

Blooms By You

Flower Arrangement School Gets Ready for the Holidays

By Sophie Braccini



Chris Stoneberg in her Orinda home-studio

Photo Yoni Mayer

Holiday homes would not be the same without a wreath adorning the front door. Making your own unique creation is easy thanks to Chris Stoneberg and Blooms By You, a flower arrangement school she opened in her Orinda home-studio. Wreaths are not the only decorative pieces Stoneberg teaches how to make; an educated flower arranger

and gilding artist, she also offers rose arrangement, egg and pumpkin gilding, succulent classes and more.

An Orinda resident for 18 years, Stoneberg says she always loved flowers and had them continuously around the house. A few years ago, she decided to become more proficient at designing flower arrangements for her home, but couldn't find

a solid week-long class locally that produced the look she wanted. She discovered the New York Flower School, and after taking many classes, she decided to pass along what she was learning. The flower arrangement classes she offers in her Orinda home-studio teach everything from selecting the flowers, creating a color palette, conditioning the flowers for longevity, to building a floral design.

"I took 'pave' (round compact bouquet), wreath, rose arranging and succulent classes with Chris," says Sheryl Tyne who is one of Stoneberg's ardent fans. "She is a fabulous teacher, from choosing and caring for the flowers, to color and texture coordination, how to go to the market and pick them out, wreath and wire wrapping, and design." She adds that the studio space in Stoneberg's garage created for the classes is meticulously arranged.

"I would live in her garage," adds Nadean Lindberg who also loves the classes. "Chris is so inviting. For the morning classes she prepares scones

and coffee and in the afternoon offers a glass of wine and treats. She creates a very relaxing and supportive atmosphere."

Lindberg has known Stoneberg for years through her charitable work in Orinda and she's noticed how the former elementary school teacher in Stoneberg comes out when she teaches her classes. "She is patient, encouraging and very articulate," says Lindberg, who has taken a gilded eggs and arrangement class, pumpkin gilding class and pave arrangements.

"I learned gilding some years ago, you can do a lot of fun things with metal, pumpkins, gourds and other festive decorative items," says Stoneberg, who is currently part of the flower committee at the deYoung Museum in San Francisco.

Stoneberg also facilitated a private birthday party celebration for Lindberg. "Her classes are perfect for a multi-generational gathering, a girls' party, or to be offered as a gift," says Lindberg.

Both students note that taking the classes has changed the way they now use flowers in their homes. "Not only do you go home with a beautiful flower arrangement, but you start to create your own at home," says Lindberg. "It has made me more confident in making arrangements when friends come over, taking the time to plan and prepare."

"I'm trying to do one (flower arrangement) a week," says Tyne. "I can do things that look very expensive from flowers I buy locally." Tyne adds that making bouquets is her way to get in the moment. "It is so relaxing and meditative," she says.

Stoneberg will be teaching a holiday wreath class at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 8. Classes change seasonally and are listed on her website, www.blooms-byyou.com.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Santa Loves Lamorinda Businesses!



Photo Sophie Braccini

In Lafayette, Santa's message is simple: "Stay Home for the Holidays!" And support your local merchants, adds the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber and the Try Lafayette First (TLF) group have planned a city-wide party Saturday, Dec. 8 in downtown Lafayette with stage entertainment, local events and refreshments – and with the "big guy" himself. Santa's next stop that day will be in Moraga at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. where he will be available for pictures (bring your camera to capture the moment). If you miss him this weekend, Santa will return to Moraga Saturday, Dec. 15 for free pictures and letter writing at 5A Rent A Space from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Everyone knows that Santa is ubiquitous – how else could he deliver toys to everyone on the "nice list" in one night? – so he'll also be at Orinda Theatre Square every Friday from 2 to 7 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. until Dec. 23. The Square's management asks that you bring an ornament for Santa's tree or an unwrapped, new toy to donate to Toys for Tots through Dec. 17.

Orinda Tire Store opens at 76 Gas Station

67 Moraga Way, Orinda
(925) 253-7799

www.orindatires.com

J.J. Abraham believes he has the best rate in the area for tires and service. "There is no hidden cost here," he said. "It's just the cost of the tires and my labor." The owner says he has all major 2012 American-made tires in stock and can give advice on the best tires for your specific car. He also offers free tire rotation with every purchase. A former aviation industry worker, this is Abraham's first business located in Orinda.

Mediation Expert Joins Lafayette Chamber

(925) 788-7198

dudley_braun@hotmail.com.

