



CARIBOU CREEK RANCH

Where sporting heritage
is infused into every log.

BY LINDSAY SUTHERLAND

Young Darin Byler quickly hopped out of bed one snowy January morning. Rushing to the window, shivers tingled down his spine as excitement wafted over him at the sight of snow piled up on the driveway. Without a doubt, school would be cancelled today and the expansive wilderness that spread thousands of miles around his home would be his playground.

LETTING OUT A "WHOOPI!" DARIN hurriedly dressed and scurried outside. After jumping onto his snowmobile, he shot off like a rocket across the snow, longing to see where the trail would lead him. Meanwhile, the rest of his family snuggled close to the fire, hot chocolate in hand, busying themselves with winter projects.

"I don't think my mother really knew how far into the mountains I traveled," Darin admitted. "I still don't think she does."

After spending hours in the forest exploring nooks and crannies, discovering new hideouts, and tracking all the wildlife a young outdoorsman could dream of, young Darin followed the trail home to the original rustic log cabin. The sight of smoke billowing from the familiar snow-covered roof was a reminder of the cozy comfort that only a rugged log cabin can elicit.

This original cabin was part of the 400-plus acres Darin's grandparents



Darin Byler, then age 14, with one of his trophy whitetails.

owned that butted up to miles of national forest. The land became part of the family in the late 1980s, but it wasn't until the early 2000s when Darin's family moved into the old 1,200-square-foot cabin.

"Three families came together on

this property. My parents lived in one cabin and my brother and I each had our own. Between all of us, we raised ten kids who were fortunate to grow up there," said David Byler, Darin's father.

Delicious food-filled Fourth of July picnics under the 800-square-foot pavilion, laughter-filled nights by the campfire pit and competitive Thanksgiving skeet shoots are just some of the numerous Byler family traditions that were birthed at this north Idaho paradise.

However, the abundance of wildlife on the acreage is still the most poignant of memories. Darin acquired his first .22 rifle at the tender age of three days old and by age 12, he was an avid hunter who brought down a white-tailed deer, bull elk, black bear and a turkey, all in his first legal-age hunting year!

"I got my start hunting whitetails, but now I love to hunt elk. The most amazing deer and elk come off the Selkirk mountains to winter," remembers Darin.

Hunting wasn't the only pastime that entertained young Darin. Fishing trout in the miles of Caribou Creek snaking its way through the wooded acreage was another highlight he delighted over.

IN 2005, DAVID EMBARKED UPON THE task of remodeling the old homestead. He envisioned maintaining the cabin's quintessential rustic charm while making a home large enough to sustain his family. He was enthusiastic about remodeling the cabin since crafting log homes was both a passion and his career. In 1989, David and his two brothers founded Caribou Creek Log Homes, named after the creek on this very homestead.

"We ripped off the roof and turned the meager 1,200-square-foot house and foundation into a 5,000-square-foot home," said David.

The original cabin still stands as part of this luxury log cabin in a place beautiful enough for God to call home. Teeming with wildlife, the property is the ultimate outdoorsman's paradise.

Several Boone and Crocket whitetail bucks have been taken on the property, along with a 360-inch elk that Darin's grandfather brought down.

"Some of the best hunting in the area happens here," David says.

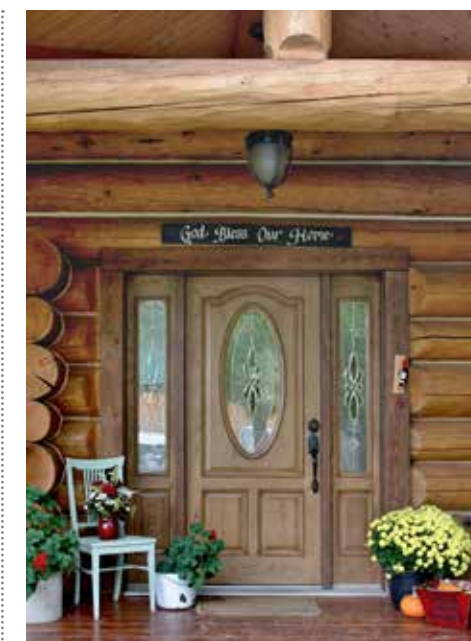
The remodeled cabin sports a game



In 2005, the original homestead cabin was remodeled into this rustic log home.



This spiral staircase is an integral part of the home. It leads to a library with a great view of the expansive property.



Although the door has been updated, this entry is part of the original cabin.

room equipped with a pool table, and a handful of trophies of animals taken on the property.

"Each trophy had a unique story," Darin said. "That was the best part of living there; the wildlife became known. We even named some of them that we saw frequently on the land. The fun was in tracking them and then bringing them down."

In 2015 David sold the cabin along with 50 parcelled acres. Although the Byler family still resides on the remaining acreage, there will always be special memories of this indelible cabin.

Now that Darin has grown and has his own family, the north Idaho lifestyle he grew up in is being passed down to a new generation. Caribou Creek Log Homes is still family owned and operated as Darin and David, along with David's son-in-law, Ken, have teamed up to continue the handcrafted legacy, building luxury log cabins around the world.

High-quality craftsmanship typifies each Caribou Creek home, but that's only part of it. The nostalgia of the log-cabin lifestyle and the passion of true sportsmen is also infused into every square inch of every home. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL CARIBOU CREEK LOG HOMES AT (800) 619-1156 OR VISIT CARIBOU CREEK.COM.