

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 6 Wednesday, May 22, 2013



The Home Designer with Brandon Neff...read on page D12

Mail Order House

By Cathy Dausman



The Kit House today

Photo Andy Scheck

Does a 75-year-old mail order house stand out in a neighborhood residents call “eclectic”? Not if it’s the Lafayette home built by James Ford and his wife, Mary, in 1940.

The Fords, who moved to Lafayette from Oakland in 1937, saved for three years to build their 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath home. Lot, contractor and house – a kit house they ordered from the

Sears catalogue – cost them a mere \$7,500.

Not just plans, but the entire house of wood was delivered to their lot. Sears sold about 70,000 similar kit homes in 48 states between 1908 and 1940, according to Sears’ archives (www.searsarchives.com/homes). As many as 30,000 pieces and the 75-page instruction book were shipped via rail to each site.

The wood for the Ford’s home – the Aladdin Marblehead B plan, a modified Cape Cod-style house – was cut in Oregon of clear heart redwood; each piece was labeled with paint to facilitate its assembly. It shipped south on the Great Northern, Western Pacific and Sacramento Northern railroad lines.

...continued on page D4

Finola Fellner and Lynn Molloy

present:

Charming Spanish Home Fabulous Country Club Location 73 La Campana ~ Orinda



This beautiful Spanish home with approximately 2376 square feet boasts lovely indoor and outdoor spaces. The home features open living spaces, hardwood floors throughout, lovely trim and finish work, beautiful French doors and vaulted ceilings.

The enchanted gardens are the unique part of this home. The formal gardens offer a quiet place to enjoy the beautiful roses, herb garden or a spot to nurture your greenhouse plants. In addition, the gardens include a spacious patio, rolling lawns, mature trees and plants creating a quiet place to relax or the perfect spot to entertain.

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DRE # 01910108

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	20	\$640,000	\$1,980,000
MORAGA	13	\$521,000	\$1,352,000
ORINDA	15	\$790,000	\$1,850,000

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

- 18 Benthill Court, \$1,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 3013 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 4-18-13;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 03-10-03
- 3252 Camino Colorados, \$1,240,000, 4 Bdrms, 2441 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 4-24-13;
Previous Sale: \$430,000, 02-19-99
- 1841 Del Rio Drive, \$721,000, 3 Bdrms, 2091 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 4-10-13
- 3680 Hastings Court, \$1,530,000, 3 Bdrms, 2344 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 4-17-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-11-07
- 2123 Hidden Pond Road, \$860,000, 6 Bdrms, 2975 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 4-19-13;
Previous Sale: \$835,000, 12-10-09
- 4133 Hidden Valley Road, \$809,000, 3 Bdrms, 1995 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 4-24-13;
Previous Sale: \$274,000, 03-21-97
- 1 Hilldale Road, \$1,327,500, 3 Bdrms, 2732 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 4-16-13
- 3784 Mosswood Drive, \$749,000, 3 Bdrms, 1634 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 4-15-13
- 1071 Orchard Road, \$635,000, 3 Bdrms, 1446 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 4-19-13
- 851 Paradise Court, \$1,066,000, 3 Bdrms, 1646 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 4-10-13;
Previous Sale: \$985,000, 04-01-10
- 1700 Reliez Valley Road, \$975,000, 2 Bdrms, 1677 SqFt, 1943 YrBlt, 4-10-13
- 645 Sky Ranch Court, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 2351 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 4-19-13
- 1155 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 2524 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 4-25-13;
Previous Sale: \$432,000, 09-21-88
- 1170 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,980,000, 6 Bdrms, 3282 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 4-17-13
- 3589 Walnut Street #E, \$640,000, 2 Bdrms, 1506 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 4-17-13;
Previous Sale: \$255,000, 12-24-97
- 17 White Oak Drive, \$787,500, 3 Bdrms, 2104 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 4-17-13

MORAGA

- 2 Benedita Place, \$521,000, 2 Bdrms, 1211 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 4-10-13;
Previous Sale: \$242,500, 10-01-92
- 805 Camino Ricardo, \$1,130,000, 4 Bdrms, 2483 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 4-16-13
- 4 Corte Santa Clara, \$1,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 2490 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 4-18-13;
Previous Sale: \$185,000, 08-09-89
- 1100 Country Club Drive, \$1,130,000, 3 Bdrms, 2051 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 4-24-13
- 470 Fernwood Drive, \$1,110,000, 4 Bdrms, 2483 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 4-24-13

... continued on page D8

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LAMORINDA MARKET UPDATE

Today's Lamorinda real estate market is resembling the crazy overbid days that we witnessed during 2005-2007. The reason for this robust market is buyers' pent-up demand, extremely low interest rates, rise in the stock market and the banks willingness to lend.

