



CYPRESS

Stars in the Best in American Living Awards' Home of the Year



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An Asheville, N.C. home constructed with locally harvested cypress was the star of the 2009 Best in American Living Awards (BALA). The residence received the Home of the Year Award and four other major prizes in the national residential design competition sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders and *Professional Builder* magazine.

Looking for a home surrounded by nature but close to Asheville's world-class restaurants, shops and music venues, the owners commissioned Rob Carlton of Carlton Architecture to design their retreat in The Ramble at Biltmore Forest, a development of luxury homes on the famed Vanderbilt estate.

"The homeowners didn't have many requirements," the architect explained. "They wanted to focus on sustainable building and sensitivity to the landscape." His only limitation was to follow the guidelines of a design review committee. "The street side [front of the home] had to reflect the overall image of the community, but we had more freedom in back."

The result is an architectural hybrid that incorporates a colonial-style front façade with the look of a mountain cottage in back. Carlton used cypress siding, in horizontal and vertical patterns with contrasting finishes, to harmonize the mix. Cypress also details the home's entry and garage doors.

Cypress was selected over cedar, white pine, and Douglas-fir. "Its tone, grain, and all of its natural characteristics made the decision easy," Carlton noted. "Being locally sourced, it was cost effective and environmentally responsible, too."

The elaborate use of wood continues inside, where honey-toned cypress lines the walls and ceilings. "Cypress is warm, contemporary, and doesn't overpower its surroundings, which can happen with other species," Carlton added.

The great room, which Carlton referred to as the "pavilion," is an indoor/outdoor space separated by a cypress-framed wall of glass. It combines kitchen, living and dining areas under a soaring, vaulted ceiling.



Top: The kitchen features custom cypress, oak and chestnut cabinetry.

Bottom: The "pavilion" is an indoor/outdoor space separated by a cypress-framed wall of glass.

The kitchen features custom cypress, oak and chestnut cabinetry designed by a local craftsman, who also contributed a 15-foot walnut countertop. Cypress cabinetry also appears in the master bathroom. Dark-stained white oak floors are featured throughout the home.

"We had a wide selection of local wood available," Carlton noted. "We were able to showcase all of their unique colors, grains and textures."

The use of wood not only added aesthetic value, but also provides superior indoor air quality. "The homeowners are sensitive to dust and allergens," noted Carlton. "We followed the North Carolina HealthyBuilt Home Program standards."

In addition to efficient windows and mechanical systems, the home features low-flow water fixtures and Energy Star rated appliances. "We also incorporated passive design elements, like the cypress louvers on the pavilion's gable and the overhanging roof," Carlton added. "They help shade the interior of the home and minimize solar gain."

The 2009 BALA Home of the Year is a shining example of how local and traditional materials, such as cypress, can combine with modern architecture to create a sustainable home.

To learn more about the beauty, versatility, and durability of cypress, please visit www.cypressinfo.org.

Awards:

2009 Best in American Living Awards, Professional Builder

- Home of the Year
- Best in Middle Atlantic Region
- Platinum Award for Best One-of-a-Kind Custom Home 4,001–6,500 Square Feet
- Platinum Award for Best Kitchen in a Home 4,001 Square Feet and Over
- Gold Award for Best Specialty Room in a Home 4,001 Square Feet and Over

Builders Choice Awards, Builder

- Special Focus Award – Kitchen

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