex of cabins to accommodate family and friends comfortably.

Although remodeling primarily involved restructuring and enlarging, they called upon Joseph Minton, of Fort Worth, Texas, their friend and interior designer of long standing, to guide the project from the beginning. "There were many people involved here," says Mr. Minton. "There was a builder who had grown up in the area and knew the peculiarities of the climate and materials. There was a mason who spent six months finding stones for the fireplace and putting them in place. The workmen were all local, fine craftsmen." The builder used many traditional methods from early Colorado days. Mrs. Sams explains: "Whenever he spotted a tree that he thought would be good for a cabin, he'd ring it and leave it to stand for three or four years to 'kill dry.' That way it wouldn't warp, as it would if it were felled and left on the ground to dry."

Construction started in September and went through July. As the building progressed, plans were sometimes changed. "Nearly every week," says Mr. Minton, "we'd have three-way conversations—between the Samses, the builder and myself. The fireplace wall was moved from where it was

originally planned. Even the placement of the windows was changed. Originally there was a space calling for a wall, but we looked up at the gorgeous mountain and decided to leave it open." Much of the design is integral to the construction. The builder often went out to look for trim and returned with a truckload of pieces to make moldings, joists, braces, handles, windows. Drawer pulls came from bent twigs, and the cabin itself from lodgepole pine growing on the property. It is a house for people who clearly love the country. Perkins Sams says: "Anything you do to your home is insignificant compared to the outdoors." Nevertheless, the interior had its demands. "It is a house that puts you in touch with the integrity of materials," says the designer. "I wanted that feeling throughout, and also the house needed a feeling of warmth. I used many country antiques from France, England and America."

Appropriateness to location and the needs of the owners are Joseph Minton's design criteria. "Joe takes me seriously when I say this room has to take a lot of hard wear, and I don't want to worry about maintenance," says Mrs. Sams. "He knows I like rooms to have a casual feeling, so they can easily accommodate new things. He knows Perkins likes to cook and wanted commercial equipment at one end of the kitchen. We have a cool closet for things you don't want to refrigerate but that need to be kept cold, like freshly caught fish. At four o'clock Perkins can say, 'We'll have fish for dinner tonight,' and go out to the lake. And I know we won't be eating scrambled eggs!" In keeping with the country—the fragrance of the trees after a rain, the stillness of the forest broken by the call of a mountain jay, the thrust of wind through aspen and pine—Joseph Minton has created a cabin of uncommon charm in the splendid and rugged mountains of Colorado.





PRECEDING PAGE: Nestled against a hillside in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, the log cabin retreat of Mr. and Mrs. Perkins Sams was restructured and enlarged under the guidance of designer Joseph Minton. OPPOSITE: Indigenous materials were used throughout the home, as in the Living Room, where a stone fireplace anchors beams of lodgepole pine. Forming a congenial area for conversation are a country settee and commodious chairs. ABOVE: In the Dining Area, two tables permit dining flexibility, with Windsor chairs surrounding the table in the background. Kilim rugs warm the brick and oak parquet flooring.



ABOVE. In the Pantry, cabinet handles and drawer pulls were fashioned from pine twigs, and moldings from split logs. Hewing to the country spirit, an antique pine dresser provides storage space. ABOVE RIGHT. A Kitchen window frames a view of the lake. OPPOSITE. In the Master Bedroom, the detailing of ceiling beams and bay window exhibits the inventive craftsmanship that distinguishes the cabin. The patchwork-quilt-patterned bedcovering, window seat upholstery and draperies complement the cheerful small-scale floral wall fabric and the rug.

