

wnc

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Premiere
Issue!

Mountain Living in Western North Carolina

Mountain Music

*From Earl Scruggs to The Biscuit
Burners, bluegrass continues to
bloom throughout WNC*

Private Land, Public Interest

The state has purchased the formerly
family-owned Chimney Rock Park.
What's in store for the landmark?

Holding Court with Roy Williams

The native son and determined
Tar Heels coach reflects on life,
love, and basketball

PLUS:

- * Share your art! Selected local artists will be featured
on our Last Page. Go to page 176
- * Express yourself! Tell us what you think. Mail the postcard on page 25

Dining Out
Fashion Goes Green

Black Mountain
Easter Eats

WNC Events



Fiery fiddler Odessa Jorgenson
of Asheville's own The Biscuit Burners

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The Business of Bark

A family venture is bringing back Western North Carolina's traditional home siding



Part mother hen, part corporate commando, Chris McCurry is one of the guiding forces behind today's revival of bark house architecture in WNC.

Yes, bark. Slabs of nubby brown tree bark. Once the hallmark of a classic mountain resort style, bark from chestnut trees still graces some of the century-old vacation homes from Blowing Rock to Cashiers. Today, it's poplar bark that gets harvested during timber-cutting operations and used in place of wood siding on all sorts of buildings—houses, stores, even a pro football stadium lounge in Colorado.



Chris and her husband, Marty, own Highland Craftsmen, which processes poplar bark in Spruce Pine. Growing up around this area, they discovered a common passion for the old-fashioned

look of bark structures. He worked as a builder, she as a nurse, but about 15 years ago, they got a lucky break and met an

old mountaineer with a stack of poplar logs. Using antique hand tools like bark spuds, peaveys, hatchets, and axes, they spent grueling days getting the hang of separating bark from trunk. "We were covered in mud, banged up, and bruised all over," Chris says, "but we did it."

These days, the company has crews throughout the Southeast working alongside timber workers to peel the bark and keep it from becoming mulch or industrial fuel, proving that what is a timber company's byproduct is a home designer's eco-friendly natural siding.

—Nan Chase

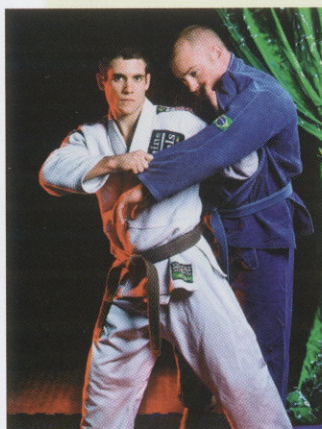
Local Seen: Butch Marks

Taking Down the Competition

Ranked among the world's top grapplers in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Butch Marks, 23, spent most of his formative years in martial arts. Working with North Carolina native and nationally respected instructor Joe Hurst, Marks earned a brown belt in this unique South American fighting style. Between com-

petitions, he teaches Brazilian jiu-jitsu to beginning and advanced students at the Gracie Barra School in Asheville. His future plans include entry into the world of law enforcement training, where he can introduce restraint techniques more suited to an officer's daily routine. "None of our techniques are about deadly force," he says. "It's based on restraint. And if you think about it, that's the majority of what most officers do every day. Performed properly, this is a way to subdue your opponent without injury to yourself or to them."

—Marie Bartlett



Mark of a Champion: With his competitive career in full swing, Marks also plans to expand his business as an instructor.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEWART O'SHIELDS

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CHRIS MCCURRY