

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 19 Wednesday, November 20, 2013



*The Home Designer: Color Your World ...read on page D6*

## Taking Care of Pests Without Pesticides

By Sophie Braccini



*James Schmerker with a skunk trap.*

*Photo Sophie Braccini*

Jenny Papka knows all too well that the use of rodenticides, the poisons to get rid of gophers, rats, mice, or voles, can end up being a catastrophe for other wildlife. The co-owner of

Lamorinda-based Native Bird Connections, who owns 16 non-releasable birds of prey that she partners with to educate residents of all ages, says: "It's lethal, it's hideous." She recently cited figures from

UC Davis that showed high levels of poisoning, often lethal, in 70 to 80 percent of the sick birds that come their way.

Papka is a supporter of Parents for a Safer Environment's training campaign designed to show residents ways to get rid of pests of all sizes, inside and outside the home, without using chemicals. At a recent day-long training session in Moraga conducted by PfSE, the public and representatives of local agencies were invited to learn about alternatives to pesticides and rodenticides.

"The Department of Fish and Wildlife are finding out that every animal has traces of rodenticide in their systems, even road-kills," said PFSE founder Susan JunFish at the training session. "[Veterinarians] are finding out that pets are also being affected."

One of the main strategies James Schmerker from Animal Damage Control suggests to deal with the problem, pesticide free, is to use different types of traps for rats, mice, gophers and voles. "For rats we recommend the raticator," said JunFish. The trap gives a deadly electric shock to the rodent. For mice, regular wooden mousetraps should be placed in the direction mice would be traveling, like along a wall or an edge, affixed with putty.

Traps are also the best option for bigger pests: raccoons, skunks and ground squirrels. "If you have skunks under your house, you can use a one way door trap," said Schmerker. "Attach it to the access where the skunk goes in and out or under your house. If they are not in breeding season, you will have no problem catching them."

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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	14	\$555,000	\$1,955,000
MORAGA	9	\$380,000	\$1,340,000
ORINDA	9	\$720,000	\$3,275,000

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

- 652 Augustine Lane, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1989 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-29-05
- 1197 Bacon Way, \$755,000, 3 Bdrms, 2039 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-10-13;  
Previous Sale: \$900,000, 01-20-05
- 205 Happy Hollow Court, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 1906 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 10-8-13;  
Previous Sale: \$99,000, 03-04-77
- 3836 Happy Valley Road, \$1,955,000, 4 Bdrms, 3548 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 10-9-13;  
Previous Sale: \$596,000, 12-24-98
- 4120 Happy Valley Road, \$950,000, 5 Bdrms, 4761 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 10-22-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,320,000, 06-21-02
- 2245 Hidden Pond Lane, \$1,199,000, 4 Bdrms, 3455 SqFt, 1993 YrBlt, 10-11-13;  
Previous Sale: \$500,000, 05-03-93
- 13309 Moraga Boulevard, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1504 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-14-13;  
Previous Sale: \$777,000, 08-24-12
- 35 Marsha Place, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 1729 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-22-13
- 3279 Mt. Diablo Court #14, \$555,000, 2 Bdrms, 1697 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 10-21-13;  
Previous Sale: \$485,000, 03-12-03
- 1545 Rancho View Drive, \$1,080,000, 3 Bdrms, 2229 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 10-18-13
- 3334 Ridge Road, \$1,284,000, 5 Bdrms, 2616 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 10-15-13
- 6 Songbird Court, \$679,000, 2 Bdrms, 1378 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 10-11-13;  
Previous Sale: \$655,000, 04-06-07
- 1749 Springbrook Road, \$1,830,000, 6 Bdrms, 4562 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 10-10-13;  
Previous Sale: \$370,000, 05-31-01
- 3332 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,695,000, 4 Bdrms, 3127 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 01-04-13

### MORAGA

- 2083 Ascot Drive #134, \$380,000, 3 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$258,000, 12-18-01
- 11 Birchwood Place, \$1,340,000, 4 Bdrms, 2492 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-16-13
- 1457 Camino Peral, \$480,000, 2 Bdrms, 1159 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$165,000, 07-22-88
- 774 Crossbrook Drive, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2048 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-9-13;  
Previous Sale: \$14,000, 02-02-73
- 6 Dolores Court, \$710,000, 3 Bdrms, 2095 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$472,500, 07-06-01
- 6 Harold Drive, \$790,000, 4 Bdrms, 1886 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-16-13
- 15 Hetfield Place, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1811 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-17-13;  
Previous Sale: \$588,000, 06-26-01
- 295 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,249,000, 3 Bdrms, 2595 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-21-13;  
Previous Sale: \$290,000, 03-11-97
- 1135 Sanders Drive, \$1,045,000, 4 Bdrms, 2073 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-17-13