At **KPG** we've seen first-hand how our advice has paid off for our sellers. 70% of our listings are receiving multiple bids including 6, 8, 10 and even 16 offers. Winning bids range from 6% - 12% over the list price. Three times this year we have recommended that our sellers increase their list price as the market has improved.

As for buyers, at **KPG** we craft a compelling **Offer Package** that will put our clients in the position to be the winning bidder. It's not just about price but it's about who you are and how you connect with the seller. With our experience representing sellers in this market, we know what sellers are looking for and we advise our buyers accordingly. In addition, we have good relationships with other real estate agents in our community which is a great benefit to our clients.



If you are interested in seeing how the market has changed we have a complete list of **SOLD** Lamorinda properties on www.kurtpipergroup.com. Locate and click on the icon to the left and link to a file with our community's sales data.

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Mail Order House

...continued from page D1



Photo courtesy Ford family

The load was misplaced once in Humboldt, but was finally delivered to Reliez Station in Lafayette, before being trucked to the building site to await assembly.

The Fords upgraded the original home plans, paying an additional \$125 for a half bath and laundry, and a bit more for a garage. They installed a Sears wood burning stove in the kitchen. The house had a fireplace; its exterior was painted white. In 1940, Mount Diablo was visible from the back of the home; its view has since been obscured by local vegetation, but the kit home has sat virtually unchanged for the past 50 years.

Ford's widow was still living in the house in 1986 when her son, Andy, and his wife, Mariana, returned to Lafayette. They moved into the house of Andy's youth to help his aging mother, and together, little by little, they began to remodel.

"My father-in-law loved roaring fires," Mariana said. One of his fires set the roof ablaze. They replaced the original shingled roof with an aluminum roof and converted the fireplace to gas.

The first interior improvement in 1987 was building an 800-square-foot downstairs bedroom and bath for the elder Ford, who has since died. A front porch with a ramp was added in 1992. In 1996, the younger Fords added 1,000 extra feet of living space by building an upstairs master bath and office. They also added a second water heater. And in 2000, the back of the garage was enlarged to create a workshop.

Along the way, the Fords brought in 200 yards of earth, moss, rocks and gravel, and re-landscaped and terraced the original back yard, which Mariana said was "just ugly."

The house blossomed from its humble 1,500 square feet into a 5 bedroom, 3.5 bath showpiece with over 3,100 square feet of living space, the exterior now painted

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Total 1819.00

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To: **Reliez Station**
Via: **North Portland, Oregon**
By: **Truck**
This order is subject to the terms and conditions of the contract between the customer and the manufacturer.

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Name: **James F. Ford**
Address: **North Portland, Oregon**
City: **Portland**
State: **Oregon**
Zip: **97208**

Original bill of lading for kit house.

Courtesy Ford family

green. In 2011 Mariana was ready to downsize, so the Fords put their house on the market.

"I wanted a ranch house," she said, noting up until that time, she and her husband had never picked out their own house. "We've had fun, we really liked it, but we're not sorry we moved," she added.

The house remains in good hands, however – the Ford's friends and former neighbors, Chris and Becky Kenney, snapped it up.

"I love that it's got history," Kenney said. "It is the most organized house." She likes the original tongue and groove oak flooring, and has had workmen admire its true 2 x 4 solid framework construction.

The Kenneys love their home and have no plans to move. As for the hard work the Fords invested in upgrades, "I'd do it again," Mariana said simply.

To learn more about kit houses, visit www.kithouse.org

... see more photos on page D6

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Mail Order House

...continued from page D1



Becky Kenney (left) admires a photo timeline of the Kit House she now lives in, prepared by former homeowner Mariana Ford. Photo Cathy Dausman



Photos courtesy Ford family



The Kit House in 2000



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970 2nd Street, Lafayette

hardwood floors throughout. The intimate backyard is recently landscaped and would be a great place to entertain or dine outdoors. A bonus studio above the garage is a wonderful addition and features a

full bathroom and kitchen area. Walk to town and schools from this convenient downtown location.

