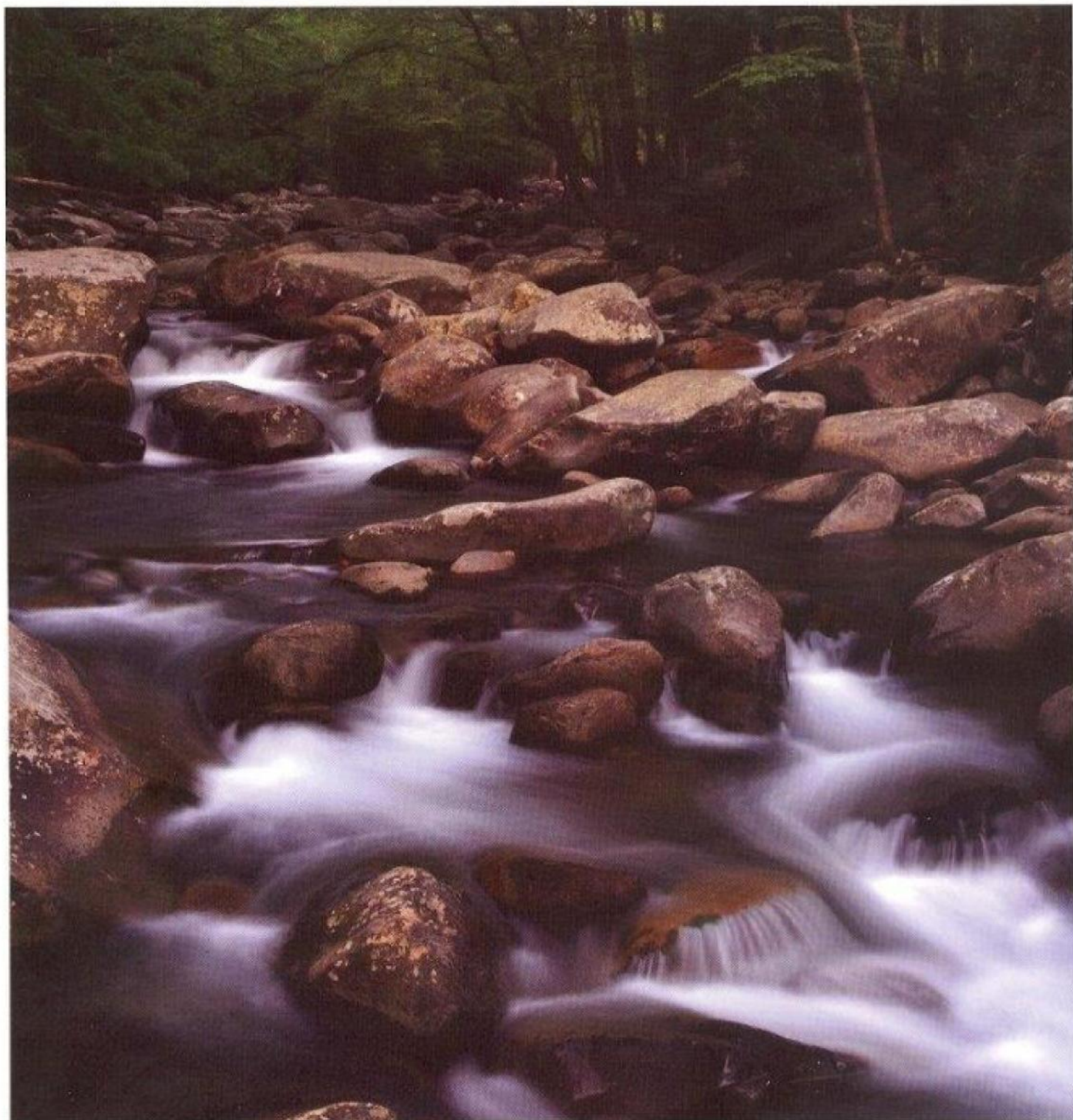


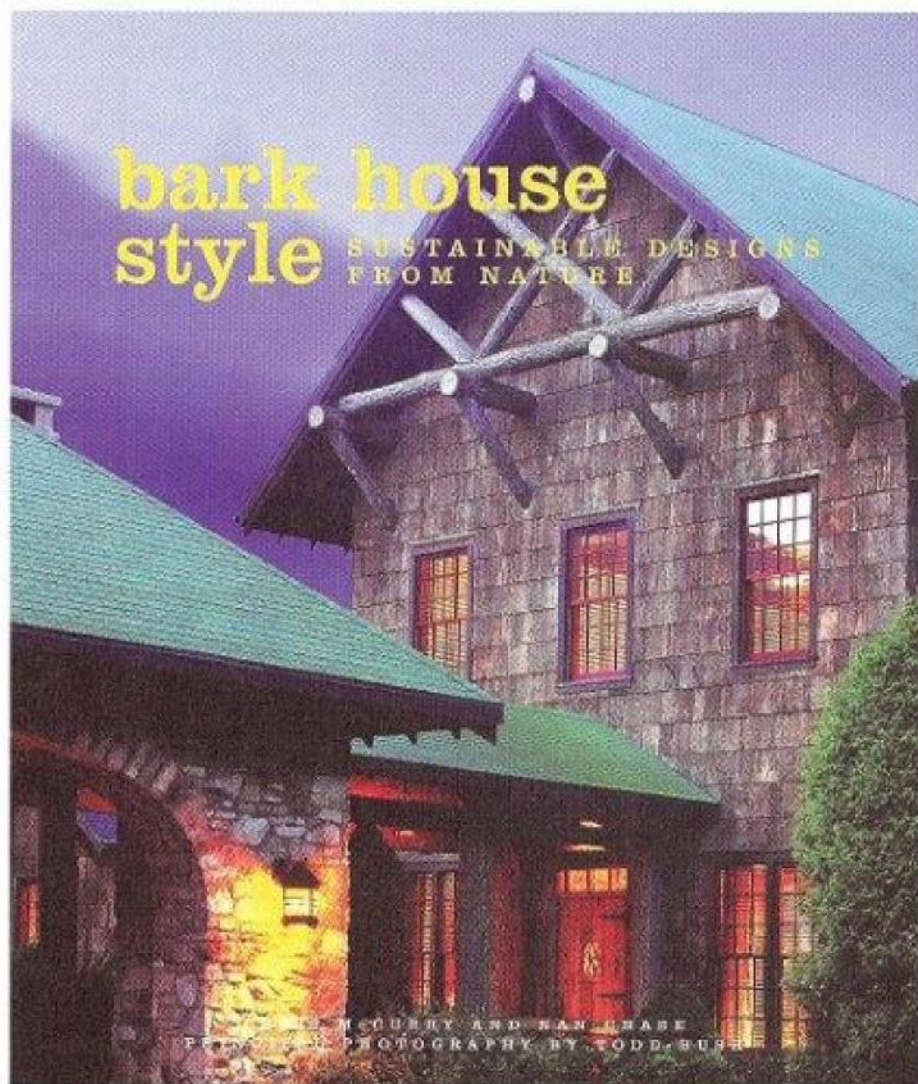
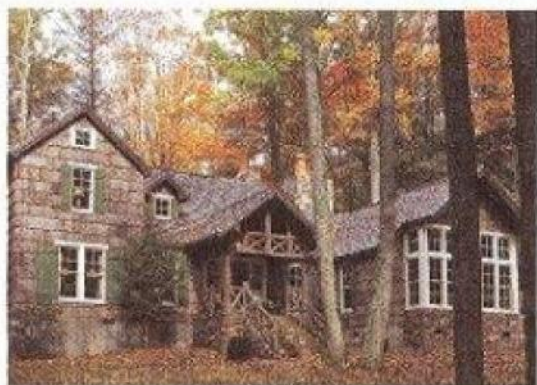
THE LAUREL OF

AUGUST 2008

ASHEVILLE

YOUR GUIDE TO ASHEVILLE, BILTMORE, & THE SURROUNDING AREA





BOOK REVIEW • BARK HOUSE STYLE

It wasn't until she began the research for her book that Chris McCurry learned that her great grandfather had processed Chestnut bark for Appalachian vacation homes.

Chris, coauthor with Nan Chase of *Bark House Style: Sustainable Designs from Nature*, comes from a long line of builders, including her father and grandfather who were craftsmen.

For years in our region, chestnut bark was used to make shingles and siding. Sadly, the chestnut blight obliterated the species by the mid-1940s, and the practice of using tree bark in construction nearly faded away.

That began to change when Chris and her husband Marty saw several old homes where bark had been used both inside and out. With a deep interest in all things green and sustainable, the couple founded Highland Craftsmen, Inc., in 1990 and began producing a product line they named Bark House. Located in Spruce Pine, the company manufactures shingles and other building design products using poplar bark.

"Bark siding is a timeless and green building material," says Chris. The shingles produced by her company, she says, are a by-product of the forest industry. "Before we started, the bark from the tree was left in the woods to decay, skinned from the tree at the saw mill or chipped into undesirable, low-grade mulch."

She's quick to point out, "We do not cut any trees to harvest the bark." Bark siding can last 100 years or more and is literally maintenance-free, she adds.

Bark House Style describes the many and diverse uses for bark siding. Color photographs throughout the book show bark being used in a variety of building projects and mixed with other construction materials, including stone, log, glass, wrought iron, and copper. From Adirondack to Modern, the styles that can be enhanced with bark products are unlimited, says Chris.

Chris is the founder of growthishometowngreen.org, a grassroots effort to help identify grants that can bring green development opportunities to economically distressed rural communities. She is a member of the U.S. Green Building Council, The American Chestnut Foundation, The Arbor Day Society, and Women in the Home Industry Today.

Nan Chase is also author of *Asheville: A History*. Her writing has appeared in many newspapers and magazines, including *The New York Times* and *Smithsonian Magazine*.

The authors will be presenting their book for the first time at 3 P.M. on Sunday, September 7, at Accent on Books, 854 Merrimon. The event will include a demonstration of how to install bark shingles. For more information, visit barkhouse.com.