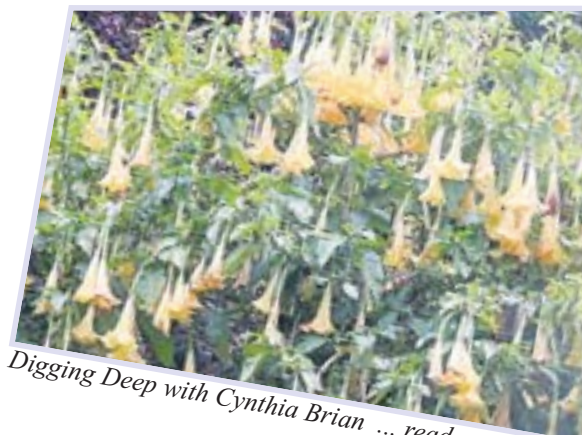


Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 8 Wednesday, June 22, 2011



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on page D5

Orinda's Windsor Chair Guy— George Lucido

By Andrea A. Firth

George Lucido was destined to work with wood. One of the first things he did when he moved to Orinda in 1984 was build a workshop out back, a small space of his own where he taught himself to carve wood. The walls of the workshop are lined with a collection of tools passed down by his grandfather, Orlando Pasquinucci, a shipbuilder in San Francisco around the turn of the century, and his father, Neno Lucido, who spent his career as a finish carpenter. “It’s in my genes, I guess,” says Lucido.

After retiring as an aerospace engineer eleven years ago, Lucido has focused his extensive energy on woodworking. The workshop has been bumped out a few feet on two sides to accommodate his growing collection of tools, equipment, and wood. And about three years ago, he started to take classes at the Mount Diablo Adult Education Center where he met another Orinda resident, Tom Killen, a master woodworker who specializes in colonial furniture. It was Killen who introduced Lucido to the art of the Windsor chair.

An easy going and patient man with an engineer’s focus on design and detail, Lucido had the right temperament and skill set to quickly master the complex and time consuming construction of the American Windsor chair—the elegant and lightweight wood chair of royal English roots with a gently curved back formed by turned spindles connected to a thick carved seat, supported by splayed legs plugged into the underside. Once called stick chairs, Lucido has made five of the seven varieties of the American Windsor chair, and a total of seven Windsors in all.

Lucido brings a mix of art, science, and tenacity to his Windsor chair building. He estimates that each

chair requires 120 to 150 hours to build over a three-month period. Lucido researches every aspect of the

chairs he reproduces, and each project typically starts with him creating a comprehensive, hand-drawn plan.

...continued on page D4



George Lucido at work on a chair in his workshop .

Photos Doug Kohen

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	7	\$525,000	\$2,225,000
MORAGA	7	\$239,000	\$1,000,000
ORINDA	7	\$240,000	\$1,325,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

- 3647 Boyer Circle, \$525,000, 1 Bdrms, 616 SqFt, 1945 YrBlt, 5-27-11
- 1061 Carol Lane, \$1,049,000, 4 Bdrms, 2678 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 5-19-11;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 03-03-06
- 3155 Gloria Terrace, \$680,000, 3 Bdrms, 2003 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 5-23-11;
Previous Sale: \$300,000, 03-20-96
- 3917 Happy Valley Road, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3866 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 5-24-11
- 9380 Read Drive, \$1,340,000, 3 Bdrms, 2927 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 5-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,515,000, 07-10-09
- 51 Janet Lane, \$690,000, 3 Bdrms, 1703 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 5-24-11;
Previous Sale: \$645,000, 04-30-10
- 20 Tiana Terrace, \$2,225,000, 3 Bdrms, 4609 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 5-25-11;
Previous Sale: \$2,498,000, 07-01-05

MORAGA

- 120 Ascot Court #F, \$239,000, 2 Bdrms, 1233 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 5-19-11;
Previous Sale: \$347,000, 07-16-04
- 756 Augusta Drive, \$690,000, 2 Bdrms, 2079 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 5-27-11;
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 06-25-08
- 1383 Camino Pablo, \$930,000, 4 Bdrms, 2587 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 5-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$718,000, 12-24-03
- 1365 Camino Peral #B, \$260,000, 2 Bdrms, 1281 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 5-23-11
- 66 Corte Yolanda, \$1,000,000, 5 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 5-20-11
- 32 Deerfield Drive, \$850,000, 4 Bdrms, 2236 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 5-23-11;
Previous Sale: \$575,000, 12-28-00
- 410 Pimentel Court, \$768,000, 4 Bdrms, 1739 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 5-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$388,000, 06-14-96

