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Steve Dubrovsky

Catskills designer/developer Steve Dubrovsky takes the rustic architectural ideal of bringing the outside in to a whole new level. “One home we’re building now has a series of five, forty-foot trees running through the middle of it,” he says, “with huge forks on the top and a log ridge that runs about eighty feet set into the forks. The house is built off of that so when you walk in you see this massive log structure that holds up the whole house.”

“Builders, do not try this at home,” Dubrovsky warns.

“You have to come in with cranes, cut the trees, peel them, take the bark off leaving the under-bark, which gives them a red hue, then set them in place with a crane on the site and brace them off. You have to find the center and stabilize them so the forks line up so that the ridge can go in. It’s very tricky. But when it’s done, it’s really something worth looking at.”

Dubrovsky’s Woodstone Development designs and builds custom luxury homes steeped in late-1800s American architecture. Often Cape Cod or northwestern in style, he says, “some of my designs are almost Wyoming and Montana lodges, or true Adirondack with birch bark panel and stick-work railings and log slab trim.”

Dubrovsky saw the grand old lodges of the northwest during his other career. As a champion steer wrestler, he recalls, “when I competed in rodeos, I traveled all over the country. I visited with ranchers whose kids were competing with me and stayed at their ranches for a few days. I took pictures, and kept a scrapbook. Over the years I developed a book of interesting details from all over the country.” Many of them appear in the custom estates he builds in Upstate New York.

“We put trees in homes and have an eagle landing in them, we’ve had

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—Steve Dubrovsky,
Woodstone Development

trees that are carved to look like a raccoon is crawling out of a hole in the tree. There’s one lodge where every knoll post is about 10 inches around and carved with a pine cone, fishing creel, turtle, bird or frog.”

Dubrovsky settled in Sullivan County after reading an article in *Forbes* magazine some twenty years ago that predicted the then depressed area, just two hours from New York City, was bound for growth. He founded Woodstone and began building luxury second homes for high-profile New Yorkers. As a designer with respect for the land, he gained a wealth of practical experience working on a project with environmental attorney and activist Lawrence Rockefeller.

Dubrovsky is currently designing and building custom homes in Bethel, two hours from New York City. “The property is part of a 20,000 acre estate owned by Chester Chapin, a railroad guy back in the turn of the century,” he explains.

Woodstone acquired almost 6,000 of the acres on the pristine 1,000 acre Toronto Lake and is subdividing and developing parts of it. The project, called Chapin Estate, has sold out its first phase of thirty-five custom, handcrafted lakefront homes of around 5,000 square feet on five and more acres, at approximately \$700,000 to \$1.5 million. Woodstone is marketing fifty more lots in a section called Top Ridge on a hill overlooking the Toronto Reservoir.

Woodstone owns the land that was the site for the Woodstock festival and Dubrovsky’s design studio is in Max Yasgurs’ renovated barn house. But he insists his design concept does not reflect late-60s ideals. “My work,” he says, “is back before that. A hundred years before.” ■