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AND THE REVIVAL



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FALL 2008

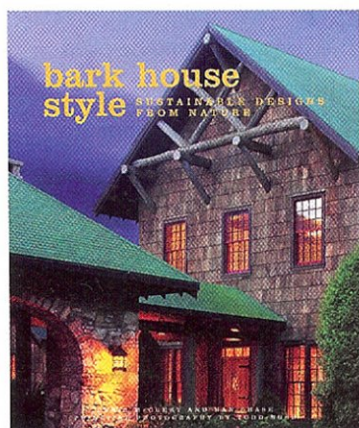
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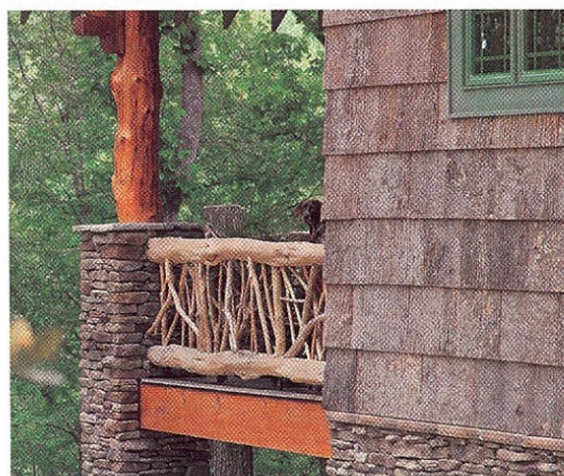
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BARK HOUSE STYLE
Sustainable Designs
from Nature
by Chris McCurry
and Nan Chase
Gibbs Smith, 2008.
152 pp., \$30

CLADDING WITH BARK SHINGLES is enjoying a minor revival, particularly in the place where the tradition began: the mountains of western North Carolina. Bark houses have appeared, too, in the Adirondacks, out West, and on new Craftsman-inspired houses. These rustic but regular shingles lend naturalism and age, whether in remodeling or new work.

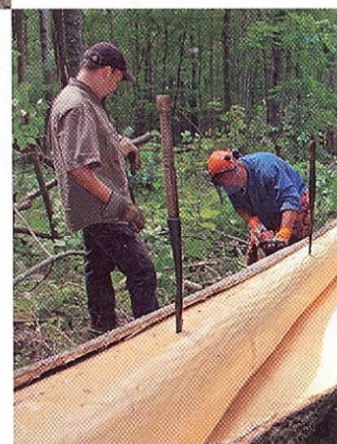
From 1895 until about 1920, chestnut-bark shingles were used in resort architecture, houses, and even churches in Appalachian North Carolina. Shingles were often used to clad walls both inside and out. Twigs from the chestnut trees were used as porch balustrades and stair railings as well as for rustic furniture. The tradition waned after the First World War, and died completely when the



ABOVE: On a restored bark house in North Carolina, new shingles of poplar bark blend with the old chestnut bark. LEFT: A bark-sided house in Boone, N.C., has peeled twigs and logs on the balcony. BELOW: The removal of bark must still be done by hand.

sweeping Asian blight killed off American chestnut trees. Today's revival is thanks to the development, by Marty McCurry, of a process for manufacturing bark-on house shingles from yellow poplar (tulip poplar). McCurry and his wife Chris, who is co-author of the book *Bark House Style*, are experts in vernacular and sustainable building practices.

Photographs present a surprisingly versatile building material: on one cabin the bark shingles seem to disappear in the trees, on a more formal structure they resemble ashlar stone. When they are used on interior walls, the look can be rustic or quite modern. This lavishly illustrated book introduces bark-house history, the revival, building practices, and new design.



RELATED BOOKS OF NOTE: **ADIRONDACK HOME** by Ralph Kylooe [Gibbs Smith, 2005] Eastern camp rustic, showcasing exteriors and interiors of 15 houses old and contemporary, and tracing Adirondack traditions. With very complete source lists. • **CABINS AND CAMPS** by Ralph Kylooe [Gibbs Smith, 2002] True rustic with an emphasis on Adirondack style; beautifully photographed, with many interiors and furnishings. • **GREAT CAMPS OF THE ADIRONDACKS** by Harvey H. Kaiser [David R. Godine edition, 2003] A sweeping, scholarly but readable and fascinating architectural and social history of the Great Camps, with many archival photos.