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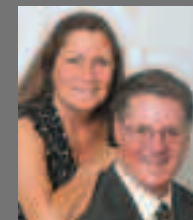


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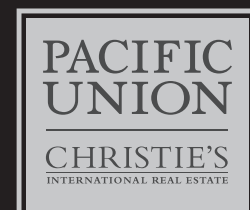
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The Home Designer

Kitchen Aid - Remodeling 101

By Brandon Neff

Kitchen remodel – two words, when used together, strike fear in the hearts of men and women alike. Granite vs. marble, wood vs. tile, eco-friendly vs. everything else – deciding where to begin can be overwhelming. There are more products and options than ever before. Add in all those enviable shelter magazine spreads of luxury kitchens from across the globe, and it'll leave you ready to call it a day and go live in a yurt. Don't despair. Getting the look you want just takes a bit of planning and knowing where to spend the money. When to go for the splurge, and where to conserve is the key to a successful project.

Let's be clear, a kitchen makeover doesn't have to break your budget. Sure, it can be stressful, but creating a beautiful and functional space can, and should, be an exercise in creativity and fun. Yes, fun! When I begin a new project, I always take a beat to remind my clients that to be in a position to remake a space in your home exactly to your specifications is truly a luxury and to savor the experience. Enjoy the process, choose wisely, hire great help and always invest in the best you can afford. And, remember, with the housing market in the Bay Area heating up, nothing sells a home more than a beautiful kitchen, hands down. Most kitchen remodels, when planned well, will return over 90 cents of every dollar spent.

With that said, achieving the kitchen of your dreams takes work. Solid planning and sourcing is important from the start, so you can make informed decisions. To that end, whether you're a traditionalist, or a modernist, I'm here to guide you through some of the simplest and easiest ways to get the look you want – high or low.

For starters, it is essential to establish a budget, and stick to it. Know what you're comfortable spending, and understand that without proper planning you will go over budget. Begin by taking inventory of what you plan to replace, what can be recycled and what, if anything, can be repurposed. For most, the need for more space, more storage and a more efficient layout are the genesis for a remodel. Take a look around your room. Do you like the overall placement of the appli-



Glamorous details like the custom mosaic backsplash bring the space to life.

Photo Brandon Neff Design

ances? What condition are your cabinets? Can you recycle the existing cabinet boxes and just replace the door faces and hardware? What does the flooring look like? What about lighting? Make a list of what works and what needs to go. Hint: keeping the plumbing and gas/electrical in its current location will save you thousands.

Next, consider the style of your home. Respecting the architecture of the house will go a long way toward guiding your decisions. Look for clues such as moldings, period details and building materials. Not

that you can't mix styles within the home, but I've rarely seen it done well. Now, decide which items are a priority. Is that Sub-Zero fridge at the top of your list, or would you rather have new Caesar Stone counters? Are you a weekend gourmand who needs a chef's range and marble baking slab, or will a more modest cooktop and butcher block serve your needs? Knowing your bottom line is paramount to getting a great result.

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All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



The Home Designer

...continued from page D10



A dark and cluttered kitchen in desperate need of a new layout, appliances and updated finishes.

To illustrate my point, let's look at an actual project (see photos). I was commissioned to design a kitchen for a client who loved contemporary design, but who lived with a kitchen more in the style of early-California ugly - Saltillo flooring, tile counters from hell and a sad layout all conspired against the home's potential.

My client wanted to be inspired, and asked me to create a beautiful room for his frequent guests to relax surrounded by a clean lined, modern space. I was given a budget of \$50,000 (well below the national budget average) to create an entirely new environment incorporating a rather long list of "must haves." I knew from the start I would have to employ my strategy of mixing high ticket items with less expensive options to achieve a cohesive look. I believe I did just that.

To balance out my client's luxury requests like the built-in, Italian espresso

Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design

machine, vaulted ceiling and Wolf range, I went to work configuring a new layout utilizing all new cabinetry from IKEA (a fantastic choice), inexpensive ceramic floor tiles cut in a more interesting, large-scale paver and a floor model refrigerator that saved me nearly 50 percent! Hint: try to use more ubiquitous materials in interesting ways – it saves you a bunch.

By choosing less expensive, but well-designed cabinets with a mix of glass and wood fronts I was able to give my client solid slab quartz counters, a custom mosaic tile backsplash imported from Spain and even a chandelier to light the island in style.