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# Taking Care of Pests Without Pesticides

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Susan JunFish speaks during a recent workshop at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Photos Ron Whitehurst

“You need a much stronger trap with locking doors that can stop a raccoon,” he added. “In a smaller skunk trap, a raccoon would be able to open the doors with its hands and destroy it.” And he recommended leaving opossums alone. “They may be ugly, but they are like a cleaning crew in your garden and they will eat grubs. They are not too problematic in yards, they don’t even eat fruit, and they’re pretty mellow.”

In 2011, the Town of Moraga caught 95 gophers in three and a half months utilizing Victor Black Hole traps, and in 2012 it caught 57 gophers in two and a half months, according to Moraga Public Works superintendent Dan Bernie. “With proper training, this can be a very effective way of limiting gophers in your lawn,” he said.

Steve Fishbaugh, maintenance operation and transportation director for the Acalanes Union High School District, got rid of about 150 gophers over six months at the local high schools using Cinch traps. “Praise the school district for agreeing to be pesticide free,” commented Papka, “and for agreeing to give me some of their catch to feed my birds.”

“Carbon dioxide is also an alternative to kill gophers,” said JunFish, “but it also kills anything in the burrows including salamanders, burrowing owls, and snakes.”

Another effective way to deal with rodents is with owls. The Town of Moraga set up two owl boxes in local parks, with two nestlings sighted per year. One barn owl nest box houses a family of these beneficial raptors that can consume up to 3,000 rodents per year. “When we clean up the boxes in the middle of November, we find 4- to 5-inch-high stacks of rodent bones,” said Bernie.

Shortly after the presentation, Fishbaugh confirmed that the AUHSD is now

considering installing a network of owl boxes at local high schools so the predators will also dispose of the rodents, thus reducing the amount of needed labor.

“Barn owls require 150 grams of food a night,” explained John Schuster of Wild Wing Company. “That’s three voles or seven deer mice. Great horned owls can extract gophers from their hole because they hunt by sound, not sight.” Schuster added that when babies are born the amount of food needed multiplies. The difficulty is placing the box at the right location on a specific property. “Owls do not hunt directly next to their nest, they cover a wide circle away from it,” said Schuster. “A solution is to have three boxes positioned in a triangle to cover an entire neighborhood.”

New techniques are also available for the tiniest of pests – termites – without having to fumigate the entire house. Chris Garcia from ATCO Pest Control said they use acoustic emissions for termite detection. “Our Termite Tracker detects both dry wood and subterranean termites actively eating and communicating within the galleries of the wood,” he said, adding that the sonic technology can detect very small infestations, with as little as six termites. “We locally treat infested areas by drilling a small hole into the chambers created by the termites. We then inject Premise Foam into the wood, filling the entire chamber and killing the termites. The residual foam is absorbed into the wood, thus preventing any further infestation for approximately two to three years.”

Jon Nelson from Alliance Environmental Services stated that, according to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, the only two effective methods for total, whole-house eradication of termites are fumigation and heat.



James Schmerker with a gopher trap.



Jenny Papka

Photo provided

“The heating process introduces clean, dry heat into a structure, gradually increasing the temperature until the inside temperature is between 140 and 150 degrees and the wood core reaches 120 degrees,” he explained, “Technicians then maintain the temperature at or above that level for 1.5 hours to ensure a complete kill. The entire procedure may be completed in as little as 8 hours.”

The training day was a huge success, offering many chemical-free pest control strategies.

“We had 71 registrants and it is very encouraging to see so many experts in the field of pest control providing options that work well, are cost effective, and safer than using poison,” said JunFish, “We hope that residents and businesses, as well as public agencies would look at our web site to get resources and get started.”

PFSE is raising funds to be able to assist schools and cities that want to adopt alternative methods of pest control. For more information, visit pfse.net.

