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Lamorinda Arts and Business Connect

By Andrea A. Firth



Bob Wahrhaftig (left) talks about his paintings to Terzettos customer Jim Colhoun (middle) and Gordon Steele (right) Photo Andy Scheck

have the space to address a larger group, and we have always wanted to open our book talks up to a broader audience. For us it was a matter of having the right venue," he says.

In stepped Singh with a large, pleasant venue, drinks for sale, and complimentary appetizers, and the two businesses have successfully held four book talks in four months. "For us, the book talks provide a platform for people to see our restaurant and taste our food," says Singh. "You have to be part of the community. It works wonders," he adds.

Singh has also connected with local artists through the Lafayette Gallery who now hold art talks at the restaurant. About thirty people, both artists and art patrons, attended the first art talk where four local artists working in a diverse array of media shared their art backgrounds, creative processes, and examples of their works. "I think this will be good publicity for the Gallery," states Margaret Lucas-Hill, a local painter who presented.

Roos Pal, the owner of Terzetto Cuisine in Moraga, has been hosting events with artists from the Moraga Art Gallery for almost a year. The events typically include wine tasting through a local wine maker as well. "Art and wine go really well together," says Pal who features the work of a different artist each month. On the last Saturday evening of each month the artist is on hand to meet with restaurant goers to launch the new exhibit. "People really love to come see the art, and this really does help to attract patrons. Sometimes we have a full house," says Pal.

As Linda Grana, the manager of the Lafayette Book Store, reviewed her current top ten books at the most recent book talk at Knox last Thursday, the all-female audience listened intently as they sipped wine and munched on the free appetizers. Some were first-time attendees while many others were regulars. The format was casual and several asked questions and shared their thoughts about the books on hand. And after Grana finished, almost everyone stepped up to purchase at least one of the books. As a pair of friends settled their tab, they told the waiter, "Oh, we'll be back for dinner with our husbands." For these two local businesses, the connection was working.

The next art talk at Knox will be held on Wednesday, August 12th from 4:30 to 6:30. The artists speaking will be Patrick Hayashi, smoke and fire painting; Nancy Hartley, water-based oil painting; and Debbie Konce, plein air oil painting and the White House holiday ornaments.

Art and wine has always been a winning combination. It is what great events, like the Lafayette Art and Wine Festival, are made of. Add some good food and a good book, and it becomes the perfect mixture to promote both the arts and business communities in Lamorinda.

Not long after the opening of Knox Restaurant and Lounge on Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette Book Store owner Dave Simpson stopped in for a beer at the end of the work day and got to talking with the restaurant's new owner Gary Singh. "Hey Gary, we should do an event together and call it books at Knox," quipped Simpson. Singh loved the idea of connecting with the book store's clientele, and he quickly agreed to host book talks at the restaurant.

While the genesis of the idea may not have been that off the cuff, book talks at Knox was part of a natural progression for Simpson, one of the originators of the Try Lafayette First campaign and a big proponent of cross-promotion among local businesses. "We have been doing book talks for book groups and other organizations regularly for years," states Simpson. "But we don't always

Meet artist Angelica Goett and view her work at Terzetto Cuisine on Saturday July 25th from 5:30-8:30pm.



Lafayette Book Store Manager, Linda Grana (right of center), selling books following a book talk at Knox in Lafayette Photo Andrea A. Firth

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