

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

## Q3

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 17 Wednesday, October 22, 2014

The Real Estate Third Quarter in Review ...read on page D6

## REAL CREEPY CRAWLIES FOR HALLOWEEN

By Cathy Dausman



Top and bottom left: *Araneus diadematus* (cross orbweaver); middle: *Argiope aurantia* (yellow garden spider); top right: Black Soldier Fly larvae; bottom right: tarantula on Mount Diablo

Photos Andy Scheck

They surround us. In every recessed corner, or darkened garden path, look closely and you'll probably find some creepy, crawly specimen around your home that fits right in with the ghoulish season.

While the number of tarantulas seen crossing paths with hikers on Mount

Diablo hillsides is finally dwindling as the arachnid's mating season comes to an end, nature provides Lamorinda its own spider – colored black, brown, orange and gold – just right for Halloween.

... continued on page D10



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**Sale Pending**

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**Sale Pending**

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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	7	\$527,500	\$2,200,000
MORAGA	5	\$390,000	\$1,125,000
ORINDA	4	\$525,000	\$1,500,000

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

3275 Marlene Drive, \$527,500, 3 Bdrms, 1160 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 9-18-14;

Previous Sale: \$159,500, 04-28-93

3374 Moraga Boulevard, \$739,000, 2 Bdrms, 946 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 9-18-14

1257 Panorama Drive, \$2,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 3206 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 9-17-14;

Previous Sale: \$345,000, 08-01-85

585 Silverado Drive, \$1,647,000, 4 Bdrms, 2668 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 9-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$170,000, 08-18-80

3345 Walnut Lane, \$900,000, 4 Bdrms, 1594 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 9-22-14

1 West Arbor Way, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1513 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 9-23-14;

Previous Sale: \$730,000, 09-21-12

1023 Windsor Drive, \$1,375,000, 5 Bdrms, 2686 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 9-18-14;

Previous Sale: \$399,000, 10-12-93

### MORAGA

581 Augusta Drive, \$800,000, 3 Bdrms, 1963 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 9-17-14;

Previous Sale: \$770,000, 03-11-11

1661 Del Monte Way, \$1,020,000, 4 Bdrms, 2016 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 9-24-14;

Previous Sale: \$136,000, 10-11-77

478 Rheem Boulevard, \$390,000, 2 Bdrms, 1170 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 9-22-14;

Previous Sale: \$67,000, 11-15-77

1154 Rimer Drive, \$1,125,000, 4 Bdrms, 2324 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 9-22-14

1707 St. Andrews Drive, \$770,000, 2 Bdrms, 1464 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 9-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$640,000, 05-13-11

### ORINDA

73 Brookwood Road #12, \$525,000, 2 Bdrms, 1020 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 9-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$127,000, 07-16-84

2 Los Altos Road, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2797 SqFt, 1936 YrBlt, 9-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$496,000, 05-30-97

643 Miner Road, \$775,000, 3 Bdrms, 1758 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 9-17-14;

Previous Sale: \$126,000, - -

9 Oak Road, \$1,075,000, 3 Bdrms, 2387 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 9-17-14;

Previous Sale: \$800,000, 09-28-11

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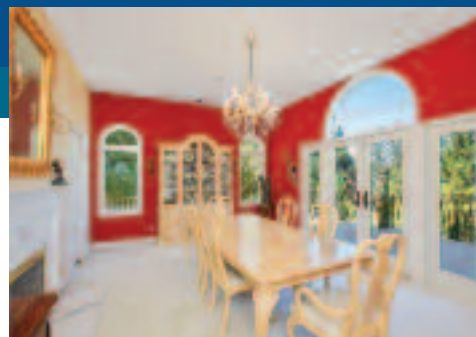
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# The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS

The third quarter of 2014 again showed significant activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from July 1 through Sept. 30, 84 single-family homes closed in Lafayette which was similar to the 88 that closed in the third quarter of 2013. Sales prices ranged from \$529,000 to \$2.67 million. The average number of days on market was 22 versus 31 for the same period in 2013, and 37 days in 2012. The average sales price was \$1,310,790, up around 9 percent from a year ago when the average was \$1,204,739. In 3Q2012 the average was \$1,001,291.

