

Orinda Books Leads the Way for Book Clubs

By Cathy Tyson and Wendy Scheck



Book Club selection at Orinda Books

Photo by Andy Scheck

Orinda Book Clubs' August Picks:

Anne Glarner's Bk Group Under the Banner of Heaven by Jon Krakauer
Book by Book Red & the Black by Stendhal
Bookies Luncheon of the Boating Party by Susan Vreeland
Great Classics Sometimes a Great Notion by Ken Kesey
Elegant Gathering Inside the Kingdom by Carmen Bin Laden
Lamorinda Womens Book Group Sarum by Edward Rutherford
Ola Literati Birds in Fall by Brad Kessler
OPAL Justine by Laurence Durrell
Orinda Books--3rd Wed. Waiting for the Barbarians by J.M. Coetzee
Orinda Owls White Ghost Girls by Alice Greenway
Page by Page Suite Francaise by Irene Nemorovsky
Sol Sisters Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini
South Side Readers Eat Love Pray by Elizabeth Gilbert
Stanford Women-3rd Thursday All the Little Live Things by Wallace Stegner
Straw Hat Ladies Rise & Shine by Anna Quindlen
Thursday AM Teach Man by Frank McCourt
Title 10 Beneath a Marble Sky by John Shors
Whine Before Books When the Elephants Dance by Tess Uriza Holthe

Lamorinda bookstores make a real effort to support book clubs. Not only is it good for business, but it's a great way to connect with the community. Merchants know that with amazon.com, Costco, Barnes & Noble and the like, it's getting increasingly difficult for an independent book seller to stay in business. What sets our bookstores apart is their wonderful customer service and loyal patrons. One of the first local bookstores to encourage the development of book clubs as we know them today was Orinda Books.

Orinda Books

276 Village Square, Orinda
254-7606

Located in the village side of Orinda near McCaulou's, Orinda Books has a very spacious store that lends itself well to author and book club events. The long running Orinda Owls along with the World Affairs Group, Literary Chapter II and the Page Turners meet monthly at the shop. Janet Boreta, owner and one of the original founders of Orinda books in 1976, has been an enthusiastic proponent of reading and book clubs since graduating from Stanford and the early days in her marriage when she moved with her husband to Venezuela with an oil company. There they lived in a thatched roof community with the other oil worker families where the only entertainment was a thatched roof bar. She had an infant and was suffered from boredom until she found out that the company offered each family the opportunity to order 25 books. Soon, Boreta established an informal library for the group where books were shared, discussed, and many brain cells were saved. One night when she was playing bridge, she made a wager with her oil company opponent: should Janet win the game, the company would build a real library for them. The newly erected library became the finest building in the compound. Once back in the States and settled in Orinda, Boreta found herself disenchanted with the book club scene where women all read the same book, but instead of open discussion they would instead attend a lecture to hear an "expert's" opinion about the book. Taking the initiative, Boreta met up with one of her Stanford friends and started a modern day book

club where ordinary people chose books to read and meet in each others homes or other convenient location for discussion and friendship. According to Boreta, there are currently around 200 book clubs registered at Orinda Books.

The 80 active clubs call in to list their latest picks on a well worn spiral notebook or post them on the website and all registered book group members receive a 10% discount on their book of the month. See their website www.orinda-books.com for the latest recommendations and coming events.

Lafayette Book Store

3579 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
284-1233

Lafayette Books started Book Culture as of March 1 of this year. Instead of offering book clubs a discount on one particular book, this is a whole new way to save money on all books. It's a unique community membership club that gives regular book buyers a deep discount. After paying a family membership fee per year, members are given 40% off every book they buy. In addition to the usual excellent customer service provided by owner Dave Simpson and staff, the store hosts book groups. After getting a sense of the type of books a club enjoys, they develop a list and talk about books that would be interesting to the group. Even at times encouraging the reading of an easily accessible classic or book of poetry. Because they read so darn many books, staff prides itself on giving accurate recommendations and trying to steer customers to a book that's a good fit. For more information, www.lafayettebookstore.com.

The Storyteller

30 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette
284-3480

The Storyteller has approximately twenty clubs, mostly mother-daughter groups, with the option of having one meeting per year in the store. Owner Linda Higham doesn't impose any kind of structure on the groups. She and her staff are happy to make age appropriate recommendations for book groups and regular customers as well. Book clubs members receive a 10% discount on the club selection of the month. They also host author events.

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