

business briefs

Teacake Bake Shop Brings Premium Cookies to Lafayette

La Fiesta Square, 35 Lafayette Circle, 283-9900, www.teacakebakeshop.com

The day of Teacake Bake Shop's open house, on Sunday May 31st, people lined up on the sidewalk by the tiny facility to get a chance to try those premium cupcakes at \$3 a piece or mini-brownies for \$1 each. The room was filled with mini-cupcakes, chocolate chunk cookies and cookie sandwiches. The experience was worth the wait because the high quality ingredients used by the baker produce a superior sweet culinary experience. This unique taste has made successful this company that's now opening its 3rd store in Lafayette (after Emeryville and Corte Madera). A visit to the web site gives an idea of the sophisticated offering, but the best way to gage its worth is to stop at the store located where "Patisserie" was (now regrouped with the tea-house on the other side of La Fiesta Square), between Red Wagon and the natural food store Open Sesame. The new store hours are: Mon-Sat 10-6pm and Sun 11-5pm.



New Pesticide-free Cherries at the Moraga Farmers' Market,

Moraga Center

Moraga's Richard Hauser set up store for the first time at the Moraga Farmers' market on June 8th.

The emphasis was on the late spring cherry harvest, approaching 100 pounds. He will also have more limited amounts of mixed lettuce, snow peas, fava beans, Lisbon lemons & Valencia oranges. Plums are coming soon. Although he can't call it organic, it's pesticide free with no chemical fertilizer.



The Orinda Branch of Union Bank of California (Grand opening was June 4th), 140 Brookwood Road, Suite 101, Orinda.

Union Bank of California recently had the grand opening of its Moraga branch. A Japanese owned bank implanted in the Bay Area for many years, they want to partner with local small and medium businesses, and be part of Lamorinda's growth.

Mechanics Bank Expands in Lamorinda with a Branch in Lafayette, 3640 Mt. Diablo Blvd

After Moraga and Orinda, Mechanics Bank will open a new branch in Lafayette in late July. "We're connecting the dots," said Raully Butler, senior vice president and retail banking manager for Mechanics Bank. "We want that synergy of neighboring cities that already know us but don't have us." The new branch will open where Wells Fargo & Co. closed earlier this year. Serendipity played a role in Mechanics Bank actually getting the lease, however, as it owns the mortgage on the building. The landlord, John Brondello, approached his mortgage lender, Mechanics Bank, about coming to town. Mechanics Bank enters the Lafayette market after several changes which have altered the banking landscape.

Yankee Pier in Lafayette Cuts Wine Prices in July, Lafayette Mercantile, 3593 Mt Diablo Boulevard, 283-4100

This July, for the sixth year in a row, the Lark Creek Restaurant Group will hold their half-off wine promotion when every bottle at every Bay Area restaurant (more than 1000 labels) is half-price for brunch, lunch and dinner. Wines found at Yankee Pier include: 2006 Gary Farrell Sauvignon Blanc \$23 / \$46, 2005 Rombauer Chardonnay \$32 / \$64

The Massage Cottage Adds Garden Treatments ,

71 Lafayette Circle. 284-2881, web site under construction.

Located in a somewhat hidden place off La Fiesta Square in Lafayette, the Cottage's owners have decided to turn the quiet location to their advantage and are now offering spa treatments in the "secret garden." Chair massage, foot massage, combined with stretching, guided meditation, and other special treats, will be offered, weather permitting. Marian specializes in Maya Abdominal therapy, Jane's area of expertise is Trager Body Work. Jana features Rehabilitative Therapy and Kamala's focus is Therapeutic Massage.