ORINDA

- 67 Brookwood Road #3, \$240,000, 2 Bdrms, 897 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 5-18-11;
Previous Sale: \$161,500, 08-16-99
- 457 Dalewood Drive, \$1,325,000, 5 Bdrms, 2776 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 5-19-11
- 90 Estates Drive, \$650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3138 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 5-26-11
- 55 La Cuesta Road, \$1,205,000, 3 Bdrms, 2325 SqFt, 1936 YrBlt, 5-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,368,000, 05-20-05
- 81 La Cuesta Road, \$917,000, 4 Bdrms, 2581 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 5-26-11
- 3 Los Altos Road, \$1,005,000, 2 Bdrms, 2706 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 5-26-11;
Previous Sale: \$785,000, 06-30-94
- 5 Patricia Road, \$799,500, 3 Bdrms, 1820 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 5-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$780,000, 10-21-05
- 14 Valencia Road, \$655,000, 3 Bdrms, 1269 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 5-25-11

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

LAFAYETTE

- 10 Carolyn Court, 94549, Wells Fargo Bank, 05-31-11, \$418,885, 1074 sf, 3 bd

ORINDA

- 110 Brookside Road, 94563, Downey Savings, 05-19-11, \$615,300, 2648 sf, 4 bd



Thinking About Buying?

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Top 4 Opportunities in 2011

- 1) Buy foreclosures in select neighborhoods and cities in Contra Costa County, for strong rental income returns, with future appreciation.
- 2) Buy a home in Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda, in a rare buyer's market.
- 3) Sell in the under \$1,000,000 range in Lamorinda, where sales are now improving, and move up to your dream house in a higher price range where the best negotiating opportunities exist.
- 4) Downsize, and sell in Lamorinda, where the market has not dropped as much, then buy a great one-story home at a bargain price in a nice neighborhood where homes have dropped more. Keep a low property tax by transferring it to the new house within Contra Costa County.

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Orinda's Windsor Chair Guy—George Lucido

... continued from page D1

"I like to keep it as authentic as possible. All of the chairs were built the original way using the original tools," says Lucido. When unable to find a domestic source for an English travisher, a convex woodcarving tool used for shaping the chair's seat, Lucido made one himself. He smiles when pointing out the exception – he admits freely to using an electric-powered lathe versus the pedal-powered lathe employed in the early days.

The wood and paint he uses are also original. The chair seats are made with East-

ern white pine sourced from the East coast, and the rest of the chair is made with freshly cut Modesto Ash, a tree common to the Bay Area with wood that has a very straight grain, so it bends easily and works well for the curved pieces on the chair back. Lucido covers the chairs with two coats of milk paint (an all natural product), first red then black. "When the chairs were first made, they were mostly painted red because that pigment was more readily available and then in later years re-covered with black paint," explains Lu-

cido. He burnishes the black layer to create a shiny and silky smooth surface and leaves streaks of the rustic red peeking through at the edges.

Lucido's woodworking craft is in large part self-taught, and he has kept busy sharing his knowledge. He volunteers time in the advanced woodworking class at Campolindo High School, and he occasionally gives talks to community groups about his craft.

"It's a really fun hobby. I'm out here in the workshop seven days a week," he says, "It

doesn't give me the frustrations that a relaxing day on the golf course used to." And as a reminder, should he be tempted to forgo the woodshop and return to the links, Lucido has his driver prominently displayed over the doorway of his workshop—and that's where it will stay, says Lucido..

George Lucido also does wood furniture repair. You can reach him at his studio at (925) 254-3659 or via email at sawdustman1@comcast.net.

More About the American Windsor Chair

Like many of the things that migrated with the early colonists, Windsor chairs were remade with an American twist. In England, chair makers were required to belong to a guild, which dictated the chair design and amount to be charged. The colonists quickly discarded the old world constraints and created their own chair designs, and the seven varieties of the American Windsor chair were born.

So why were they called "Windsor" chairs? As one story goes, King George was hunting and took refuge from the rain in a farmer's house in the woods. While there he sat in the farmer's chair and found it so comfortable that he ordered several identical chairs to be produced for his home, Windsor Castle. (George Lucido finds this explanation a bit far-fetched.) More likely, the name stems from the fact that the chairs were first made in Windsor, England, an area where many of the woods used could be sourced.

The quintessentially American Windsor chair has been seen throughout the United States' brief history and carries a democratic provenance.