In Moraga, the number of single-family closings was 50, up from 44 a year ago. Prices ranged from \$775,000 to \$1,904,000. The average sale price was \$1,178,956 in the quarter – very close to the 3Q2013 average of \$1,183,906. In 2Q2012 the average was \$1,049,408. In the same quarter in 2011 it was \$874,909. The average marketing time was 24 days, up from 19 days on the market in 3Q2013.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings was 90, an increase from the same period in 2013 when there were 76. Sales prices ranged from \$650,000 to \$3.05 million with an average price of \$1,420,663. A year ago the average was \$1,197,879 in the same calendar quarter, an increase of over 18 percent. It took an average of only 28 days to expose a home to the market this last quarter. A year ago it was 26 days.

In the third quarter of this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$560.50 per square foot versus \$484.64 per square

foot a year ago, a continued large increase over the same quarter in 2012 when it was \$419.49 per square foot. Moraga homes sold for \$504.10, again a large increase over a year ago when it was \$450.18 per square foot. In Orinda it was \$518.49 on a price per square foot – an increase of over \$25 per square foot over a year ago at \$492.82.

In Lafayette, the average sales price was 103 percent of the final asking price. In Moraga it was 101 percent and in Orinda it was just over 100 percent. In many cases, there were multiple offers on homes and the result was a closing price above the asking price.

In Lafayette, 52 of the 84 closings sold at the list price or above. In Moraga, 29 of the 50 sold at or above asking and in Orinda it was 47 of 90.

In the condominium/town home category, as they did in the same quarter of 2013, Lafayette had five closings. They were priced from \$527,500 and \$779,315; Moraga had 22 versus 21 a year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$290,000 to \$870,000. Moraga Country Club attached home sales ran from \$710,000 to \$820,000. Orinda had five condominium sales – all in the complex at 73 Brookwood Road. They ranged from a one bedroom sale at \$285,500 to a two bedroom at \$525,000.

As of Oct. 10, there were 77 pending sales in the three communities combined. A year ago there were 76 pending sales per the MLS. The asking prices for the pending single family detached homes ranged from \$719,000 to \$4 million. It should be noted that there is only one “Potential Short Sale” that is currently pending and was subject to lender approval. At this time a year ago there were five and two years ago there were 20. As values increase, some homeowners who had lost their equity or were “underwater” no longer find themselves in that place. None of the pending sales are REOs (bank owned properties).

It is interesting to point out that of the 77 pending sales in the area, 65 have received acceptable offers since Sept. 1. That is an average of just over two per day. Usually many of the sales are completed prior to the start of school. Depending upon how many of the homes are being purchased by families with children who are new to Lamorinda, it may impact certain grades at the elementary level.

Inventory, however, continues to remain low when looking at the available homes. In Lafayette there are 39 on the market as of Oct. 10 versus 39 at this time last year.

In Moraga buyers have their choice of 22 properties, up from only 13 properties a year ago.

Orinda inventory has fallen to 46 currently available from 52 one year ago.

From a historical perspective, as of Oct. 7, 2011 there were 189 residences available in the three communities including two in Canyon. A year ago there were 103. In October, 2012 there were 96.

Current asking prices range from \$265,000 for a condominium in Moraga to \$6,488,000 for a Lafayette property.

At the high end, 23 homes closed above \$2 million in the three communities combined during the quarter. In the year ago period there were only 12 homes sold above \$2 million.

There are 28 currently available above this amount: 11 in Lafayette, 15 in Orinda, and two in Moraga.