Quenchers Adds Frozen Yoghurt, 21 Orinda Way # G - Orinda 254-7836

Building on a new trend in New-York City and LA, Quenchers is offering frozen yogurts in the popular European tart flavors that incorporate all the live cultures that are good for you. The store offers different flavors every day and optional toppings such as granola or fruits. Price starts at \$2.50 for the petite size. Quenchers is already well known for its smoothies, including the "Living Lean" option that was developed in partnership with Sheena Lakhotia. Hours are 10 to 5pm during the week and 10 to 4pm on Saturday.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 100 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, www.lafayettechamber.org:

- Friday June 13th: Coffee With The Mayor - 8:00 am - Lafayette Chamber Conference Room. This is your chance to visit with Mayor Mike Anderson and get a front row seat to discuss the current events and issues in Lafayette.
- Monday June 16th - 9th Annual Best Martini in the East Bay Contest from 6-8 pm, at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Sponsored by the Lafayette Park Hotel and Level Vodka by Absolut. All proceeds will benefit "Project Second Chance," the Contra Costa County Library adult literacy program.
- Wednesday, June 18 - Noon - GREEN Committee - Chamber offices
- Thursday, June 19 - 8:30am - Entrepreneur's Club - Chamber offices

Moraga Chamber of Commerce, www.moragachamber.org:

- Tuesday, June 17th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Moraga Country Club invites the members of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and their spouses to a mixer. Appetizers and wine provided by the Club, RSVP before June 14th to edy321@comcast.net.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda, www.orindachamber.org:

- Tuesday, June 17th: Chamber Luncheon Noon - 1:30 p.m. Orinda Country Club 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda. Speaker will be Dr. Joel Parrott, Executive Director of the Oakland Zoo. Cost: \$30.00 per person. Call 925-254-3909 for your reservation

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A Dream for Moraga

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The key partner in the project is the landowner. Different sites are viable for this grand vision in Moraga and Magalhaes is actively seeking property owners' support. "The idea would be to create a Special Purpose Company that would involve the main stakeholders, including the property owners, and preserve their interest," explains a passionate Magalhaes. He envisions that the group would create the 2020 vision, its business plan and visuals, and then actively seek the right professionals to launch the bakery, hotel, spa, and wine-making that will constitute this new center.

Magalhaes has handled projects of even larger scope in his past, but does not want to be the main actor in this one. "I am retired now," says Magalhaes, "I know investors and other interested parties. All I want is that my children and grandchildren continue to have pride in the place they live in."

The members of the Town Council and the Town staff are very interested in the idea. "There's no question that Joao's project appealed to all of the Council members," said Vice-Mayor Dave Trotter. "It can and should be incorporated into the Moraga Center Specific Plan. With support of the property owner, the project could be a very attractive component at the heart of Moraga's new and revitalized downtown."

Council member Mike Metcalf was just as positive, "I have discussed the winery concept a number of times. It's always seemed to me a perfect fit for Moraga, given (1) our agricultural heritage, (2) our growing number of earnest wine



Parkmon vineyard in Moraga

Photo Andy Scheck

growers, and (3) an (apparent) appreciation by Moragans for good wine." He too highlights the role of the property owner, "Clearly no winery project could ever fly without the enthusiastic support of the Bruzzone family, which owns the ideal location for such a project."

Mayor Lynda Deschambault agrees, "The concept of a boutique winery and B&B is one that many have supported, including myself...now we need a real business plan, renderings, and buy-in from the landowners."

"Developing Moraga as a destination is a way to complement declining retail sales tax revenue with Transient Occupancy Tax," says Council member Ken Chew, "we need to look in that direction."

"A lot of Joao's ideas are very attractive, and our family has had such dreams for many years," says property owner Dave Bruzzone. "We want to have the ability to implement the developments this commu-

nity needs, but zoning and political structures have impeded progress in the past. We have been trying to work with the Town, on the Specific Plan, to set up the framework that will allow exciting ideas and projects to take root and blossom. The Specific Plan shouldn't be about one specific idea but the opportunity for us as property owners, to entertain all the great ideas and then go with the best ones. A good Specific Plan makes accommodations for exciting opportunities and doesn't exact burdens and conditions that are barriers to entry. We need people like Joao, and all the others like him, who see what we saw years ago in Moraga, a special and unique place, a place worth your life's investment."

The next meeting for the Specific Plan is scheduled for June 16th, in the La Sala Building of the Hacienda de las Flores; a presentation by the Dahlin Group is scheduled for July 9th during the Town Council meeting in the JM auditorium.

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