

Lamorinda OUR HOMES



Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 23 Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Every Home Needs a Heart

By Laurie Snyder



Great food. Great conversation. Great view. Unbeatable combination. The Warners' kitchen is truly the heart of their home.

Photos Andy Scheck

A mid-century ranch style residence that had lost its heart seems like an unlikely choice to receive one of Orinda's 2011 Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Architecture. Unlikely, that is, until you learn about the collaboration of love between the home's owners, an architect from an award-winning firm known for its soulful restoration designs, and the Orinda-based contractor who made their dreams real.

The residence, on Via Hermosa, received an award in the category for minor residential additions under 1,500 square feet and remodels. Like other winners this year, the Via Hermosa remodel was recognized for outstanding "property improvements which make an extraordinary contribution to the character and livability of Orinda neighborhoods."

... continued on page D6



2012 Lamorinda Real Estate Guidebook



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Troy Feddersen
Broker Associate
DRE# 1835783

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$514,000	\$1,252,000
MORAGA	2	\$492,000	\$740,000
ORINDA	7	\$210,000	\$1,789,000

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

- 144 Castle Court, \$1,170,000, 3 Bdrms, 2282 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 12-16-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,170,000, 12-16-11
- 3803 Quail Ridge Road, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1892 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-8-11;
Previous Sale: \$13,000, 08-07-70
- 1751 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,120,000, 5 Bdrms, 3731 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 12-13-11;
Previous Sale: \$390,000, 08-30-95
- 3176 Rohrer Drive, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 2104 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 12-16-11;
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 12-16-11
- 3217 Sharon Court, \$1,252,000, 4 Bdrms, 2367 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 12-15-11;
Previous Sale: \$248,000, 02-03-88
- 1202 Vacation Drive, \$514,000, 3 Bdrms, 1243 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 12-15-11
- 3306 Victoria Avenue, \$655,000, 2 Bdrms, 1511 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 12-8-11;
Previous Sale: \$274,000, 09-30-88
- 3133 Withers Avenue, \$742,500, 4 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-8-11;
Previous Sale: \$345,000, 01-09-95
- 3365 Woodview Drive, \$806,000, 4 Bdrms, 2547 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 12-16-11

MORAGA

- 1403 Camino Peral, \$492,000, 3 Bdrms, 1709 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-14-11;
Previous Sale: \$675,000, 03-30-07
- 125 Hazelwood Place, \$740,000, 4 Bdrms, 2160 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-12-11

ORINDA

- 67 Brookwood Road #2, \$210,000, 2 Bdrms, 897 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-16-11
- 115 Coral Drive, \$700,000, 3 Bdrms, 1340 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-9-11;
Previous Sale: \$315,000, 09-24-93
- 11 El Verano, \$835,500, 3 Bdrms, 1706 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 12-16-11
- 99 La Cuesta Road, \$1,064,000, 4 Bdrms, 2720 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-9-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,169,000, 06-16-11
- 618 Moraga Way, \$670,500, 5 Bdrms, 2146 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 12-8-11;
Previous Sale: \$985,000, 05-02-06
- 9 Southwood Drive, \$935,000, 3 Bdrms, 1960 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-13-11;
Previous Sale: \$839,000, 10-26-07
- 5 Woodcrest Road, \$1,789,000, 4 Bdrms, 3802 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 12-8-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 08-13-99

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

LAFAYETTE

- Mosswood Drive, 94549, US Bank, 12-16-11, \$605,000, 1376 sf, 2 bd
- Silverhill Way, 94549, RWW Properties, 12-16-11, \$714,922, 3473 sf, 5 bd
- Via Media, 94549, Citimortgage, 12-20-11, \$849,900, 2893 sf, 3 bd

MORAGA

- Camino Peral #A, 94556, Harborview Mortgage, 12-14-11, \$298,800, 1281 sf, 2 bd
- Francisca Drive, 94556, HSBC Bank, 12-06-11, \$674,778, 1847 sf, 2 bd
- Paseo Bernal, 94556, Bank of New York, 12-12-11, \$562,275, 2117 sf, 3 bd



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Open House Dos and Don'ts

by Andi Peterson Brown

The 2012 spring real estate market is just around the corner and you've decided: this is your year to jump in. You've found yourself using terms like Zestimate and DOM on an hourly basis, and every front yard Coming Soon sign seems to be speaking only to you. This can only mean one thing—you're ready for the next level. The Open House. Believe it or not, there is an art to perusing other people's homes, and below are some tips to help you make the most of your Sunday afternoons.