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## Stylish Solutions

# The Holiday Dining Room

By Ann McDonald



*Removing two portions of this dining room table makes it smaller and provides more room for several stations in adjacent areas. Varied height and stations accommodates diverse food and drink. A simple pop of green breaks the blue and white color palate. Don't forget whimsy for interest. Give your guests something to discover.*

*Photo Ashleigh Hodges*

The weather has finally shifted a bit and we are enjoying some cooler temperatures. As the holiday season is close at hand, we have been sharing some stylish solutions for dining rooms with our clients. I have a love affair with the dining table and dining room, and delight to set buffets, formal sit down dinners and glorious breakfasts. Finding and executing different designs on a short time frame and reasonable budget can seem impossible, but it's really not. This week I want to share how my team and I consistently come up with unique settings and ideas, especially if you are hosting friends these next few months in varied formats.

It is really important to me as a designer that you use every part of your home consistently. There should be no abandoned space or portion that is off limits. You are more precious than even the most expensive item in your home, so I encourage you to consider using every inch of it this holiday season. Honor those among you with the beauty sitting in your china cabinet and silver chest.

Let's get started!

The first thing we do is consider the *type* of gathering. Even if you don't have a formal dining room, let's assume for argument's sake that your breakfast table or favored gathering area will serve as inspiration for this post. That said, what are we planning? Is it a buffet? A formal sit down? Don't sell your entertaining self short by always defaulting to chilled drinks in an ice bucket on the kitchen counter and buffet trays by others on the island.

It's quite easy to set a holiday table in the dining room. All you need are time honored tips and an infusion of confidence! My hope is to give you both. Consider these three things: type, transitions and topography. ... continued on page D8

## 67 Corte Yolanda, Moraga Sought after Campolindo



Lovely updated ranch style home in Moraga on cul-de-sac. Conveniently located 2 blocks from Campolindo HS and Community Pool. Charming 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, approx. 1,894 SF home. Features refinished hardwood floors, new carpet, new paint. Upgraded bathroom with glass shower; stone tile, granite. Inside laundry with washer/dryer. Kitchen/dinette/family open room. Large lawn play area.

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## Stylish Solutions

# The Holiday Dining Room

... continued from page D7



*A favorite trick is to match flowers to a signature drink. Sparkling cider looks fantastic in champagne glasses and gorgeous with white flowers. It's one of those design details people can't quite pinpoint but is registered by the mind's eye.*

*Photos by Ashleigh Hodges*

You may be wondering why I use odd words when putting together holiday dining rooms. Honestly, these words come out of the discussions we have around the design table when planning and implementing design events. We use them because the diversity gets our creative juices flowing. It is way more interesting to come up with topography than simple floral arrangements. The word itself opens up ceilings, balconies and all manner of arrangements. You'd be surprised how creative you can get with this.

The type of event you will plan in your dining room refers to basics: number of people, buffet or sit down, formal or informal. It could be as simple as having a plan for breakfast for those overnight guests who will be staying in November or as complicated as a sit

down dinner for 150 covering a few rooms in your home.

Second is transition. This single item is *key* to a great gathering in your holiday dining room. In order for even a small gathering to flow properly, you must plan and provide for transition. Remember your conversation, your eyes, your feet, your food, your drink. All of these need forms of transition. If you have ever been to a seriously dull party, poorly executed transition is likely one of the problems.

It can be simple transition space for conversations which means low centerpieces for easy sight lines and flow or intentional traffic patterns through a larger dining room at different stations for different types of food and beverages to keep guest moving and the party humming.

This is one of the most overlooked planning

components. It also provides for one of the most interesting, from a décor standpoint.

Topography: Look up, look down, look around. I have this 'thing' my assistants joke about – watch what she does with the ceiling! I love using varied heights and unexpected ingredients to draw the eye up, down, into and out of various spaces. You'd be shocked what you can do with a bolt of fabric. For one featured event we used 35 yards of navy sheer fabric. Up on a ladder, we literally threw the bolt over the beam, tacked it and then carefully placed magnolias from the Dollar Store in Moraga to give it interest. We used the draping in four areas of the event. This draping (topography) lent itself to transition from one area to another while providing fun visuals during the buffet (type).