- George Washington was a devoted Windsor chair collector and had 27 Windsors at his Mount Vernon home.
- Thomas Jefferson wrote a draft of the Declaration of Independence while seated in a Windsor.
- When the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, the assembly sat in Windsors.
- Washington's officers sat in Windsor chairs at Fraunces Tavern in New York City to listen to his farewell speech.



A sack back American Windsor chair.

[Source: <http://www.gummelchairworks.com/Windsor-Chair-History.htm>]

George's Bowls and Vessels

People call George Lucido when a tree falls. "It happens all the time," he says. And when he gets a call, he gets to work right away (the wood must be harvested within a week) turning the dead tree remnants into beautiful and functional bowls. Lucido has collected wood from felled trees such as black acacia, black walnut, and birch, from all over Contra Costa County. After making the bowl, he allows it to cure for a year and then sands, oils, and polishes it to provide a bright, natural sheen.



Lucido also makes some very elaborately detailed bowls and vessels, which are more about art than function. The woodworker uses popular and exotic woods to recreate the designs of clay vessels from the Southwest. These bowls and vessels are sold at Valley Art in Walnut Creek and Gallery M in Half Moon Bay.

A. Firth



Photos Doug Kohen

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian Plant a Playground

By Cynthia Brian



A summer centerpiece with blue and white Nigelia in a copper bucket. Leeks and onions have been picked for roasting.

Whether the result is a horticultural masterpiece or only a modest vegetable patch, the hope for a glorious future is at the heart of all gardening. Marina Shinz, photographer

Every morning after making my early bird rounds of my property with a cup of java, I go to the office, sit down to the computer, respond to emails, and post a quip to Facebook, Twitter, and Linked-in. Usually my musings regard the literacy charity, Be the Star You Are!® or an insight about the rewards of working with and coaching teens. A few responses from fans are posed to my profile, applauding the purpose or asking for further information, yet nothing remarkable. However, on the days that my blurbs pertain to garden issues, my inbox overflows with comments. Friend requests arrive from total strangers across the globe insisting that we are colleagues because we are gardeners.

The love of gardening is our equalizer and common denominator. Our gardens become our personal playground, a sandbox of building, planting, exercising, sharing, and growing. According to the journal, Environmental Science and Technology, it only takes five minutes in the garden every day to improve both your mood and

your self-esteem. Researchers suggest that gardening is in our evolutionary genetics. When we tend a patch of earth, no matter how small, we feel more peaceful, generous, and optimistic. Prevention Magazine shared data indicating that biochemical pathways in our brains are stimulated and satisfied by our primal longings to commune with nature.

Gardening is good for our bank balances, too. The associated Landscape Contractors of America calculate that landscaping adds as much as 14% to the resale value of a building and helps it sell six weeks earlier. Planting ecologically benefits our planet by reducing soil erosion and filtering pollutants.

Statistics abound with the how and why people garden resulting in fascinating findings. With an accuracy rate of 95% (plus or minus 4.2 percentage points) representing the attitudes of over one hundred million households, the spring Technometrica Market Intelligence survey found that nearly one half of the population will be gardening in their backyards with a little more than a quarter sprucing up their front spaces this summer.

Despite the economic challenges, 51% percent of consumers favor buying plants of the highest quality, regardless of price. Only 27% chose purchases that were the least expensive.

Where are gardeners getting their ideas for styles, trends, and tips? A whopping 34% indicated that they read books, magazines, and newspaper gardening articles before planning and planting. I hope they are perusing Digging Deep!

With people more aware of the health benefits of local produce, vegetable gardening is more popular than ever. Two thirds of those surveyed grow their own food and 82% are motivated to do so because homegrown vegetables, fruits, and herbs are tastier, pack more nutrients, and are freshest from the terra to table. Although most Lamorinda gardens are larger, it was interesting to note that the majority of avid gardeners worked a plot of land smaller than ten feet by ten feet!

Gardening is the number one hobby of Americans. Aside from beautifying our surroundings and providing edible nourishment, the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional benefits shine for gardeners of all ages. Gardening in-



Orinda gardener, Harry Freis, shared his fabulous foxgloves. He wrote Cynthia, "I enjoyed two weeks of perfect flowering weather until the storm hit. Then they looked like a chorus line of long haired ladies in the shower!" A compelling image. Thank you Harry!

creases strength, flexibility, and body tone. Forty-five minutes of active gardening burns the same number of calories as thirty minutes of aerobics. Gardening is "real" exercise. One hour of weeding burns 300 calories, the same as walking or bicycling at a moderate pace.