Do have a game plan. While it's easy to hop in the car and follow random signs, finding your next home is not a scavenger hunt. Do research ahead of time.

Do bring business cards. If you already have an agent, hand their business card over to the hosting agent. If you haven't selected one yet, open houses are a good time to check agents out. Picking your agent early on is one of the smartest things you can do.

Do open doors. Checking closet and storage space is important.

Don't rummage through any personal belongings.

Do ask questions, **don't** forget to take notes. After a day of house-hunting, houses tend to blend together.

Do set up a follow up appointment. Got a feeling that this might be the one? Spend time in the home without other buyers milling about, and **don't** let it pass you by.



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The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett

2011 was another interesting year for residential real estate in Lamorinda, just as it continued to be throughout the country. However, where most other areas saw a more limited amount of sales, Lamorinda's volume was up significantly in Moraga, and down only slightly in Lafayette and Orinda.

Homes stayed on the market for a little less time than a year ago and prices remained relatively stable as supply remained reasonably low throughout the year.

Also, the Lamorinda communities continued seeing more short sales and REOs (bank owned properties) although these properties continue to negatively influence other nearby communities on a much larger scale.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings January 1 through December 31, 2011, 245 single-family homes closed in Lafayette versus 250 in 2010 and 198 in 2009. There were two sales where the sales prices were not reported to the MLS. For the 243 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$399,000 to \$2,900,000 and the average time on market was 49 days, down from 53 in 2010. The average sale price was \$1,040,014 versus \$1,097,749 in 2010 and \$1,045,217 in 2009. The average sales price was 96.8% of the final list price in 2011.

In Moraga there were 124 single-family closings up significantly from the 102 in 2010 and the 59 in 2009. Prices ranged from \$530,000 to \$2,450,000. The average sale price was \$894,768, down from \$927,948 in 2010 and 2009's \$961,872. The number of days on market in 2010 was 40, an improvement from the 44 days in 2010, and the average home sold for 97% of its last list price.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 164. In 2010 the figure was 179 while 162 closed in 2009. There was one property where the sale price was not reported to the MLS. The reported sales ranged in price from \$250,000 to \$3,450,000 with an average price of \$1,021,751. In 2010 the average was \$1,060,798. In 2009, it was \$1,029,915. The average market time was 50 days, down a few days from a year ago when it was 62 days. The average sales price was 96.1% of the final list price.

On an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette homes sold for \$402.15 per square foot, Moraga homes for \$381.61, and in Orinda it was \$423.17. In 2010, Lafayette homes sold for \$432 per square foot, Moraga homes for \$385 per square foot and in Orinda it was \$408. In 2009, Lafayette homes sold at \$434 per square foot, Moraga homes sold for \$408 and Orinda was at \$426.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had six closings, down from nine closings in 2010, and six closings in 2009. They ranged in 2011 from \$325,000 to \$555,100;

Moraga had 67 (up from 65 a year ago) ranging from \$97,200 to \$738,000. This includes attached homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had 12, which was much higher than the three each in 2009 and 2010. They sold from \$200,000 to \$972,500. The lowest four were in the complexes on Brookwood Road and the higher ones in Orindawoods.

It should be noted that there are a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These include some foreclosures that were sold at the courthouse as well as some sales between private individuals.

As of December 31, there were 48 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$339,000 to \$3,499,000. 13 "Potential Short Sales" are currently pending. In each case, the anticipated closing date is several months into the future as the sellers await approval of their particular lender or lenders.

A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined versus a year ago shows a marked decrease to 78 available properties from the 133 that were available on January 1 of 2011. There were, as of January 1, 2012, 12 short sale homes available and also 3 listed bank REOs. Typically the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer. There were only 34 homes on the market in Lafayette at year end versus 55 a year ago. The current asking prices range from \$331,000 to \$5,800,000. In Moraga, buyers had a year-end selection of only 11 homes and condos versus 39 a year ago. List prices ranged between \$165,000 and \$3,500,000. In Orinda there were 24, down from 40 on the market a year ago. Asking prices as of December 31 ranged from \$475,000 to \$6,750,000.

As has been the recent story, the most active price range is the more "affordable" price range. However, after a year of an increasing number of homes sold above \$2,000,000, there were only 17 that sold above this amount in 2011. In 2010 this number was 42. This compares with 23 that closed in Lamorinda in 2009, 30 in 2008 and 50 in 2007 at \$2,000,000 or above.