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## The Home Designer

# Color Your World

By Brandon Neff



Walls were painted a custom grey to accent the grand fireplace stone. Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design

Have you ever entered a room and instantly felt your spirit lifted? Or, driven past a field of flowers and been transported? That's the power of color. Sure, we all have different preferences when it comes to color – some cooler, some warm and enveloping. Many studies have been done on the psychology of the way color impacts us, but the bottom line is we like what we like. Color is visceral – it transforms.

For my client, Connie, it was all about saturated hues reminiscent of a spring bouquet – cerise, raspberry, coral, peony and leaf. She hadn't updated her home in many years and was ready for something transformational.

For her home in Moraga, Connie wanted her space to speak to her love of happy, candy colored accents and soft fabrics blended to create an altogether glamorous effect. Strong colors take a confident hand and not a small amount of courage to pull off successfully. But, oh, what a payoff! What I hope we achieved in her home is an expression of her warm and inviting personality mixed with her tradi-

tional and sophisticated heritage.

For starters, there were several great elements in her living room – high ceiling, sundrenched light from the patio doors leading to the pool and a grand fireplace that climbed the height of the space. While the room had potential, it felt washed out. Her pastel fabrics and white walls were overwhelmed by the strong California light – a light that needs stronger color to stand up to.

When I suggested turning up the volume on their palette, and adding a range of patterns, she and her husband came on board – enthusiastically.

Adding color to your life, and design, doesn't mean splashing it everywhere – especially in a room that needs to work cohesively with adjacent spaces. With a kitchen on one end, and the entry flanking the other, it was important to link the spaces in my client's home while still achieving something beautiful and fresh. Think of the walls as the shell that can be a neutral, but highlighted backdrop for enhancing everything you put in that room – and a landscape to highlight the art you hang.

With that in mind, I suggested a warm grey for the walls that helped pop the crisp white mouldings and accent the wood planked ceiling. Grey is a fantastic foil that works in any room to add depth to your walls while accenting nearly every other accent color. Grey and chartreuse, grey and yellow and grey with coral are a few of my favorites. Grey keeps more intense hues from looking too garish – grey adds a subtle sophistication.

The mantel was painted a deeper shade of grey to pull out the field stones that clad the fireplace breast – the original light oak mantel looked dated and out of place. It wasn't a particularly interesting feature, but by painting it out it became more a part of the room.

Remember, painting wood isn't a sacrilege unless the piece is a treasured antique or somehow integral to your home. A coat of paint has brought many a vintage chair or dresser back to life.

At nearly 20 feet by 15 feet, the room had enough scale to handle heartier pieces – always keep proportion in mind when designing any space – as small pieces in a large room feel like doll furniture. My clients wanted the space to work for both cozy TV watching and for entertaining larger groups. Having several areas within the space for lounging, reading

and conversation divided the room into “zones” that allowed it to work on many levels. I introduced them to a bench with gracious bolsters that serves to flank the oversized ottoman I designed, while adding seating and allows informal gathering around the center of the room. Its brass capped legs and mid-century lines worked beautifully with more traditional elements.

A classic club chair in the corner upholstered in a rich watermelon mohair provides a place to read and enjoy the view to the pool, and a vintage Queen Anne chair can migrate to serve as needed while adding a traditional silhouette. From the onyx side tables to the velvet pillows, every piece added layers of color, texture, pattern and warmth.

Draperies were kept simple and elegant with a tailored valance. Table lamps in Grecian urn shapes made of glass mix with a blue and white chinoiserie task lamp for added interest and to keep everything from looking too predictable.

Tips of the trade:

In a room with two large upholstered and skirted pieces (in this case the sofa and loveseat), try adding leggy accents like the ottoman with cabriole legs and the single armchair – this helps to keep the room from looking too “heavy.” Try and keep your wood finishes to fewer than three in any room – we mixed deep walnut, lighter oak and a large painted media cabinet to hold her beloved Vermont pottery to full effect without it looking like a tag sale – think about continuity in every detail.

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Groupings like this onyx table, Chinese lidded jar and coral colored roses give high impact style to a corner of the room.



An oversized ottoman does double duty as a place for snacks and extra seating in a pinch.

Don't be afraid to mix metals. Layering brass, silver, and even chrome can add interest and keep everything from looking too staged.

