

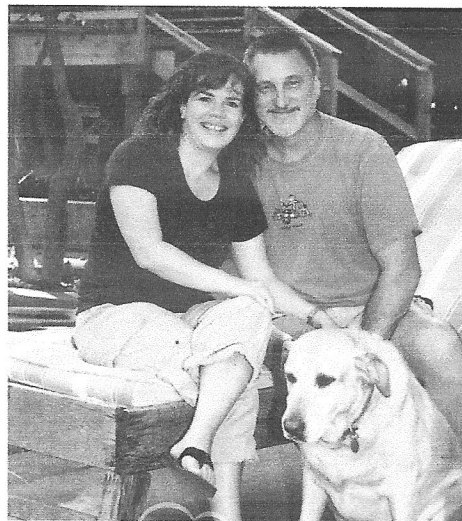
Life is  
**Gruene**

BY JAN ADAMSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY VERONICA AND JORDAN SMITH



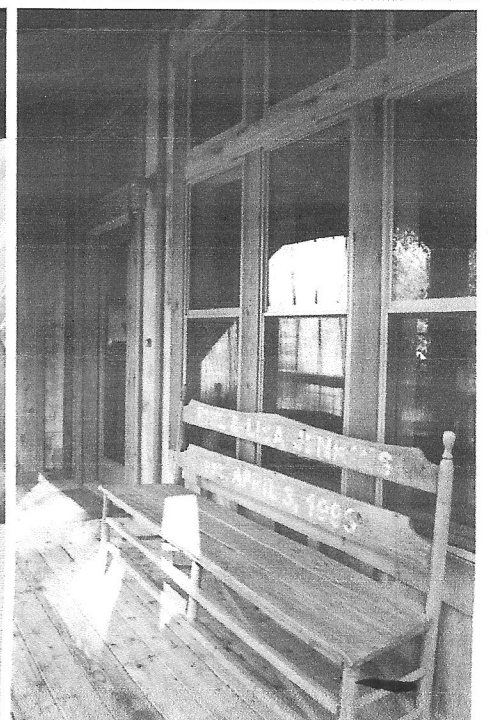
Texasans are uniquely adapted to handle change. We can cope with starting a day at 75 degrees and ending it at 20 degrees. We understand going from drought to flood with a single rainfall. So adapting to change wasn't a stretch for Phil and Lisa Jenkins when the real estate market hit a wall, making them re-examine their plans for their home along the Guadalupe River in Gruene (pronounced "Green").

"We built the house in 2007 for us personally and had planned to live in the home for two years and then sell," Lisa says. "Since Phil is a home builder, that was typical for us. When we were ready to list the property in late 2008, the economy hit a snag and we pondered what to do. We eventually decided to stay and rent the house as a vacation rental and build a small house for us toward the front of the property." >>



"We love the energy and excitement that comes with summer around here. It's contagious and it's lots of fun."

~ Lisa Jenkins





The Jenkins moved to Gruene in 1998, with Lisa accepting a position with Comal County and Phil continuing to run his Nostalgic Log Homes in Brenham. Phil sold the business a few years later. He continues to take on a few building projects each year, and the couple also owns Yard Dog Furniture, a custom furniture business that uses sustainable reclaimed materials salvaged from old Texas farmhouses. And Lisa handles the day-to-day demands of the guesthouse while dabbling in interior design and architecture.

The couple has four children, along with a yellow lab and two cats. "Our son Tyler is the only one left at home and he is 16 so he doesn't want to hang out much," says Phil. "Lisa and I enjoy the live music and great restaurants in Gruene."

Bright and open to outdoor spaces, the guesthouse blends with its riverside location. "You have to design a house to fit the site, not the other way around," Phil says. "Our house fits the site so well because of the natural materials and wood that tie it to the landscape. Building above the floodplain while making the house not have the stilt look was challenging."

The interior features bead board ceilings, wood floors, painted cabinetry, shaped moldings, and mellow colors, with Lisa taking the lead on the design, aiming for a timeless quality.

"Standing in the house, I wanted it to be difficult to tell just when or even in which decade it was built," she says. "I used classic materials such as wood walls, antique reclaimed long-leaf pine floors, Carrera marble countertops, and honey onyx for the kitchen backsplash and master shower. I wanted views of the river from all of the main rooms and very little wasted space."

Given the home's location, the house had to be ready to endure the casual living that comes with a rugged site.

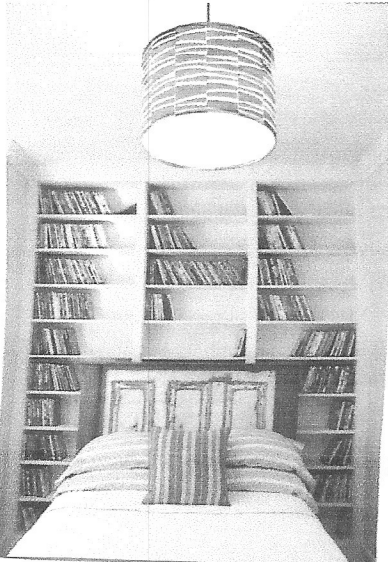
"The house was designed as a 'river >>

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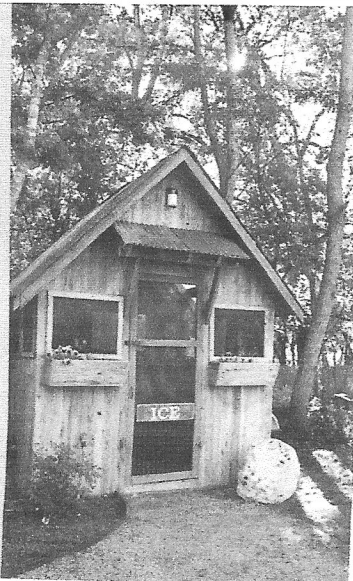
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house' so it is so easy to maintain," Lisa says. "The reclaimed wood floors get scratched from time to time and each nick and scratch tells a story. We don't worry ourselves with the little things. Natural materials are more forgiving than man-made surfaces. Marble countertops can be buffed and sealed periodically, but we haven't had the need to do so. Between guests, we clean the house top to bottom. It's like a spring-cleaning three times a week. Besides, we have the best handyman around: Phil."

In addition to the challenges of keeping the house ready for guests at a moment's notice are the challenges of living in a town like Gruene. With attractions like the river,

Gruene Hall, and all the shops and restaurants of the town, Gruene can go from sleepy to mad in a heartbeat.

"We actually love tourists. Even when we haven't rented the house, we love the energy and excitement that comes with summer around here," Lisa says. "It's contagious and it's lots of fun. In the summer, we do limit trips to the grocery store to Tuesdays when we have the least amount of traffic. In winter, the whole town quiets down and it's so peaceful and relaxing. It's the best of both worlds, and we are always ready to welcome in the new season." °

•• For information on renting this home, visit [lifeisgruene.com](http://lifeisgruene.com).