Interest rates continue to remain at near historic lows and are attractive to those with down payments of at least 20%. Corporations continue to expand and contract and also to relocate families... families who find the Lamorinda area attractive because of outstanding public schools, BART, and the close distance to San Francisco. That and the very minimal amount of new construction help keep supply and demand within a better balance than a lot of other neighboring communities.

Prices are not as high as they were at the peak a few years ago, but in 2011, there were several situations in the three communities where the seller received multiple offers and homes sold for above the list price. This, when coupled with a very low supply, points to both a strengthening of the market and a willingness by sellers to be realistic in their pricing.

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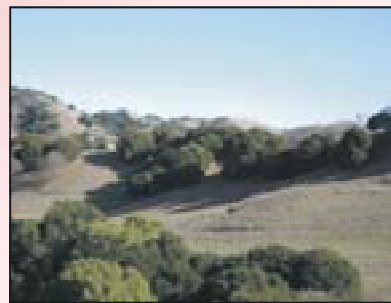
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Every Home Needs a Heart

... continued from page D1

Originally built as a minimalist home with a detached garage, the main mid century ranch style structure sprouted from a hill above the Orinda Country Club more than half a century ago, and was most likely created as a getaway cottage, according to present owners Susan and Howard Warner.

When she first viewed it roughly 14 years ago, says Warner, the property had “almost a magical feel.” She is still clearly mesmerized. “I loved the house from the very beginning.”

Woven into the house’s historical tapestry are tales of fitness legend Jack LaLanne’s



Facing toward the dining room’s glass doors, guests feel part of the greater natural world. When facing away, the dining experience is cozy.



Designers maximized important historic characteristics of the home, including this original brick fireplace.

time here. The LaLanne family is credited with at least one of the residence’s numerous remodels – the enclosure of the walkway between the main house and detached garage which created a new living room area.

Since that time, the house has “undergone a number of discordant remodels and additions,” according to Jarvis Architects, a recipient of previous Orinda awards for architecture and the firm chosen by the Warners in 2009 to modernize their residence while still retaining its old Orinda charm.

Robin Pennell, the lead architect on the Warner’s project, has been a partner with Jarvis since 1991. “He was very keyed in to what we wanted,” says Warner. “He really kept the integrity of the house.”

That house, says Pennell, “had probably six distinct additions, each done a little more poorly than the last. There was nothing that held the house together.” Warner points to the different styles of flooring employed in each room as major contributors to the home’s “hodgepodge” feeling prior to its re-design.

Both echo the other’s sentiment— “The house had no heart.”

Saying that “none of the rooms were in the right place” and describing the residence as having “a lot of rambling spaces,” Pennell said his job was to simplify the house and pull it together by removing much of the offending work that had been done over the years.

Both Pennell and Warner note that there were features with fascinating and important character that were worth preserving – flush doors with distinctive grooves that evoked an almost art deco feel, beamed ceilings, and a living room that was unusually large for this period of ranch home design. That room, says Warner, was and still is “the true essence of the original home.”

A sense of history resonates from the living room’s original old brick fireplace, which has been transformed into a focal point for visitors by flanking white bookshelves and comfortable, inviting furniture.

Warner and Pennell decided to replicate the grooving on the majority of the home’s doors, as well as other pewter and wood touches to create a more consistent feel from room to room.

... continued on next page



The living room’s original dark wood beamed ceilings and more subdued lighting contrast nicely with the home’s sunlit kitchen and dining room.

Two additional fireplaces were re-bricked to match the one in the living room, and wood floors are now visible throughout the home – except in the bathroom where marble was installed. A new powder room was also created to ensure the comfort of visitors.

“I really wanted this design to stand the test of time,” says Warner.



Wrap-around windows (center) provide bright natural lighting for the interior staircase off the family room.



The kitchen door opens onto the expansive deck. The doors at left lead to the dining room.

The living room ended up serving as an anchor for the remodel so that the contractor, Kirk Wall, could dramatically transform the kitchen, dining, and family room areas per Pennell’s vision. Wall, says Pennell, “helped make design decisions along the way. He has a nice eye. This would not be what it is if any one of the three [collaborators] was not participating.”

The whole back of the house now has a view of Mount Diablo – a simply stunning sight that is felt as much as seen upon entering the front door, thanks to the redesign.

“The flow is wonderful,” says Warner. “It feels very spacious – much more than the original design.”

Strategically placed French doors between the family and living rooms also contribute to that sense of openness, as does the high ceiling in the kitchen, Warner’s favorite room in the house. Warmed by a fireplace on chilly, okay-to-burn days, it truly is the heart of the home – a comfortable place where visitors are inspired to put their feet up, relax, and zone out to the serenity of the natural views. It is the perfect setting for Warner who enjoys having family and guests near her while cooking.