*Dining room floral for a recent event. Notice the reflection in the mirror of the topiary.*



A great holiday dining room doesn't need to be over the top, but simple consideration of type, transition and topography make a world of difference. Your home is a unique expression of you. Take the time to honor those around you by planning some décor updates for the holiday season, even if it's just simple florals. One of my favorite holiday dining room parties is a casual evening of soup and designer coffees for 12 at Christmastime. Gather simple soup bowls of all kinds, set out varied toppings and enjoy the mix.

Enjoy the holidays, and live a custom life!



*Use theme colors in diverse textures to look more upscale, less 'party in a box.'*

### Want to learn more?

Join me at our upcoming 3-hour Holiday Home Workshop Nov. 6, which will include coffee and treats. Cost is \$197. Take away includes a personalized binder of resources and checklists, hands-on teaching. Location TBD depending on number of attendees. Visit <http://www.couturechateau.com/workshop> or give us a call at (925) 386-0720.



*Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda. If you are interested in chatting about your next decorating project, give us a call at (925) 386-0720. For a complete blog post including photos of different dining room design ideas, visit [www.couturechateau.com/blog](http://www.couturechateau.com/blog).*



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# REAL CREEPY CRAWLIES FOR HALLOWEEN

... continued from page D1

The Cross Orbweaver spider, known by its scientific genus *araneus diadematus*, is non-native but started appearing 15 or 20 years ago in the Bay Area, according to Peter Oboyski, senior museum scientist and collections manager at UC Berkeley's Essig Museum of Entomology. The spider captures flying or jumping insects in its orb-shaped web, which it typically eats every night, recycling the proteins and water before building a fresh web.

Another beneficial critter, looking as if it crawled from an un-dead face in a Stephen King thriller, is *Hermetia illucens*, also known as the Black Soldier Fly.

While a great, all-natural composting tool, the Black Soldier Fly larvae has a face only a mother could love, and there's no running or hiding from these critters. "You find them almost everywhere people live," said Oboyski.

Black Soldier Fly larvae are detritavores, an animal that feeds on dead organic material – cue the ghoulish laughter!

"They're doing this in nature all the time," Oboyski said. He once had a close encounter with "tens of thousands" of the larvae spreading across a lawn in Hawaii where they'd infested a campground bathroom area.

When recently checking his backyard composter, *Lamorinda Weekly* publisher Andy Scheck noticed the surface undulating in small waves and he heard a faint crunching sound coming from the bin. He gently moved a layer of the compost away to reveal hundreds of Black Soldier Fly larvae. The voracious composters devoured a large zucchini in 6 hours; a large steak bone still heavy with meat was stripped clean in 2. He was congratulated for his good fortune. Not only do the larvae make short work of most plant and animal matter, speeding up the composting cycle (see sidebar), if Black Soldier Flies don't like your composter, they don't stick around.

"There are Black Soldier Fly farms that sell the fly to gardeners but the fly is picky and does not stay everywhere," Scheck said. "Kenny (at Moraga Garden Center) told me that the Merriewood Children's Center bought some for their garden, but they didn't stay and they didn't come back. I'm very lucky to have them and hope they will come back next year. So far they are still around and larvae is still in the compost bin."

Black Soldier Flies seek warm, semi-aquatic habitats (compost, for example, if an un-dead face is not available) in which to lay their eggs. The eggs become worm-like larvae, and remain in that state for about two weeks. The larvae seek out hidden spaces in which to pupate, making

the transformation to adult fly, with a one week agenda: find debris and mate. The cycle continues throughout the warmer months. In winter, Black Soldier Flies come to parade rest in the pupae stage.

Because they're so prolific Black Soldier Flies are often used in pig and chicken feed where they provide the animals with extra protein.

If that doesn't make your skin crawl, nothing will.

## Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

By Cynthia Brian

Put away your fly swatter and get out the welcome mat.

