

Lots of Trees in Lamorinda

By Cathy Dausman



Asher (left) and Eric Menke of Orinda picked out an 11-foot Christmas tree at McDonnell Nursery on Saturday. Photo Andy Scheck

Lamorinda Baseball Academy. He hires local high school students to work the lot. "I like to keep the money in the community," he says. Bierly also offers a 20% sales donation to schools and nonprofit groups. Wood chips cover the ground and their smell vies with that of the tree inventory—Noble fir (sheared or natural style), Douglas fir and an East Coast favorite, Fraser fir. Fraser trees are tall and narrow; their needles are silver underneath. Trees range from 2-3 feet to 15 feet in height and cost between \$21 and \$300. Delivery and setup is extra. Bierly hand picks his Oregon-farmed trees, and likes to donate leftovers late in the season to local charities or churches. Honey Bear Trees is named after the bee hives which populate one tree farm; a jar of honey goes home with each tree. The lot is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, and Santa Claus visits from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. December 10 and 11.

Lafayette Boy Scout Troop 224 has been in the Christmas tree sales business since 1958, long enough that one current scout parent was a troop Eagle Scout. Parent Joanne Layshock says this is the only local troop selling trees. Scouts unload and set up day after Thanksgiving. Parent volunteers staff the lot at Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Risa Road during school hours, working in three hour shifts. The scouts work afternoon and evening shifts. The lot is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, and offers four varieties of fresh cut Oregon trees:

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Recent sunshine and 60 degree weather might not put you in the Christmas mood, but visiting tree lots could make a believer out of even the Grinch. Lamorinda lots seem steeped in tradition, and each offers something unique. Here's a look at who's selling real, full-sized Christmas trees:

Sue Renno has sold trees in the Las Trampas pool parking lot (Glenside Drive and St. Mary's Road) in Lafayette for 18 of the last 19 years. Renno's trees are from her father's Oregon tree farm. She sells only Noble firs, which she says last longer, are sturdier, have nicely spaced branches and carry weight well. The trees are kept in water stands at the lot to keep them fresh. "I love selling trees," Renno says enthusiastically, noting the product's great color, freshness and fullness. She also loves visiting with her repeat customers, who range from Rossmoor residents to Lamorindans buying for themselves, their parents, and their grown children. One local family arrived on roller blades to buy its tree, and took it home in a wagon. Renno offers wreaths sales from Boy Scout Troop 204. Her trees are priced by height increments starting at \$60 for 5-6 feet; trees over 8 feet

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