

LIFESTYLES & LEISURE

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Lofty Mountain Grandeur: Building a Dream for Families

Pictures Above: Set on property Mike Incrovaia used to explore with his father, the homes he has created blend perfectly with the mountain top setting.

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY JOHN THOMAS
STAFF WRITER

Imagine a father and son standing on a wintry hillside more than thirty years ago. They watch in silence as a group of deer pass through the forest not more than fifteen yards from them, then travel down the hillside, traverse a stream, clamber up the opposite hillside, and disappear into the forest. The man and boy remain silent as they walk through stands of tall, green pine trees to return to their car. The boy in the story is Mike Incrovaia and that memory is from just one of the many trips Mike and his family made to the hilltop just outside of Ellicottville. Growing up, Mike's dream

was to spend as much time as he could with his family in the same pristine area; enjoying the forest, streams, wildlife, and views. Now he is creating a new dream of building houses that will allow the owners to create the same kind of connection to the land as organic as his own.

Mike feels genuinely blessed that he now owns the area that formed so many of his boyhood memories. But rather than fencing off the property and building himself a starter castle as a monument to his success; he has chosen to share this special place with others. He is subdividing the land into five acre parcels and building only a single home on each lot. The passion Mike feels for the area is evident in the attention to detail he is giving to every

aspect of the development. He used a GPS unit to lay out the lot lines and nature trails connecting them. Just steps from each home the nature trails connect to fishing ponds and shelters built specifically for family picnics. Mike even laid out the lots himself, personally choosing which trees should be cleared for the building pad, and to expose the views. Of the few Pole Pine and Locust trees cleared, they were used to create the rough hewed fence that borders the site.

Mike is so connected with the area that he insists on building his chalets with local recycled materials. Much of the wood in the homes is reclaimed from old barns often found just a few miles from the development. Mike feels it allows the home

and its owners to maintain their connection to the community.

"We aren't flying in beams from California," he tells me. "This creates value for the home owner." Going through two of the completed chalets the wood work throughout is extraordinary. A set of hand made Amish oak kitchen cabinets, from a 125 year old barn are, in a word, breathtaking. They are a far cry from the pressed wood concoctions at the local home center. Mike credits Dana John Contracting for the quality construction of the chalets. "He's a natural!" Mike exclaims. "He has a great eye. He probably could have built these houses without plans." Dana apparently shares Mike's passion for the project; the finish work on all the homes

is extraordinary.

Lofty Mountain Grandeur is a unique amalgamation of pristine location and exceptional homes, creating what Mike likes to call an "Adirondack lifestyle" in Western New York. It's true; the chalets have the same sort of relaxed elegance found in the finest Adirondack lodges. What's more, the homes have been carefully positioned on each lot to take advantage of the view, as well as not have a view of their neighbor. His goal is to create an atmosphere where families will re-connect with each other. He's hoping the families who live here will create for themselves the same cherished memories of this place that he has. For those families who need a bit more activity, the

homes are only ten minutes to downtown Ellicottville, with its golf, skiing, restaurants and shopping.

As Mike and I stand on the deck of one of the chalets, he points out one of the benefits of living here. "You can hear it loud and clear," he says referring to the silence. Indeed, there is nothing but peace and quiet all around, only a breath of air moving through the forest. As his eyes gaze out over the forest scene it's almost as if he can see a man and a young boy walking through the forest, creating memories as they go. For more information about Lofty Mountain Grandeur contact Amy DeTine at ERA Vacation Properties, 716-583-3769. Or see more homes visit www.loftymountainhomes.com

Reclaimed wood from local demolished barns create unique natural wood kitchens.

The large great rooms are designed to bring in the views. They are a reflection of Mike's boyhood connection with the area.

Reclaimed wood from local demolished barns create unique natural wood kitchens.



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• Mike Incrovaia, Developer •
• Dana John Contracting, Builder •