Of the more than 120,000 species of annoying flies, the Black Soldier Fly is the one you want to invite to dine – in your compost pile, that is! Sometimes called the "privy fly," the larvae of these beneficial soldiers hungrily devour waste, eliminate odors, increase decomposition, and reduce the possibility of disease with their powerful chewing, shredding, and digesting capabilities.

Black Soldier Flies, a true fly, are one of the most beneficial insects for waste and environmental management. Unlike a vampire, the adult fly has no mouthparts, living off the stored energy they built up as larvae. At 3/4 -7/8 of an inch long, adult flies don't bite, sting, nor transmit any illness. Males and females mate in flight, ultimately hatching 500 or more eggs in compost bins, outhouses, and manure piles.

The non-pest insatiable larvae consume twice their weight daily converting waste into protein and fat rich feedstuff that can be fed to birds, animals, worms, or used as additional compost. They also protect against the breeding of pest flies. You can buy a working colony or easily develop one yourself by composting (with adequate drainage in the bin or pile) your biodegradable materials including food, fruit, and vegetables with chicken, rabbit, pig, horse, cow, or goat manure. As biocomposters, Black Soldier Flies are nature's fastest food and waste recyclers.

Because of their high amount of nourishing proteins and fat, companies are developing tasty BSF maggot recipes to feed the world. Who knows ... they may be coming to dinner after all!

Happy Halloween, Happy Gardening, Happy Composting!  
Cynthia Brian

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Black Soldier Fly



Black Soldier Fly larvae eating the meat off a bone

As I wish you and your little princesses, pirates, and pumpkins a happy and safe Halloween, I leave you with a bit of garden Halloween humor:

- a. What is a vampire's favorite flower? (Bleeding Hearts)  
b. What is a werewolf's favorite legume? (Human Beans)





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## New Tree Planting

Think of the tree you just purchased as a lifetime investment. How well your tree, and investment, grows depends on the type of tree and location you select for planting, the care you provide when the tree is planted, and follow-up care the tree receives after planting. The ideal time to plant trees and shrubs is during the dormant season-in the fall after their leaves drop or early spring before bud breaks. Weather conditions are cool and allow plants to establish roots in the new location. The proper handling during planting is essential to ensure a healthy future for new trees and shrubs.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you find your perfect tree.

*Advance Tree Service*

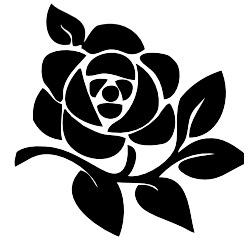
*Your Authority on Trees and Landscape.*



**925-376-6528**

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# MORAGA GARDEN CENTER

## Annual Fall Sale Ends Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>

5 Gallon  
**Roses**  
reg. \$30<sup>00</sup>  
now \$15<sup>00</sup>

up to  
**20% Off**  
California  
Natives

up to  
**50% Off**  
General Nursery  
Stock,  
selected items

*Subject to stock on hand. Free Plants with Purchase*

Moraga Garden Center  
located at the Moraga Shopping Center  
**925-376-1810**

9am-5pm  
7 days a week

# McDonnell Nursery

**October Sale! All perennials trees  
and shrubs are 25% off.**

family owned since 1933

Trees • Shrubs • Vines • Annuals • Perennials  
Vegetables • Containers • Statuary & Fountains  
Indoor Plants • Decorative Items

[www.mcdonnellnursery.com](http://www.mcdonnellnursery.com)

196 Moraga Way • Orinda • (925) 254-3713 • Open Daily





# Lamorinda's Leading Independent Real Estate Firm

## ORINDA



**19 Mira Loma Road A** delightful 3bd/2ba of apx. 1715sf built in 1940's represents traditional properties built on the knolls overlooking the Club. Naturally light & bright. Walk to town, Lake Cascade or the Club. **\$875,000**

## ORINDA



*New Listing*

**31 Oakwood Road** Charming midcentury 3bd/4ba nestled on gorgeous private parklike .8ac w/expansive lawn, pool, mature trees within walking distance to town. Hdwd flrs, spacious master suite. Ideal inlaw setup. **\$1,089,000**

