

# Life in LAMORINDA

## Interior Design in Lamorinda—What Color to Choose?

By Andrea A. Firth



Mari Tischenko and Jana Rains

Photo: Andrea Firth

Color consultants Mari Tischenko and Jana Rains talk about paint colors the way some women reminisce over childhood friends. With names like Timothy Straw, Saybrook Sage, Jalapeno Pepper, and Dill Pickle among their favorites, these colors sound like they could be old friends. Mari and Jana came to work together as colorists establishing a business based in Orinda about five years ago after their sons, who are also friends, graduated from Miramonte High School.

“Color should make everything in the room look great,” explains Jana. “The function of color is to wrap its arms around the rest of the things that are happening in the room and support those things

rather than be the focal point itself.” Although they describe seeing a variety of approaches to color in the homes they work in through out Lamorinda, Mari notes, “Many people are using color now. We have moved away from the all beige or white house of the previous decade.” But Jana is quick to add (as these partners often finish one another’s thoughts), “White is a color that should be used deliberately. It should be treated as a color not a default.”

Mari and Jana avoid trends when it comes to color. “Every year there is a new color trend, and you will see this new color grouping in the goods of many of the large home furnishings retailers,” explains Mari. “We try to focus

on what’s really right for the client’s home. Color trends come and go from year to year, but you often keep your furniture and your home for twenty years or more.”

Mari and Jana regularly deal with the unique aspects of Lamorinda homes when recommending color choices. “We approach each house as a composition. We consider the connection between the inside and the outside as well as how the house flows,” states Mari. Choosing color for homes in Lamorinda requires balancing all the natural beauty and color in the foliage and landscape that surrounds the home and is reflected inward she explains. She also notes that the open floor plan found in many area homes necessitates assigning

color in a more architectural manner rather than a decorative manner. “It’s a big factor. You can weaken or confuse spaces with the improper placement no matter how beautiful the color may be.”

After several attempts to pin these color gurus down to what colors work best in Lamorinda homes, Jana explains. “There is a trend to color that is a little more organic. The colors are often all part of the same family, so it all flows. And it’s not just earth tones like browns and greens. You can have organic yellows and organic blues. Every color can be an earth tone.”

So what is that perfect color for you? “Everyone has an inner palette that they respond to,” explains Jana. “The function of your house is to serve as a nest that makes you feel warm, comfortable, and secure. If you have a color around you that supports you then it works for you.” Mari Tischenko and Jana Rains can be reached for color consulting at 253-9744.

## “Moonlight” Delivers Laughs

Moonlight and Magnolias Plays at the Lafayette Town Hall Theatre

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“Yes Mr. Selznick,” is the common refrain of stylish Meghann May, who plays Miss Poppenghul, the very efficient assistant to the man in charge. At one point, as delirium sets in on day five, she appears in a dream as Scarlett to our three amigos.

Artistic Director Kevin Morales not only does a great job with the cast, but he also has a link to Victor Fleming; he’s his great nephew. Playwrite Ron Hutchinson gave him special permission to produce the play.

The second act loses a little momentum as the campy comedy gives way to serious political topics like acceptance of successful Jews along with straight man Hecht worrying about moral obligations and parallels between the Civil War and Nazi Germany. Valid points to be sure, but frankly my dear, they feel a little out of place in this rollicking farce.

On the whole, a wonderful production right in our own backyard. Moonlight and Magnolias runs through March 15 at the

Town Hall Theatre 3535 School Street, Lafayette, for more information, go to [www.thtc.org](http://www.thtc.org).

## Wired on Technology

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“If on the way home from Tahoe, you can’t wait to get home to play a video game, or other areas of your life are being neglected, like you’re not in sports with friends or school is suffering, there might be a problem,” D’Ambrosio said.

A recent letter to parents from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate principal Bruce Burns said that although the school has a strict policy against using cell phones on campus, students are “often thinking about and waiting for their next text message instead of attending to their school work.”

Burns suggested parents check their monthly phone bill to see how many text messages a child is sending or has received.

D’Ambrosio and colleague Steven Freemire, MFT, held a conference for parents on Feb. 21 entitled “Living in the World of iPhone, Wii, and My Space: Tools of Addiction or Means of Communication” to address these concerns. Although there are benefits to these new technologies, such as building relationships and a sense of community with friends, and getting news of social gatherings, D’Ambrosio and Freemire explained that users can fall victim to cyber bullying, can have private or hurtful information disseminated to hundreds of people with a click, or can become vulnerable to predators.

“I suggest parents talk to other parents to see how long their kids spend on the Internet or gaming,” D’Ambrosio said. “Get a frame of reference, limit access to types of things kids have access to, or get professional help.”

The main reason D’Ambrosio believes some kids (and adults) get into trouble is an inability to deal with boredom. “Boredom means discomfort with yourself,” he said. “Play board games, cards, or learn to day-dream. Help our children learn how to deal with down time. The world is making it very hard for us – kids will always be around computers, cell phones.”

New technological advances, however, are not a bad thing. For many, like Edelstone, the world is a better place thanks to wireless technologies.

“About eight years ago, I went on a cruise (and that was before cruise ships had Internet access),” he said. “The cruise was great, but I came back to 1,000 e-mails. It took all the fun out of the cruise. All the good feelings were gone.”

Now, the world is open to him. While sitting in the bleachers watching a Cal game last week, Edelstone sent me an e-mail update: “Cal is losing 21-15 to Washington State, with seven minutes remaining in the first half.”

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