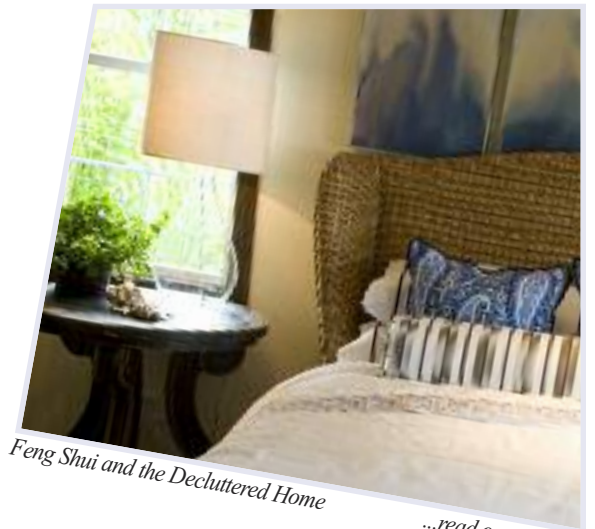


# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 22 Wednesday, December 31, 2014



Feng Shui and the Decluttered Home

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## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

By Cynthia Brian

*"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour." –John Boswell*

**A**s an extreme gardener and sun worshipper, winter is most definitely my least favorite season. After the hoopla of the holidays and the extravagance of a New Year's celebration, January demands reflection, re-interpretation, and relaxation. With the glorious rain we experienced in December, the three creeks on my property are rushing, offering a meditative sound that soothes my soul. The hills are greening, daffodils are blooming, mushrooms are sprouting, and branches are bare. As tempted as you may be to gather wild mushrooms, refrain from doing so unless you are with an expert mycologist or the outcome could be dire. With the exception of pruning, spraying, and weeding, we have very little to do in our gardens this first month of the year. That suits me just fine as I am busy catching up and voting on the numerous nominated films and TV series in the upcoming 21st Screen Actors Guild Awards to be simulcast live coast to coast on TNT and TBS at 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25. If I'm not gardening, movies on the big screen entertain and intrigue me, offering a winter respite from the travails of the yard. This is also my special time to analyze what I did right and wrong in the past year, peruse seed catalogues, dream about creative new outdoor spaces, set goals for the new year (maybe I'll study edible fungi), and cook with fruits and vegetables that I froze this past summer in anticipation of this downtime. Embark upon your sentimental journey to enjoy the slow pace of January.

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What a lovely surprise to see Jade in bloom in the winter.

Photos Cynthia Brian



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*Happy New Year!*



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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	5	\$570,000	\$2,440,000
MORAGA	3	\$512,000	\$670,000
ORINDA	5	\$1,000,000	\$2,285,000

Home sales are compiled by CalREsource, 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

- 419 Castello Road, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 1579 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 11-19-14  
 1004 Howard Hills Road, \$1,935,000, 4 Bdrms, 3099 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 11-18-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 11-16-09  
 1944 Reliez Valley Road, \$885,000, 3 Bdrms, 1619 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 11-20-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$310,500, 08-24-95  
 514 Silverado Drive, \$1,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2377 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-17-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$910,000, 07-24-08  
 3375 St. Marys Road, \$2,440,000, 5 Bdrms, 4996 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-19-14  
 3198 Stanley Boulevard, \$570,000, 4 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-20-14

### MORAGA

- 828 Country Club Drive, \$550,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-19-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$274,000, 06-03-97  
 131 Cypress Point Way, \$670,000, 2 Bdrms, 1464 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-17-14  
 61 Miramonte Drive, \$512,000, 2 Bdrms, 1248 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 11-18-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$232,500, 09-25-00

### ORINDA

- 25 Estates Drive, \$2,285,000, 5 Bdrms, 3736 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 11-18-14  
 28 Jack Tree Knoll, \$1,443,000, 11-18-14  
 7 La Encinal, \$1,230,000, 4 Bdrms, 3212 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-19-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$469,000, 03-05-99  
 21 Los Dedos Road, \$1,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2756 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 11-18-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$39,500, 12-11-70  
 37 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2849 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 11-20-14;  
 Previous Sale: \$1,175,000, 08-16-06



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# Seasons Greetings



*Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very Happy New Year.*

Kurt Piper, Amy Price, Leslie Piper, Christine Gallegos and Scott Sans

**Kurt Piper**



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# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

... continued from page D1

**RECYCLE** your Christmas tree. Remove the ornaments, lights, and all the trimmings before putting by the curbside on your regular garbage day through mid-January. If your tree was taller than 10 feet, the disposal service requires that you cut it in half.

