

Casa Orinda Celebrates its 75th Birthday

By Sophie Braccini

Secret fried chicken recipe, juicy steaks, ham and eggs, guns, moose head, and incredible stories make up the spirit of Casa Orinda, the oldest continuously operated restaurant in Contra Costa County. Last Wednesday, the Orinda Historical Society honored John Goyak and his sister Charlotte, present owners, as they talked about life at the Casa. The restaurant is a landmark where generations of Orinda residents and Contra Costa diners have come to eat at their favorite tables; a place where politics are discussed and romantic involvements interlace.

Jack Snow came from Montana to Orinda in the early 1930's to work on the Caldecott Tunnel. Jack was a social man, he enjoyed company and a good time and since there was not much in that category at the time in Orinda, he decided to start his own restaurant. In 1932, he opened Casa Orinda where it stands today. At the time the restaurant was surrounded by grazing land and a few trees. The bar was a rallying place for the cowboys and a location to eat and catch up with friends. There was a rotisserie in the back and you could be served chicken, beef... but no lamb. It was cowboy food, some of which can still be found there today.

John asked his brother Tommy to join in and manage the place. History has it that Tommy was a gambler and all kinds of games took place upstairs. At the time, "Crossroads" restaurants, like Casa Orinda, were considered "out of bounds," with poker and slot machines flourishing up to the 1950's. People say that Tommy Snow might have been playing a dangerous game when in 1965 he was found murdered in his car. His killer has never been found.



Artifacts and memorabilia from the Casa Orinda

Jack had to take the reins back, but he looked for a partner to manage the place. At that time the Board of Supervisors used to have dinner at the Casa after their meetings. Some say that's where the real business was done. That's how Jack met and befriended Superintendent Ivan Goyak, John and Charlotte's father, and proposed to take him on as a partner. John Goyak started part time in the kitchen when he was still a student and Charlotte did the hosting. At the time, the Casa was serving 2 breakfasts, lunch and dinner and Charlotte was practically living there. She's seen generations of Orindans and has hired many of their kids for part time jobs. In 1978, the Goyak family took full ownership of the Casa.

Charlotte went on to pursue other interests, but John stayed with the restaurant and is still managing it today. That continuity, over 75 years, explains how the original spirit was preserved. Ivan Goyak and his wife Mary retained one of the 4 apartments that sit above the Casa and when they are in town, that's where they stay.

Besides food, the charm of the Casa comes from its unique decor. When a decision was made to do away with the linens on the table, the family asked all the ranchers in the area to come with their brands and "brand" the tables. You can still see these markings today. The large rodeo paintings that can be admired in the dining rooms were commissioned by Jack Snow. When he retired, he left his gun collection, which still hangs on the wall. Today, these artifacts, the trophies, the wooden tables are the ingredients of this unique Casa Orinda atmosphere. Some aficionados call it a "home away from home."

Today, when mayors from Contra Costa meet, they have dinner at the Casa; regulars come back to their favorite table and ask for their preferred dish. Class reunions meet there, like the Miramonte class of '73 which convenes in the restaurant every five years. The tradition of hearty cowboy food is maintained and John Goyak chooses only the best ingredients available in our area for the delight of his clients and friends. New dishes are added as "daily specials" but change on the main menu only occurs once in a while. Rooted into the ranching past of Orinda, this landmark carries on into the 21st century, preserving 75 years of Lamorinda history.

Authentic Chinese Food

Shanghai Cuisine

Free Appetizer with \$30 meal

Banquets & Parties Available

Open 11:30am, 7 Days

3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

Food To Go • Free Delivery

(925) 284-7569

狀元樓

Lily's House

Restaurant

Holly Penfield— International Entertainer Returns Home

By Randolph L. Tom



Holly, a London Sensation



Holly at 18



Holly performing at the Orinda House, May 25
Photo Rick Konlon

One time rock 'n roller Holly Penfield is a local success story with an enviable history as an international entertainer. Raised in the East Bay, honing her singing and writing skills while at Campolindo in Moraga, Holly has returned home to perform in cabaret style at the Orinda House for several dates in June before she heads back to her adopted home of London, England.

While being trained and nurtured as a singer by the legendary Judy Davis, the voice coach for Barbra Streisand and Frank Sinatra, among others, Holly began her professional singing career at the tender age of 13, leading her band, Love Agency, and playing multiple shows throughout the Bay area. At that time of musical history in the early 70s, like a lot of young singers, Holly stuck to playing covers of rock 'n roll classics for "chick singers." Moving from Linda Ronstadt's "Different Drummer" to Judy's Collins' classic, "Both Sides Now," Holly sought inspiration and contacts for her singing career, moving to Los Angeles where she secured recording contracts with

producers Mike Chapman and Nicky Chinn, who were responsible for producing multimillion dollar sellers for cutting edge women rockers like Pat Benatar, Tina Turner and Deborah Harry of Blondie.