Gardening is a stress buster, especially when you are hacking away at those menacing weeds instead of seething with business burnout. By digging in the dirt, we connect with nature, allowing us to unplug from our technological turntable. Patience is learned, as we can't rush a beet. With the long cold and rainy season experienced this year, many of the seeds I planted in May are only now sprouting. Mother Nature decides when germination occurs. We are the worker bees.

The garden is the foundation for creativity as we combine colors, textures, form, and func-

tion. No matter what style, shape, or size, our gardens are the play structures for our imaginations, a gathering place where family and friends find tranquility, enjoyment, and camaraderie.

Gardening is our hope for the future. This summer, dig in, plant a playground, and welcome the flower power paybacks.



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Ask Cynthia Brian, Your Gardening Guide on the Side

Steep thyself in a bowl of summer. --Virgil

Throughout the year, Lamorinda Weekly readers email me with horticultural queries. Many gardeners share the same concerns. These are the three most popular inquiries this year.

Question: How can I bring butterflies to my garden?

Answer: Our beautiful winged friends are drawn to bright, cheerful flowers. When you plant a garden filled with their favorite feasts, you have planned their party. Echinacea, zinnia, butterfly bush, penstemon, lantana, Mexican sunflowers, and cosmos are a few of the floral favors. Lilac bushes and wildflowers are also attractive. Encourage them to stay longer and multiply, by growing host plants such as milkweed, fennel, parsley, and dill for their offspring to dine al fresco. The eggs hatch into caterpillars, hungrily nibbling on the treats until metamorphose magic. Keep a small saucer of muddy water for them to sip a cool drink. If you planted a potager, your herbs, flowers, and vegetables will be mingled together offering the best retreat for these colorful insects.

Question: Last year I had gorgeous daffodil blooms. This year, not a single daffodil flowered, but there were loads of beautiful leaves. What happened?

Answer: This is the most frequent complaint I get in the spring from gardeners who love a perfect yard. My guess is that last spring after your daffodil blooms faded you either cut, braided, or tied the leaves before they had a chance to completely die back. As unsightly as they are, it is imperative to allow the yellowing leaves to naturally disintegrate for the photosynthesis to feed the bulb for the following season. When the leaves are golden brown and crackly like a potato chip, then, and only then is it time to clean up the plant. If you find it unsightly to leave the fading leaves in your beds, plant annuals or a ground cover around the daffodils. By doing this, you will ensure double the amount of blooms next season. By the way, this procedure is necessary for all blooming spring bulbs, not just daffodils. In my garden, I clean up the browned leaves during the month of June, adding them to the compost bin.

Question: I have a pond with a recirculating pump, yet, there are mosquito larvae swimming around. What do I do?

Answer: Now that the sunny weather has finally arrived and summer is around the corner, we have to be proactive with keeping the mosquitoes at bay. Some mosquitoes carry the West Nile virus dangerous to humans, while others endanger the lives of our canine friends by infecting them with heartworm disease. Be vigilant in emptying any standing water as even a couple of tablespoons in a container entices mosquitoes. When the weather heats up, it takes three to five days for the larvae to mature into breeding, biting brats.

Probably your pump isn't powerful enough. It may be stirring the water surrounding the immediate area of where it is installed leaving still or stagnant areas at the other end of the pond. My suggestion is to add mosquito fish which, when mature at one inch of length, will devour up to five hundred mosquito larvae per day. Depending on the size of your pond, goldfish or koi are voracious eaters, although you may want to install netting over the pond to deter the fishing raccoons. You can also buy Mosquito Dunks at your local garden center or hardware store. These two-inch floaters contain *Bacillus thuringiensis v. israelensis*, slowly releasing the BT on the water surface. It gradually sinks to the bottom where the larvae feed on it and die. The Mosquito Dunks are not harmful to wildlife, fish, or humans. They last three to four weeks with one dunk covering twenty five to hundred surface feet. You can cut them into quarters for smaller areas. If you feel you have a mosquito problem, abatement is offered for free by the Contra Costa County Vector Control Department. Call 925-685-9301 and ask for an inspector to come to your property. They will spray and also give you mosquito fish. In the early 1900's, parts of Contra Costa County were uninhabitable because of mosquitoes and the diseases they brought including malaria and encephalitis. Mosquito abatement began in 1927 and our health has been a priority ever since.



Cynthia's amazing artichokes--beautiful and delicious.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Question: What is your favorite specimen in your garden?