Since space was at a premium, I utilized every inch. I incorporated trash and recycling into deep drawers in the island (no one wants to look at a trash container), I kept the microwave close to the fridge (most micro use is for reheating foods anyway) and I made a bold move to close up a window with



Utilizing inexpensive, larger scale ceramic floor tiles extended the budget while adding high impact.

an uninteresting view to achieve added counter and pantry space. Remember, it's just a box until you create a room that works for you.

Additional features include a chimney hood over the range for an added focal point, an unexpected stainless steel toe kick to trim out the island base along with an industrial style

faucet for the sink. What I hope I accomplished was an altogether reinterpretation of my client's kitchen into something functional and artful. Looking at it as a whole, you'd never guess where I economized to achieve the look, and I know my client and his guests will enjoy this heart of the home for years to come.

Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer. He can be reached at BrandonNeffDesign.com or at brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com.



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from Page D2

MORAGA ... continued

- 31 Fieldbrook Place, \$950,000, 4 Bdrms, 2104 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 4-23-13
 14 Inverleith Terrace, \$1,352,000, 5 Bdrms, 2692 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 4-24-13
 1908 Joseph Drive, \$1,225,000, 4 Bdrms, 2755 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 4-11-13;
 Previous Sale: \$460,000, 02-16-95
 1024 Larch Avenue, \$855,000, 3 Bdrms, 1714 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 4-10-13;
 Previous Sale: \$935,000, 03-09-06
 50 Miramonte Drive, \$530,000, 2 Bdrms, 1436 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 4-19-13;
 Previous Sale: \$535,000, 05-10-05
 263 Paseo Bernal, \$625,000, 3 Bdrms, 2018 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 4-15-13;
 Previous Sale: \$615,000, 04-29-04
 413 Woodminster Drive, \$582,000, 3 Bdrms, 1572 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 4-25-13;
 Previous Sale: \$429,000, 06-02-03
 496 Woodminster Drive, \$580,000, 3 Bdrms, 1800 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 4-10-13

ORINDA

- 42 Bates Boulevard, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1804 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 4-16-13;
 Previous Sale: \$937,000, 07-01-04
 1 Crestview Court, \$1,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 3171 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 4-22-13;
 Previous Sale: \$475,000, 09-03-09
 11 Dos Posos, \$790,000, 2 Bdrms, 1612 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 4-19-13
 6 Ellen Court, \$830,000, 3 Bdrms, 1578 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 4-17-13;
 Previous Sale: \$335,000, 10-16-97
 29 El Toyonal, \$835,000, 4 Bdrms, 2172 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 4-23-13
 41 Las Cascadas Road, \$812,500, 3 Bdrms, 2018 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 4-12-13;
 Previous Sale: \$900,000, 08-31-04
 125 Meadow Lane, \$1,237,000, 4 Bdrms, 2169 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 4-12-13;
 Previous Sale: \$418,000, 08-06-96
 78 Oak Road, \$1,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 3580 SqFt, 2011 YrBlt, 4-24-13;
 Previous Sale: \$299,000, 02-10-11
 79 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,325,000, 3 Bdrms, 2652 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 4-10-13;
 Previous Sale: \$245,000, 12-07-87
 14 Risa Court, \$1,310,000, 4 Bdrms, 1758 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 4-19-13;
 Previous Sale: \$925,000, 09-04-12
 11 Rita Way, \$1,287,000, 5 Bdrms, 3314 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 4-18-13
 25 St. Hill Road, \$1,300,000, 5 Bdrms, 2772 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 4-19-13;
 Previous Sale: \$510,000, 10-30-98
 3416 St. Marys Road, \$850,000, 4 Bdrms, 1812 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 4-16-13
 3432 St. Marys Road, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1756 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 4-10-13;
 Previous Sale: \$655,000, 09-04-12
 3078 Sweetbrier Circle, \$868,500, 3 Bdrms, 1511 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 4-11-13;
 Previous Sale: \$590,000, 09-18-12
 3178 Teigland Road, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 3284 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 4-12-13;
 Previous Sale: \$750,000, 07-13-01
 5 Sunrise Hill Court, \$1,549,000, 5 Bdrms, 3589 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 4-24-13;
 Previous Sale: \$1,190,000, 04-23-04
 2 Vista Del Mar, \$1,050,000, 5 Bdrms, 2330 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 4-12-13
 18 Warford Terrace, \$1,205,000, 4 Bdrms, 2040 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 4-17-13;
 Previous Sale: \$850,000, 08-14-02

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ORINDA



New Listing

6 Las Vegas Court Likely tear down home in desirable Orinda neighborhood on .40 acre lot. Bring contractor/ investor.

\$599,000

ORINDA



31 Oak Drive Charming 1600 square foot home on beautiful setting offering a good value for 4 bedrooms and 2 baths. Vaulted wood beamed ceiling, living-dining room French doors open to brick patio. Tons of tranquility and privacy.

