

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Wednesday, August 22, 2007



Winegrower's Jim and Leslie Ward, Lafayette

Photo by Andy Scheck

When Dave Parker planted 1,500 grapevines on the hill behind his Moraga home four years ago hoping to fulfill a dream to make his own wine from a future harvest, he had no plans to turn his experiment into a commercial venture. However, the combination of Dave's passion for wine and entrepreneurial spirit along with the help of his wife and business partner, Shari Simon, soon led to the creation of Parkmon Vineyards—the only commercial vineyard in Lamorinda. "I originally pursued winemaking as a business, because I thought it would be something that wouldn't take over our lives," notes Dave with a laugh. Yet in 2006, Dave found himself working 100-hour weeks during the "crush" season after harvesting eight tons of grapes from his own vines and other area vineyards and producing about 400 cases of wine. And, as the grapes have grown so has the business. Dave and Shari anticipate a 20% increase in production this year.

Once he had planted his vines, Dave began to notice other vineyards throughout Lamorinda, and other homeowners with empty hillsides started to stop by Dave's property to take a closer look and ask for help to get their own vineyards started. This shared enthusiasm and interest in winegrowing led to the formation of the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association—a group committed to supporting Lamorinda as a winegrowing region. "We started the association in July of 2005 with a meeting of 15 families that owned vineyards in the area, and we now have over 50 members that are winegrowers," states Dave.

"I think the vision for Lamorinda as a winegrowing region is great," adds Jim Ward, a member of the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association.

... continued on page 7

Grapes are Growing on the Hills of Lamorinda

By Andrea A. Firth

Lafayette Art & Wine Festival

By Lee Borrowman

The 12th Annual Lafayette Art & Wine Festival is scheduled for Saturday, September 15 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, September 16, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., in downtown Lafayette. Celebrating over a decade of excellence, the event has grown from a tiny street fair into a premier outdoor event. Art, wine, food, wine, music, wine, shopping and beer, this annual event has something for everyone and is one of the most eagerly anticipated events of the season.

Over 100,000 people are expected to attend this year's event, which features continuous music on three stages, and the Chef's Stage with cooking demonstrations by some of the area's top chefs, including Andy Tseng (Uncle Yu's Szechuan), Gordon Drysdale (Pizza Antica), Chuck Courtney (Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa), and Michael Zeiter (Postino). Also visit the Premium Wine Pavilion, KidZone, and 200 unique arts and crafts booths. A wide variety of tasty tidbits will be available to satisfy any appetite.

Free parking is available at the Lafayette BART station; Black Tie Transportation and our own Lamorinda Spirit will run a free event shuttle to and from the BART parking lot.

The Lafayette Art & Wine Festival benefits local non-profit organizations, including the Lafayette Art and Science Foundation. For more info go to www.lafayettechamber.org.

Road closures during the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival: Beginning at 6:00pm on Friday, September 15, through Sunday, September 17, at approximately 9:00pm, Mt. Diablo Boulevard will be closed in both directions from Lafayette Circle (The Round Up Saloon) to Dewing Avenue. The east portion of Lafayette Circle (by Round Up Saloon) will also be closed from Mt. Diablo Blvd. to Hough Ave. (Residents and Businesses will be allowed access up to Chow's Restaurant.)

Parking restrictions in the affected area will begin at 4:00pm on Friday, September 15. All meters will be "bagged" with no parking notices as of that time so that all vehicles can be removed before the street officially closes at 6:00pm. Cars parked in the area after that time will be subject to towing. Please note that parking lots with access/egress only on Mt. Diablo Blvd. will also be affected as cars parked there after 6:00pm will not be able to leave.

Advertising



Lafayette Art and Wine Festival, 2006

Photo by Michelle Billing

Music schedule:

Saturday, September 15, 2007:

ART STAGE-50 Lafayette Circle	WINE STAGE-3583 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
11:00-12:30 Ellie Athayde	11:00-12:30 Red House
1:00 - 2:30 Nitelites	1:00 - 2:30 Red House
3:00 - 4:30 Bob Athayde	3:00 - 4:30 Workingman's Ed
5:00 - 6:30 Annie Sampson	
5:00 - 6:30 Evolution	

Sunday, September 16, 2007:

ART STAGE-50 Lafayette Circle	WINE STAGE-3583 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
11:00-12:30 Big Sirs	11:00-12:30 Sound Advice
1:00-3:00 Pure Honey	1:00-3:00 Aja Vu
3:30-5:30 Delta Wires	
3:30-5:30 The Sun Kings	

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Lamorinda's Business Community Mingles at Tri-Chamber Mixer

By Sophie Braccini

On the evening of August 8th, over two hundred members and guests from Lamorinda's three Chambers of Commerce squeezed themselves onto the patio of the Lafayette Chamber to reconnect with old acquaintances, make new connections, and enjoy a fabulous spread prepared by Chef Jeff Assadi from Lafayette's La Finestra restaurant.

Although the venue was a bit small, and the volume of the participants a bit loud with enjoyment and enthusiasm, the long-awaited Tri-Chamber Mixer was a tremendous success. Such an event had not been held in several years but Barbara Gilmore, Membership Services Director of the Lafayette Chamber

of Commerce said, "We will definitely plan another one soon."

Speaking on behalf of the staff of the Lafayette Chamber, Executive Director Jay Lifson commented later, "We thoroughly enjoyed meeting with our Chamber members and those of our neighboring Chambers - Orinda and Moraga. What happened at this Tri-Chamber mixer was truly a Lamorinda experience. It was proof positive that community networking can be beneficial for all."

The Presidents of the Orinda and Moraga Chambers, Keith Miller and Jenny Boyd, both echoed these sentiments and offered thanks to their colleagues in Lafayette for sponsoring the event.



Chamber members mingling among the foliage donated by Mt. Diablo Nursery & Garden

Photo by Andy Scheck

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY this week			
Towns news	2, 3, 4	Lamorinda Reads	5
Lafayette Youth Services	2	Calendar	6
Moraga Parks & Rec Director	3	SMC Campus Happenings	6
Clinton Fundraiser	4	How to contact us	6
A Day at Briones	7	Business Briefs	11
Lamorinda Home Sales	8	Lamorinda Restaurants	12
Reverse Mortgages	8	Master Gardeners Walk	13
Orinda Teens in Kenya	9	Gold at Junior Olympics	14
Swim Championship	15	Stead Open Tennis	15
Classified	14	Love Lafayette	16