

The Old Pangle Place

The rustic log home, more than 200 years old, plus a splendid view of the mountains, the magic of the Shenandoah River and the calm rhythm of hang gliders nearby lured Joy and Lou Giusto six years ago to the place they now call home near Burnshire Dam in Woodstock.

But as grand as the layout was, it took more than a little imagination to see themselves in the house known to most people in these parts as "the old Pangle place."

"We started looking around (for a home) in 1991 or 1992," Joy Giusto, a Luray native, said. "We looked around Luray and even some places in West Virginia. Then we saw a listing for this. But the picture looked horrible. You couldn't tell it was logs and you certainly couldn't tell the logs were exposed."

But the descriptive words in the listing worked their charm. The Giustos drove out from Annandale with sons Louie and Ian to see for themselves just what this house looked like. Joy admittedly was somewhat more eager.

What they found was almost their dream house. With some aesthetic alterations, it fast is becoming just that.

"We were looking for a farm house, and we liked old country houses," she said. "And the pine floors are wonderful."

The two-story log and clapboard structure sold at auction in the late 1980s, and Freda and Willard Riffie, from whom the Giustos bought the house, saw the potential, tapped into it and restored it.

"She took out all the chinking," Giusto said of Freda Riffie. "It looked like Lincoln logs. She put the chinking back and did it all herself."

Riffie also expanded the kitchen, leaving the Giustos with an ample dining area from which they can behold the mountains and witness the hang gliders at play over the mountains.

While the Giustos bought the house in 1993, they visited it only on week-

ends, allowing for plenty of fishing expeditions.

"Lou taught me to fish, and I enjoy it, although I don't have a lot of time for it now," Joy Giusto said. "And Ian loves to fish. He really wanted us to have this house."

At the end of June 1997, Ian having graduated from high school and Louie having struck out on his own, the Giustos gave up weekend commutes and made their complete move to Shenandoah County. Nick, the youngest, had just turned 3.

Once firmly implanted in Shenandoah County, more renovation began in earnest.

"We started when we first moved out," Joy said of the changes in the home. Planning for the house's addition, however, took longer than anticipated, she said.

"We'd started planning (the renovation) before we moved here, probably in early 1997," she said. "But the construction started in June of last year and continued until December. We knew the planning phase would take longer. People change their mind, and I changed my mind about everything."

She concedes, however, that the changes weren't major.

Lou Giusto's office, where he directs his North Fork Fishing Guide Service after a career in restaurant management and food services, was a screened-in porch originally.

Now it has windows all along one side, providing the same vista as those in the kitchen. Above the windows are stained glass panels, bearing the quilt pattern Joy Giusto designed and sketched.

Wainscoting was added to the enclosed section that showcases tiles matching those found in the hallway leading about half the length of the added section.

The first-floor addition that provides a bedroom and bathroom, Joy Giusto said, was to have been stone.

"We both wanted a stone addition, but it was too cost-prohibitive," she said. So they went with siding and



synthetic stone.

"Steve Snyder is the stone mason who did the work," she said. "He lay it down on a pallet, took the pieces, cut them and then modified them to look natural. We're really pleased with it."

The property originally was in the Hockman family.

"A daughter married a Rush, and it stayed in the Rush family," she said. "Then two brothers built houses, one of which is the Fitzsimmons house now and the other is this house."

A Rush subsequently married a Pangle, hence its reputation as the "old Pangle place."

Because of their devotion to history and preservation, the Giustos have striven to maintain the character of the house, going up against a few critics.

Two staircases lead to three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs, one of them being the narrow, winding style found in centuries-old homes and often referred to as the servants' stairs. It was recommended that such a set of stairs be eliminated; the Giustos stood their ground, as did the steps.

The other staircase leads from the living room that faces Tower Road and isn't much wider, forcing the Giusto

family to move bedroom furnishings through upstairs windows. But the extra effort was worth it, Joy Giusto is quick to say.

Finding evidence of a once-standing front porch, the Giustos replaced the porch, begging yet for a planned coat of paint. But the porch and the addition found another critic, this time from a woman driving by who ventured to ask anxiously, "What are you doing to my favorite house?"

Joy Giusto's persistence paid off still when it came to the ice house that was renovated as her office for Southern Exposure, a landscape design company.

Workers and architects advised her the interior stones should be eliminated to allow more space, but she craved the character they brought. The stones stand intact.

In her office/studio, the window design is especially appealing, she points out. They are high enough to provide her privacy when sitting at her desk or drawing table, yet large enough to allow the Valley's sunshine to surface the room.

A small section was enclosed to

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Giusto

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provide a half-bath; a door found in an old shed on the property separates the bath from her office.

Joy Giusto's mother, Margaret Hackley, moved in with the family not long after the 1997 relocation. Her living quarters are in the addition that features French doors and expansive windows, panes of eight over eight. Rosettes bank the windows and doors.

Adjacent to the addition, and hallway with five sets of similar eight-over-eight style windows, is a kitchen galley with laundry facilities.

"We opened the laundry room and added storage cabinets," Joy Giusto said. "You know with old houses there's little storage area."

Beams were left exposed in upstairs bedrooms.

Because of her profession, Joy Giusto has overseen all installation of landscaping. Now she's just waiting for the fruits of her labor to bloom. But it's a pleasant wait, one learned through patience and care, challenged daily, with children, her mother, her plants and flowers.

Outside her office door lies a stone, its etching reading, "One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth."

The Giustos seem to have found their garden on their own little piece of earth.

By Mona Casteel