\$725,000

ORINDA



New Listing

643 Miner Road Serious fixer on .92 acre creek side lot. Beautiful setting with incredible privacy. Must call agent to show.

\$850,000

ORINDA



New Listing

154 La Espiral Situated above Orinda Country Club area, this mid-century traditional offers a wonderful floor plan in private setting. Dwell comfortably in this 2 story, 4+bd/3 ba, remodeled kitchen, 2 decks overlooking trees & flat grassy backyard.

\$1,199,000

ORINDA



9 Las Piedras Picturesque 6 bedroom private estate in a park like setting. Views, level lawn and recreational pool. Classic custom home with vaulted ceilings, walls of windows, and hardwood floors.

\$1,595,000

ORINDA



New Listing

199 Crestview Drive Stunning 3400 sf home built in 2006 with beautiful architectural detail. Granite kitchen opens to expansive family room with vaulted ceiling, custom fireplace. Outdoor kitchen, huge level lawn. View knoll surrounded by oaks.

\$1,599,000

ORINDA



65 La Espiral Updated 4bd/4ba with beautiful custom features & amenities. Very well maintained. Majestic setting, lovely gardens, new pool + views/privacy, fully fenced. Tuscany ambiance, European flair.

\$2,195,000

ORINDA



New Listing

17 Tappan Lane Vistas across Orinda come alive from all rooms of this spacious 4,155 sf home w/ 6 bd/4 ba & 2 half baths. Inside has high ceilings and is light and bright. Perfect for fun in the sun with yards, decks, pool, & vineyard on 1.15 acres.

\$2,495,000

ORINDA



New Listing

33 Dias Dorados Orinda Country Club prime location historical Spanish Hacienda on 1.67 acre spectacular grounds. Beautifully updated, Grand living areas, wine cellar, library, fabulous master, stylish guest house, 4 car garage.

\$3,950,000

MORAGA



Pending

279 Claudia Court Beautifully maintained and attractively updated offering 5 bedrooms plus bonus game room and 3 full baths. Wonderful setting with sweeping panoramic views of Mt. Diablo. Rose gardens plus pool and spa.

\$1,299,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

970 2nd Street Downtown Charmer! Delightful 3bd/2ba ranch circa 1946, with vaulted ceilings, hardwood floors, exposed brick fireplace, great natural light and level private backyard. Bonus studio above the garage and separate parcel.

\$865,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

10 Candlelight Lane Beautiful 5bd/4ba 3695sf custom trad. on 1.34 ac view lot built in 2004, featuring gourmet eat-in kitchen w/granite open to fam rm w/fplc; mstr BR w/lux bath & 1 BR on street level, large lvl fenced bkyd & patio, 3 car gar. & top schools.

\$1,650,000

CLAYTON



New Listing

6024 High Street Beautiful detached downtown patio home built in 2007, 4 beds/ 2.5 baths, 2124 sq. ft. on 5100 sq. ft. lot. Hardwood floors, high ceilings. Great location. Walk out front door to Saturday Farmers Market or coffee.

\$645,000

RICHMOND



New Listing

6170 Plymouth Avenue Diamond in the Rough! 3bd/1.5ba w/2850sf Richmond View home that needs lots of TLC but real possibilities. Bring your contractor & investor. Price incl. separate .40 ac lot for possible dvlpmnt. Possible ct confirm. As is sale! No reports.

\$529,000

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

1962 Fair Ridge Court Special location in Summit Ridge neighborhood. 3bd/2.5ba w/2549 sf townhome boasts large sized rooms with vaulted ceilings, abundance of light, all very well maintained & updated. Private courtyard & patio on great cul-de-sac.

\$699,950

WALNUT CREEK



2050 Shell Ridge Trail Northgate Vineyard Estate with Gated 1.08 Acres, Grand main house, gorgeous grounds, guest/ party house with movie theatre, diner style game room + newer salt-water pool, 5-car garage.

\$2,250,000



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