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## Southbury couple finds their castle on HGTV show 'Home Hunters International' segment airs tonight



Liz and Gordon Jones of Southbury share their story on the set of 'House Hunters International' on HGTV. The couple bought a castle in Ireland. Liz is a global project manager and Gordon is a professional musician and a volunteer EMT in town.



The Jones family of Southbury on the set of 'House Hunters International,' from left, Ian, Morgan and their parents Liz and Gordon

SOUTHBURY – Local residents Gordon and Liz Jones are medieval re-enactors who recently toured castles in Ireland in hopes of buying one of their own. The couple's experience was captured by a film crew from the HGTV show "House Hunters International."

They visited castles in County Clare, County Galway and County Wexford with a range of asking prices.

"We end up with a castle with a lot of interesting small features," Liz said Saturday.

To find out which one they chose, tune into the episode “Castle Hunting in Ireland,” which airs tonight at 10:30 p.m. A second showing is scheduled for 1:30 a.m. Tuesday.

The Joneses, who have lived in Southbury since 1998, have a son, Ian, 23, and daughter, Morgan, 19. They became members of the Society for Creative Anachronism 30 years ago. The international organization began with a medieval party at the University of California Berkeley in the '60s.

“This organization is very liberal in whatever people choose to do,” Liz said. “People have to make an effort to be medieval in clothing and some mannerisms. My character was originally a Welsh person. I changed to an Italian persona. My name in the society is Mistress Damiana Illaria d’Ondre from 1450 to 1520, depending on what clothes I want to wear. My specialty is medieval clothing.”

Gordon’s character is Lord Gruffudd Belwyn, a Welsh man born in 1355, who barely survived the Battle of Agincourt. “Now I’m resting on my laurels,” he said.

Over the years, the couple has hosted workshops for clothing, shoes, furniture building and leather.

“Most of the formal events are usually at more public sites,” Liz said. “The difference between doing it in Europe and here is we rely on schools, churches and parks in the U.S. We have to use more imagination. It’s not as inspirational. But in places like Germany, being able to hold events in castles, it gives you the feeling of really being there in time.”

Liz and Gordon had volunteered with a local group, working on a small castle in Germany, cleaning it and pulling weeds, for the opportunity to sleep

there and host events. “You really felt you could have lived in it,” Liz said. “It was not a grand place. It was one of the small, more intimate family castles.”

Both of the Joneses were always fascinated with castles and other old buildings. They wanted a place of their own to give people the same opportunity they had in Germany. “We want to bring other people along on the journey,” Liz said.

In 1989, they tried to buy an ancient house in France. Part of it was attached to the wall of a castle. “There was too much red tape and it fell through,” Liz said.

Five years ago, they started looking for castles in Ireland. Gordon, a professional musician, often performs Irish music, and he and his wife are members of the Greater Danbury Irish Cultural Center.

He is also section leader in the choir at St. Matthews Episcopal Church in Wilton, where a friend there introduced the Joneses to his son’s fiancée, who is a producer of “House Hunters”. She asked them to do the show.

Joel Wald, chairman of the Southbury Film Commission, worked with the production company to find locations to shoot B-roll footage in town in April and filming was also done at the Joneses’ home. Then there were five days of shooting in Ireland.

Gordon said they never intended to be on television and he and Liz marveled at the work ethic, professionalism and friendliness of the production crew.

“It was great,” Gordon said of their experience. “I’d do it again in a heartbeat.”

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