You don't need to match your art to your room. Fewer things in design can drive me over the edge more than when I see homeowners match the art colors to their furnishings and fabrics. It reminds me of a Starbucks where the quaint coffee posters pick up every tone and hue of the flooring, walls and banquette seating. Your home isn't a corporate logo, so stop matching! The eye needs to travel, and a room needs visual tension to keep it interesting. Mix it up. Vary the lighting. I've said this before, but it deserves repeating. Every room needs three kinds of lighting: general light (recessed cans), accent lighting (to highlight art or a specific view) and task lighting (for reading and to keep light at eye level where it's more flattering on the face.)

And please, everything on dimmers. Your guests will thank you.

Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer. He can be reached at [BrandonNeffDesign.com](http://BrandonNeffDesign.com) or at [brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com](mailto:brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com).



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## ORINDA



### 1 Camino del Cielo

Set in the picturesque area of El Toyonal, this spacious 4900 sq. ft. newer construction 4+ bedroom, 3.5 bath brown shingle style home offers spectacular views & privacy yet is located just mins from downtown Orinda. **\$1,599,000**

## ORINDA



New Price

### 11 Fairway Drive

Rare find. Mid-century modern 4bd/3ba + 2 half bath home on 4th fairway. Private, large rooms, high ceilings, office, boudoir, great guest setup, updated kitchen. Grand, comfortable, very special property. **\$1,599,000**

## ORINDA



### 17 Tappan Lane

Vistas across Orinda come alive from all rooms of this spacious 4,155 sf with 6 bd/4 ba & 2 half ba. High ceilings & light & bright. Perfect for fun in the sun with yards, decks, pool, & vineyard on 1.15 acres. **\$2,389,000**

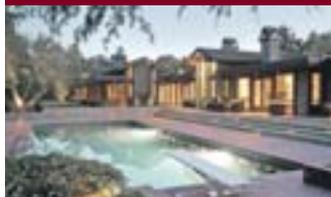
## ORINDA



### 11 Scenic Drive

Elegant updated 4bd/3.5ba, 4695 sf single-story estate property on .64 ac. Custom millwork, hand carved biblical stone fppls, lrg bdrms, ofc, Chef's eat-in kit/fam.rm; guest house, pool, lrg patio, gorgeous landscaping. **\$3,350,000**

## ORINDA



### 92 Sandhill Road

Absolutely One-of-a-Kind Bay Area Home w/captivating, sweeping views from every rm. Perched on foremost knoll of the coveted Sandhill enclave. Ideal for active family as well as large scale entertaining. **\$5,200,000**

## MORAGA



New Listing

### 137 Via Joaquin

Updated Moraga Townhome with Oversized loft, chef's kitchen, open floor plan, lots of windows, private setting. Inviting patio backs to open space. 75 Walk Score. **\$645,000**

## MORAGA



Coming Soon

### 30 San Pablo Court

Remodeled 4 bedroom & 2 bath home with high end finishes located on a huge flat yard. Desirable "The Bluffs" neighborhood with top rated Moraga & Campolindo schools. **Price Upon Request**

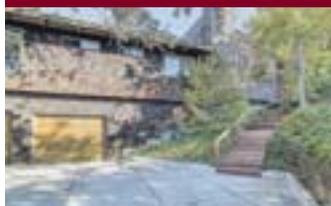
## MORAGA



### 1743 Spyglass Lane

Moraga Country Club Forest Hills model, updates throughout include new kitchen appliances, granite counters, updated bath, hardwood floors, new carpet, paint & lighting. **\$950,000**

## LAFAYETTE



### 9 Mountain View Place

Fabulous updated 4bd/2.5ba, 3481 sf custom contemporary on .78 ac in tranquil setting. Spacious LR & DR, new hardwd flrs throughout, new eat-in kitchen/DR open to FR, voltaic solar panels, new redwood deck & more. **\$1,299,000**

## ROSSMOOR



New Listing

### 4829 Terra Granada # 2B

Sunlight fills upper-level 2bd/2ba home. Soaring ceilings & dramatic windows highlight living rm. Patio door from dining rm leads to deck. Eat-in kit. & large formal dining rm. Take in the view from window seat in Master. **\$549,000**

## WALNUT CREEK



### 3737 Waterford Lane

Mini Merlot Vineyard! Home included! Own your own grapevines & fruit trees on gorgeous lot with beautiful almost 3700 sq ft 4 bdrm home. Hardwood floors, 3 fireplaces, formal dining & separate ofc. A must see at **\$1,398,000**



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