

The Good Life

From the ski slopes of Stowe to the shores of Champlain, these four homes make life great in the Green Mountains. **BY KATHLEEN JAMES**

The good life means something different to everyone. To Scott and Helen Nearing, who bought a farm near Stratton Mountain in 1932 and wrote a famous book by that name, “the good life” meant working the land. To the owners of the lovely homes in the following pages, it may mean escaping the city (if only for the weekend), spending time with family and friends, getting outdoors (early and often!), or living downtown. However you define it, one thing is clear: Life in the Green Mountains can be very good indeed.



This vacation house in Stowe is owned by Elaine and Davis Zaharris of Woburn, Massachusetts. “We wanted the comfortable feel of a mountain lodge,” says Elaine.



FAMILY RETREAT

Owners: Elaine and David Zaharris
 Location: Stowe (off the Mountain Road)
 Style: Sophisticated mountain lodge
 Details: Salvaged doors and stained glass
 Builder: Gristmill Builders
 Architect: Heidi Arnold
 Photography: Susan Teare



SECOND HOME



The kitchen floors are made of four-inch maple, and the rustic boards still show holes where sugarmakers once drilled taps. Radiant heat runs beneath the first floor. An antique stained-glass window, which Elaine found at an antique fair, reflects the sunlight above the stovetop; a local artisan made the handblown hanging lights in a matching shade of rose. The cabinet doors are from Mason Brothers Architectural

Elaine and David Zaharris have good friends in Stowe, and over the years, they have visited the ski village often. When they decided to build their own vacation home, the location was simple to select. “We love Stowe, and we already have family in Maine,” says Elaine. “With a second home in Vermont, we could all visit the beach, and we could all spend time in the mountains.” They bought a hillside lot in 2004 and started working with Brendan O’Reilly at Gristmill; they also hired Stowe architect Heidi Arnold, a solo practitioner who has since moved to the Virgin Islands. “We wanted something open and comfortable, a relaxed house with a mountain lodge feel,” says Elaine, who runs a clinical research trial at Boston Hospital. “When we’re in Vermont, we like to stay home. We wanted a place to cook meals with our family and friends, and read, and hang out.” One of her favor-

ite rooms is the screened porch; she also loves the comfortable window seats that look out over the mountains. O’Reilly and his team used recycled barn-board to side the garage, and the interior includes a fascinating collection of reclaimed doors; the master bedroom door, for example, is hand-carved pine, two inches thick. Other focal points are the colorful stained-glass windows the Zaharris’ found at salvage yards and

antique fairs. “Elaine is great with color, and she really got into the stained glass,” says O’Reilly. “It helped shape the feel of the house.” The cathedral great room, with a tall stone fireplace (see preceding page), has sturdy beams of native hemlock from Heath and Sons Lumber. The house was finished in December 2004, and the Zaharris’ moved in on the day after Christmas. At this point, it has three bedrooms and three-and-a-half

Salvage in Essex Junction; so are the other doors in the house, the handcarved newel post on the stairs, and the segment of old tin ceiling, painted to look like tile, behind the wet bar (at right).

baths. When the lower level is complete, it will have an additional two bedrooms and two more baths. “Our nieces and nephews use the house a lot, so we’ll need the space,” says Elaine. “I’ve always loved Vermont,” she adds. “It’s so peaceful; it’s very different from the rat race in Boston. When you turn that corner on I-89 in New Hampshire and head toward the border, the smile comes back to your face.”