Answer: This is an unfair question! It's like asking me which of my children I love most. Since you've been reading *Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia*, you already know that I am a zealous, hands-in-the-muck, extreme DIY gardener. I get excited literally every day when something new bursts into bloom. This year, in the vegetable department, I am head over heels with my two artichoke plants growing in my potager. They have provided bushels of sweet, almost thistle free scrumptiousness for weeks with no end in sight. The most unusual delight is the triple blooms of my scarlet red amaryllis. Normally entertaining me at Christmas, it surprised me with a dazzling dinner plate size display this week. Finally, my roses have never been more glorious. My home is filled with their brilliance and fragrance. (FYI--July *Digging Deep* will be a tribute to these precious plants.) Because of the rains, my orchard is disappointing. I have no cherries, apricots, or Santa Rosa plums this year. There will be a small crop of Asian pears, apples, peaches, loquats, mulberries, currants, grapes, tangelos, tangerines, guavas, lemons, and chestnuts, assuming mild weather conditions and minimal interference from the abundant wildlife. As hoped, my purple plums are right on schedule to ripen on June 22.



Cynthia's favorite Amaryllis.

Thank you for your questions and for reading this column. It's a pleasure to be your gardening guide. If you want to be happy, healthy, and tranquil, start digging deep!

Hello summer and happy gardening to you!

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207 Orchard Road
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ORINDA 
18 La Vuelta
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Offered at \$1,650,000



ORINDA 
69 Tara Road
 Very special 4bd/3.5ba hm of great style, lovely decor & quality enhancements. 4382 sf of ideal spaces, light rms, high ceilings and office. Pvt, gated 1 acre w/outstanding outdoor areas incl patios, pool, sport court. Views too.
Offered at \$1,739,000



MORAGA 
818 Augusta Drive
 Spacious MCC townhouse w/idyllic setting. Backs to babbling brook. Frml LR & DR. Fam area off kitchen. 3bd/2.5ba + bonus rm. Ownership incl club amenities. Top-rated schools..
Offered at \$639,000



MORAGA 
11 Buckingham Drive
 Terrific 3bd/2ba home! Open floor plan with remodeled living, dining rms & kitchen. Expanded master. Great yard with new paver patio and large lawn.
Offered at \$785,000




MORAGA 
151 Cypress Point Way
 Super sharp very well-maintained 2060 sf 3bd/2.5ba 1-level living detached home in MCC. Exceptional style, numerous enhancements. Easy access outside from all rooms to ideal pvt yard.
Offered at \$865,000




MORAGA 
66 Shuey Drive
 Spectacular 4bd + office, dream home w/resort-like yard & pano views. Full high end remodel w/amazing finish work - high ceilings, custom gourmet kitchen, lvl lawn, pool, spa & play space. Top schools.
Offered at \$1,315,000



MORAGA 
136 David Drive
 4bd/3.5ba 3763 sq. ft. w/oversized rms, an abundance of windows & qual. craftsmanship evident throughout. End of a cul-de-sac loc. on a 1.86 ac lot w/trees, lvl lawn, decks in sought-after ngrhd "The Bluffs".
Offered at \$1,379,000



MORAGA 
6 Southard Court
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Offered at \$1,695,000



LAFAYETTE 
3419 Shangri La
 Totally charming 3100 sf 5bd w/updated eat-in kitchen, huge fam rm plus bonus rm, 3-car gar. Lg 1.07 ac lot w/pool & use of riding arena. Great Reliez Valley loc w/Laf/Acalanes High schls.
Offered at \$1,045,000




LAFAYETTE 
8 Hawks Hill Court
 Absolutely stunning pano views of Mt. Diablo, hills & Carquinez straits. Custom blt by owner in 2006 w/master suite, LR/DR/FR, kitchen on main lvl, 3 more bdms & 2nd fam rm downstairs. Many custom features.
Offered at \$1,798,000



PLEASANT HILL 
1910 Hoover Avenue
 Terrific sgl level contemp. ranch. 4bd/2ba, open kit/fam rm. LR, DR, frplc, cathedral ceiling, 2-car gar. Fenced yards w/grassy play area & sparkling pool. Nr schls, trails, parks, shops & golf.
Offered at \$495,000



ROSSMOOR 
1501 Skycrest #2
 Lovely, peaceful 1bd/1ba condo in park-like setting. Beautifully landscaped with verdant views from every window. New cpt & refrig. Nice patio, woody views, convenient inside laundry.
Offered at \$79,500

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