## ORINDA



**7 La Encinal** Move in ready 5bd/3ba w/large rooms + great light, abundance of windows. Vaulted ceils, hdwd flrs + updated kitchen & baths. Fam. rm off kit. opens to level area. Great deluxe master suite. **\$1,250,000**

## ORINDA



**81 Mossbridge Lane** Beautiful Orinda Downs home. 6+ bedrooms, 5 & a half baths on a tranquil & peaceful .5ac lot with level lawns & approved plans for a pool. This is a wonderful place to call home! Come see!! **\$2,495,000**

## ORINDA



**51 Rheem Blvd.** Classic true New England 6bd/5ba 4000 sq. ft. traditional. Formal living & dining rooms. All rooms shine with style, grace & sophistication. Private, tranquil, beautiful. **\$2,798,000**

## ORINDA



**92 Sandhill Road** Estate setting of unmatched appeal. Large spaces plus modern design allure for appealing family living or grand scale entertaining. Fabulous views of valley & Briones reservoir/sunsets. **\$4,475,000**

## MORAGA



*New Listing*

**1967 Ascot Drive #A** Very clean 1st floor 2bd/2ba end unit Moraga Condo. Light & bright living room with fireplace, two balconies, spacious master with large walk in & community pool. Top rated schools! **\$285,000**

## MORAGA



**267 Paseo Bernal** Spacious & sophisticated 3bd/2.5ba end-unit near shopping & restaurants. Bright & airy with vaulted ceilings & windows on three sides. Lovely private patio & lots of storage. **\$725,000**

## MORAGA



**1891 Saint Andrews Drive** Gorgeous single family detached MCC stunner with fabulous open floor plan, gourmet kitchen, priv. master w/skylit bath, frplc, priv. terrace. Views, all amenities incl.-free golf, swimming, tennis. **\$1,298,000**

## LAFAYETTE



**3921 Happy Valley Road** Stunning 4600+sf custom 4bd/3.5ba gated estate on 1 acre in heart of H.V. Pool, pano views. Hdwd flrs, cherry kitchen w/island open to FR, library, elevator. Close to top rated schools, commute. **\$2,795,000**

## LAFAYETTE



**1142 Glen Road** Stunning NEW single level 5bd/4.5ba 4510 sq. ft. traditional on flat .79 acre lot in popular Happy Valley Glen. Exquisite millwork, chef's kitchen. Walk to downtown Lafayette & BART. Top schools. **\$3,495,000**

## LAFAYETTE



**23 Sessions Road** Gated English Manor 12.18 acre 5bd/6ba Estate. Grand foyer, living, family rooms + "Club" room, deluxe kitchen, dramatic solarium + executive office. Gorgeous grounds w/lap pool/lawns, views. **\$3,895,000**

## LAFAYETTE



*New Listing*

**1141 Vallecito Court** Treasured Happy Valley 6bd/5.5ba estate custom built in 2006 with the finest craftsmanship & materials. Spectacular yard w/pool, spa, fireplace & level lawn. Guest house. Privacy & views. **\$3,900,000**

## MARTINEZ



*New Listing*

**433 Blue Ridge Drive** Sought after Virginia Hills home, 3bd/2ba in 1530 sq. ft., updated kitchen, hardwood floors, dual pane windows and great floor plan. Not to be missed! **\$550,000**

## WALNUT CREEK



*New Listing*

**530 Monarch Ridge Drive** Fabulous 3bd/2.5ba end unit overlooking green belt & redwood trees in exclusive Summit Ridge. Private master retreat w/soaring ceilings, inviting patio, 2 car garage. Top Lafayette schools. **\$699,900**

## WALNUT CREEK



*New Listing*

**1804 Pasto Court** Sophisticated, elegant, pristine! Beautiful designer finishes are highlighted in the bright, open floor plan. Private with wooded views. 2500 sq ft, 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths. **\$1,125,000**



## THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATES:

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 Patricia Battersby  
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