Inspired by the singing and writing of one of New York's legendary women singer-songwriters, Laura Nero, Holly spent some time in New York City, paying her dues while writing a vast collection of both pop and more self expressive personal songs. With her music sensibilities changing in the rock 'n roll life of hanging with the stars of the day, Holly was enticed to seek her fame and fortune and stake her career in London. To satisfy her recording commitment with her Los Angeles label, Holly sought a producer who understood her music and need for expression. As fate would have it, Holly not only identified a great producer for her music, but found a soul mate and supportive spouse, Ian Ritchie. An accomplished saxophonist, Ritchie, who will be performing with Holly at the Orinda House on June 17,

also has an active musical career as part of Pink Floyd's Roger Walters' touring band. Like most performers, they check their Blackberries to see when they'll see each other.

London has been good to Holly, where she has been headlining for a decade in venues throughout Europe, bringing her acclaimed "Fragile Human Monster Show" to an enthusiastic and appreciative audience. In so doing, Holly has made the successful transition from pop rock singer-songwriter to jazz and cabaret performer. With her loyal following in the UK, where she has played for many of that country's dignitaries, including Prince Charles and Princess Diana, Holly is able to claim a home at the prestigious Dorchester on Park Lane where she performs to loyal patrons such as Shirley Bassey, Lionel Ritchie and Kate Moss.

In bringing her energetic cabaret style to her hometown, Holly is seeking to give a boost back to the community that has given so much to her. She fondly remembers her time in the bucolic setting of the Lamorinda area and

knows that performing locally to support the businesses that make up the community is extremely important to maintain its vitality. As Holly indicated, "Orinda is home for me, and I'd like to eventually return. The Orinda House is a great forum to perform to an intimate crowd and I'd like to do my best to support its owner, Ron Bonner, to help ensure its viability."

With her eyes firmly focused on that goal, Holly is actively looking to renew her career in the States, this time emphasizing her ample entertainer skills in combination with her formidable singing capabilities. As she looks for professional representation in the States, Holly hopes to build on her well-developed reputation as an exciting cabaret and burlesque entertainer and dynamic singer, as evidenced by her latest CD "Holly's Hot Spot." In addition to her Father's Day performance, you can see Holly at the Orinda House on June 23rd and 30th. Check her out and support our local dining and entertainment scene. I'm sure you'll enjoy the show.



Lamorinda Weekly is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda, California

Address: Lamorinda Weekly
P.O. Box 6133
Moraga, CA 94570-6133
Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 1-800-690-8136;
email: info@lamorindaweekly.com

Publisher: Andy Scheck; andy@lamorindaweekly.com, phone 925-330-7916
Associate Publisher: Wendy Wuertch-Scheck; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Editor: Lee Borrowman, Schools, Life and Towns; lee@lamorindaweekly.com
Staff Writers:
Jennifer Wake, Saint Mary's and Life; jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com
Kevin Shallat, Sports Reporter; kevin@lamorindaweekly.com
Sophie Braccini, Life and Towns; sophie@lamorindaweekly.com
Chris Lavin, Life and Towns; chris@lamorindaweekly.com
Cathy Tyson, Life and Towns; cathy@lamorindaweekly.com
Steve Angelides, Towns and Life; steve@lamorindaweekly.com
From our Intern Army, the following Students contributed stories or photos this week:
Sarah Henningsen, Gavin Schissel, Jordan Fong
Advertising:
Wendy Wuertch-Scheck; 925-330-1983, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Sophie Braccini-Lucacher; 925-413-8048, sophie@lamorindaweekly.com
Distribution:
28,000 printed copies
11,500 Lafayette households
6,500 Moraga households
7,500 Orinda households
100 St. Mary's College
2,000 Public places and local businesses

Give your graduate the gift of cooking

An Interactive DVD Cookbook for any beginning cook!