Gnarled oak trees visible from the dining room give one a sense of timelessness. At least one of these sturdy friends is believed to be 150-years-old.

It’s also easy to have fun. The kitchen and dining room areas open onto an expansive deck. During the summertime, Warner rolls out indoor-outdoor carpeting to create a single large entertainment-living space accommodating up to five tables for guests. An outdoor barbecue supports work done inside in the kitchen.

Pennell added large wide steps to the deck to encourage the Warners’ guests to come down and enjoy the backyard, newly re-landscaped with native plants to help conserve

Orinda’s precious water. He also strengthened indoor efficiencies, improving the heating and water systems and insulation.

“Look at every path closely and deliberately,” wrote Carlos Castaneda. “Does this path have a heart? If it does, then the path is good.”

ARCHITECT:

Robin Pennell
Jarvis Architects
5278 College Avenue
Oakland, CA 94618
Telephone: (510) 654-6755
info@jarvisarchitects.com



Strategically placed French doors between the family and living rooms contribute to the home’s sense of spaciousness. The hardwood floors add warmth.

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ORINDA

106 Scenic Drive

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Offered at \$859,000



ORINDA

345 Camino Sobrante

Updated 4bd/3ba, 3301 sf contemp on .55 ac in primo country club loc w/spacious great rm, updated kitchen, hdwd flrs, lower lvl guest apt w/pvt entrance, ofc, lg mstr suite.

Offered at \$998,000



ORINDA

20 Monterey Terrace

Architectural Digest worthy, 5000+ sf showplace home w/stunning kit, fab mstr suite, 2 FR's + sep apt. Exclusive close-in cul de sac. Beaut pvt 3/4 ac setting w/lovely views.

Offered at \$1,899,000



MORAGA

101 Brookline Street

Detached spacious 2bd/2bath + ofc in MCC. Wimbledon model, large bedrooms, vaulted ceilings. Great views from top of the hill. Flat yd in back, potential patio, dog run, etc.

Offered at \$695,000



MORAGA

675 Carroll Drive

Walking distance to town, schools, trails, parks & more. Pvt .31 ac lot w/attractive landscaping, grass play area, veggie gardens. 3bd/2ba updated thruout -baths, kitchen, hdwd flrs.

Offered at \$699,000



LAFAYETTE

945 Mountain View Drive

Charm abounds in this 867 sf cutie on .20 ac lvl lot near Lafayette Village conveniences. 1bd/1ba w/exceptional curb appeal. Attn to detail thruout, Fr drs to gardens & decks. Sep artists studio.

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LAFAYETTE

3376 Ridge Road

Affordable 4bd detached home in the popular Trail neighborhood surrounded by heritage oaks -truly a beautiful, natural setting. Tons of recent improvements made to this charming home.

Offered at \$649,000



LAFAYETTE

960 Hawthorne Drive

Trad 3bd/2ba hm in trail neighborhood. Hdwd flrs, Fr doors, wood windows, lovely deck for entertaining. Flat yard w/lawn & views. Nr K-8 schls, trail, shopping, restaurants & library.

Offered at \$719,000



LAFAYETTE

3398 Ridge Road

Special Lafayette Trail 4bd/3ba home nestled among oaks with views of hills on .29 acre. Easy walk to downtown, shopping, restaurants & 9 yrs. of schools. Backs to bike trail.

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LAFAYETTE

3286 Sweet Drive

Lovely 3150 sf home, flex flr plan, updated thruout, granite kitchen. Sweeping views, 2 mstr bedrooms plus 2 more bedrooms & 4 baths in Burton Valley. Guest set-up w/separate entry.

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LAFAYETTE

1730 Toyon Road

Charming craftsman-styled 2100 sq. ft. home on secluded 3/4 acre. Newer roof, skylights, furnace - gorgeous huge new decks. Maple floors, Wolfe range, very private, very secluded.

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LAFAYETTE

1847 Reliez Valley Road

Newly renovated w/high style & fully updated amenities & quality features. Lg new Chef's kitchen w/adj fam rm & formal living/dining rms + stylish master suite. Lots of bedrooms, new baths.

Offered at \$999,000



LAFAYETTE

1258 Panorama

Totally charming trad ranch home on most coveted street in Lafayette! Quiet cul de sac 1 blk to Happy Valley Elem. Updated thruout w/vaulted ceiling, granite kitchen & baths.

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LAFAYETTE

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