Mediation expert Dudley Braun recently joined the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. A former product marketing manager in the high tech software industry, Braun mediates civil conflicts, before or after law suits. "It is a very satisfying job; in general people come to me when they are very unhappy and when they leave they're very happy," says Braun, who recently worked on a case involving two companies, one providing services to the other. "One was dissatisfied by the service received and refused to pay; the other one threatened to sue." Braun met with the president of one firm and the vice-president of the other together and got them to resolve the issue. "It is a very private and confidential process," says Braun. "Sometimes emotions run very high, but most of the time it is very effective." Braun is approved in the Contra Costa court system, he volunteers for the small claims court in Walnut Creek.

Moraga's Employee of the Month for November



From left, Moraga Rotary President Frank May, Robert Martin, UPS Store owner Doug Meyer, and Moraga Chamber of Commerce President Frank Melon. Photo Kevin Reneau

Robert Martin has been named November's Moraga Employee of the Month, an award sponsored by the Rotary Club of Moraga and the Chamber of Commerce. A familiar face in Moraga, Martin works as a Senior Associate at The UPS Store, and is an accredited Notary for the business. "Robert is just a great people person and he has a knack with connecting with our customers," said UPS Store owner Doug Meyer. "He is cheerful and energetic and makes everybody's day just a little bit brighter." Martin will receive a \$50 Safeway gift card and a \$50 gift certificate to Pennini's Restaurant in Moraga, which will be presented at the Moraga Rotary luncheon on Dec. 4.

Cloud 9 Organic Salon Re-Opens

1 Orinda Way, #3, Orinda (behind the Shell Station)
(925) 258-9811

www.cloud9organictherapy.com

Some call it the best mani/pedi in the area. Cloud 9 prides itself on being one of a kind; it promises to not only make your hands and feet beautiful, but that you'll leave the place relaxed and revived. The owner, Cindy Nguyen, guarantees the use of only organic products such as polishes and lotions. The salon also provides hair styling and waxing services.

CM Commercial Real Estate Named 2012 Fastest Growing Business

3575 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Suite 212
(925) 283-6076

CM Commercial Real Estate of Lafayette was named one of 2012's fast growing businesses by the San Francisco Business Times. They want to acknowledge their friends and clients who have made this possible.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Annual Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12 at Wells Fargo Bank, 3630 Mt. Diablo Blvd. \$10 admission or free with three canned food items.

Ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 for Lan's Skin Care, 3416 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga

The Chamber is accepting nominations for Business Person of the Year. Names can be emailed to Kathe Nelson at kathe@moragachamber.org. Votes to select among the nominees is scheduled in January and the awards dinner will be in February.

Orinda

Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 hosted by Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, Orinda. After the mixer, hop to Hilton House from 5:30 to 9 p.m. to enjoy food, music, fun and a special sale as part of the 11th Anniversary Holiday Party organized by Cindy Hilton and her staff. For more information visit, www.HiltonHouseDesigns.com.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

Improving Downtown Parking in Orinda

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The monthly cost would be minimal and would cover the cost to the city.

"It would encourage employees to park somewhere other than in front of the stores and would give them peace of mind," he adds.

Kattenburg says he presented his plan to city staff in July and was still waiting to get a City Council hearing date. According to the group's calculation, approximately 75 permits would be needed per year.

The last and most difficult issue is BART and the rideshare zone. "It's a real problem for our communities," says Moraga resident Anita Wood. "If I arrive at BART after 7:40 (a.m.) it's likely that there won't be parking avail-

able." Wood, who works in San Francisco, often drives to the Oakland West BART station to find parking. "By the time I arrive, there is no parking there either," she says, "but across the street there's a paying lot where I can leave my car."

Kattenburg says his group has talked to council member Amy Worth who is knowledgeable on these issues and also talked to BART. "We were told by BART that they refused to add parking space to Orinda and Lafayette because it would attract drivers from more eastern municipalities to park there." Kattenburg adds that the group will not give up talking to BART and may propose 'local drivers' zones, so Orindans and

Moragans can find a space after 8 a.m.

According to Kattenburg, the rideshare/casual carpool should be moved to another place with close parking. "We've been working with Orinda Planning Intern Shama Khan who initiated contacts with the churches that have large parking lots on Moraga Way," says Kattenburg. "The idea would be to use these spaces during the week for meeting points for the ride-share, or even run a BART shuttle from there to the station." Kattenburg says the discussions are preliminary, but he's hopeful it will come to fruition.

"All we are doing," says Kattenburg, "is trying to keep pressure out of the downtown area."

Lamorinda Weekly

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