www.cookinup.com

Phone: 510.537.1282

| LAMORINDA's Restaurants | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| American | | |
| Bistro | 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-7108 |
| Chow Restaurant | 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 962-2469 |
| Hungry Hunter | 3201 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 938-3938 |
| Joe's of Lafayette | 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-8807 |
| Nation's Giant Hamburgers | 76 Moraga Way, Ori | 254-8888 |
| Quiznos | 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-0200 |
| Ranch House | 1012 School St, Mor | 376-5127 |
| Terzetto Cuisine | 1419 Moraga Way, Mor | 376-3832 |
| The Cheese Steak Shop | 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-1234 |
| BBQ | | |
| Bo's Barbecue | 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-7133 |
| Café | | |
| Express Cafe | 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 170, Laf | 283-7170 |
| Ferrari-Lucca Delicatessens | 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 299-8040 |
| Geppetto's cafe | 87 Orinda Way, Ori | 253-9894 |
| Caribbean | | |
| Calypso Bar & Grill | 2 Theatre Sq, Suite 153, Ori | 258-9686 |
| Chinese | | |
| Chef Chao Restaurant | 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor | 376-1740 |
| China Moon Restaurant | 380 Park St, Mor | 376-1828 |
| The Great Wall Restaurant | 3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf | 284-3500 |
| Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine | 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori | 253-9852 |
| Lily's House | 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf | 284-7569 |
| Mandarin Flower | 581 Moraga Rd, Mor | 376-7839 |
| Panda Express | 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-0288 |
| Szechwan Chinese Restaurant | 79 Orinda Way, Ori | 254-2020 |
| Uncle Yu's Szechuan | 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf | 283-1688 |
| Yan's Restaurant | 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-2228 |
| Coffee Shop | | |
| Millie's Kitchen | 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf | 283-2397 |
| Squirrel's Coffee Shop | 998 Moraga Rd, Laf | 284-7830 |
| Village Inn Café | 290 Village Square, Ori | 254-6080 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Continental | | |
| Petar's Restaurant | 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 284-7117 |
| Shelby's | 2 Theatre Sq, Ori | 254-9687 |
| Vino Restaurant | 3531 Plaza Way, Laf | 284-1330 |
| Duck Club Restaurant | 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-7108 |
| Hawaiian Grill | | |
| Lava Pit | 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori | 253-1338 |
| Indian | | |
| India Palace | 3740 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-5700 |
| Swad Indian Cuisine | 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-9575 |
| Italian | | |
| Giardino | 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-3869 |
| La Finestra Ristorante | 100 Lafayette Cir, St. 101, Laf | 284-5282 |
| La Piazza | 15 Moraga Way, Ori | 253-9191 |
| Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria | 975 Moraga Rd, Laf | 284-3081 |
| Michael's | 1375 Moraga Way, Mor | 376-4300 |
| Per Tutti Ristorante | 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-5225 |
| Pizza Antica | 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-0500 |
| Postino | 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-8700 |
| Ristorante Amoroma | 360 Park St, Mor | 377-7662 |
| Japanese | | |
| Blue Ginko | 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-9020 |
| Kane Sushi | 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-9709 |
| Niwa Restaurant | 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori | 254-1606 |
| Serika Restaurant | 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori | 254-7088 |
| Tamami's Japanese Restaurant | 356 Park St, Mor | 376-2872 |
| Yu Sushi | 19 Moraga Way, Ori | 253-8399 |
| Jazz Dinner Club | | |
| Joe's of Lafayette | 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Laf | 299-8807 |
| The Orinda House | 65 Moraga Way, Ori | 258-4445 |
| Mediterranean | | |
| Alekos | 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori | 254-5290 |
| Oasis Café | 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-8822 |
| Mexican | | |
| 360 Gourmet Burrito | 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-1270 |
| El Charro Mexican Dining | 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-2345 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| El Jaro Mexican Cafe | 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-6639 |
| La Cocina Mexicana | 23 Orinda Way, Ori | 258-9987 |
| Mucho wraps | 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor | 377-1203 |
| Baja Fresh Mexican Grill | 3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-8740 |
| Celia's Restaurant | 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-8288 |
| El Balazo | 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-8700 |
| Maya | 74 Moraga Way, Ori | 258-9049 |
| Taqueria El Balazo | 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-8700 |
| Numero Uno Taqueria | 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-1333 |
| Pizza | | |
| Aladino's Pizza | 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-6363 |
| Mountain Mike's Pizza | 504 Center St, Mor | 377-6453 |
| Pennini's | 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor | 376-1515 |
| Round Table Pizza | "361 Rheem Blvd, ", Mor | 376-1411 |
| Round Table Pizza | 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-0404 |
| Village Pizza | 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori | 254-1200 |
| Zamboni's Pizza | 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori | 254-2800 |
| Sandwiches/Deli | | |
| Bianca's Deli | 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor | 376-4400 |
| Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub | 64 Moraga Way, Ori | 254-7202 |
| Kasper's Hot Dogs | 99 Brookwood Rd, Ori | 254-2908 |
| Noah's Bagels | 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-0716 |
| Orinda Deli | 19 F Orinda Way, Ori | 254-1990 |
| South American | | |
| The Patio Tapas and restaurant | 960 Moraga Road, Laf | 299-6885 |
| Steak | | |
| Casa Orinda | 20 Bryant Way, Ori | 254-2981 |
| Tea | | |
| Patisserie Lafayette | 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 283-2226 |
| Thai | | |
| Amarin Thai Cuisine | 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd # B, Laf | 283-8883 |
| Baan Thai | 99 Orinda Way, Ori | 253-0989 |
| Royal Siam | 512 Center St, Mor | 377-0420 |
| Siam Orchid | 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori | 253-1975 |

The Lamorinda Weekly (LW) Restaurant Guide is not paid advertising; our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. We hope that we have included all Lamorinda restaurants on this page, except those that told us they did not wish to be listed. LW is not liable for errors or omissions. In the event that we have inadvertently printed misinformation or excluded a restaurant please let us know (info@lamorindaweekly.com) so that we may correct our list for the next issue.