**TUCK** surprises into your containers or along walkways to invite guests to stop and start a conversation. I've slipped empty Angel star perfume bottles between orchid fronds (can't throw those lovely blue stars away) and also placed an iron sculpture of two fighters created by my husband in high school on top of a birdbath planted with succulents.

**SOLVE** the problem of a bare spot by purchasing an azalea, fuchsia, or cyclamen in bloom and placing the pot directly in the garden. When it has finished blooming, transplant wherever you wish.

**PRUNE** roses, vines, and fruit trees. Canes of roses can be shared with friends. Dip a healthy cane into a growing medium, plant in good soil or in a container.

**TIME** to order bare root roses. David Austin is introducing four new English roses to the United States for spring. My favorite is called The Lady Gardener. More information at <http://www.DavidAustinRoses.com>.

**MULTIPLY** delight by bringing bouquets of pink bergenia and fragrant narcissi into your rooms. Jade is in bloom, yet there is not much other color in the

landscape right now except these enthralling favorites.

**WATCH** the 21st Screen Actors Guild Awards simulcast live coast to coast on TNT and TBS at 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25. The award shows of the season have nothing to do with gardening, and that is the point.

**FEED** the birds! With winter in full throttle there is little food for our feathered friends. Make sure to keep feeders out of the rain.

**SPRAY** fruit trees, dogwoods, and cotoneaster this month with the first of the dormant sprays.

**ADD** sulfur or coffee grinds to acid loving plants including rhododendron, fuchsia, azalea, rose, daphne, and citrus to give an added boost of energy.

**SAVE** fireplace wood ashes to fertilize your alkaline loving plants and iris.

**MULCH** hillsides to prevent erosion, maintain warmth, and assist with water retention.

**WEED** whenever you notice the unwanted greens popping up to save yourself the trouble when the ground is dry. Weeds are easy to pull in the rainy weather and can be added to your compost heap.

**SPRINKLE** laundry detergent on mushrooms that grow in your lawn. Personally I love seeing mushrooms as they remind me of my favorite fairytales, but if they bother you, a dusting of laundry detergent exterminates them quickly and safely.

**CARE** for indoor plants by wiping large foliage with a damp cloth to remove the dust, use room temperature water on all pots, and be vigilante about watching for pests.

**TAKE** cuttings from fruit trees to graft in April. Wrap cuttings in wet newspaper, seal the wrapped twigs in plastic bags, and store in the freezer until you are ready.

**FORCE** bulbs of crocus, hyacinth, and lily of the valley.

**INSPECT** and repair all garden tools and equipment. Make sure to oil, sharpen, and store them securely.

**PERUSE** garden catalogues and magazines for ideas for a spring garden. Make a list of seeds you'll want to try this year.

**REST**, relax, rejuvenate, reinvent. Give yourself a respite from the cold, damp, and dreary to dream about a flourishing spring.

Have a safe, happy, and healthy New Year.



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## Winter Pruning

Winter is the best time to start pruning deciduous plants and trees, such as maples, shrubs, roses, most fruit trees and most of all your Monterey pines. They go dormant in the winter and some lose their leaves. Deciduous plants are best pruned in the winter because that's when they're dormant and less prone to disease.

Before you start hacking away at your yard, you may want to call in a professional Arborist from Advance Tree Service to give you their advice on what should be done, the proper handling during pruning is essential to ensure a healthy future for your trees and shrubs.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help make your yard its very best.

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Rain drops on the Meyer lemons.



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 I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.

Cynthia Brian ice skating for New Year's.



Mushrooms growing in the redwood mulch look delicious but are probably poisonous.



An iron sculpture tops a birdbath filled with succulents.

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# Feng Shui and the Decluttered Home

By Michele Duffy



*Keeping homes, especially the master bedroom, clutter-free can enhance Qi, or the flow of good energy.*

*Photos provided*

There is no better time to say adios, au revoir, and goodbye to stagnant unhealthy clutter that makes us feel stuck and otherwise overwhelmed than at the start of a new year.

Don't we all accumulate and attach ourselves to too much "stuff" and then our "stuff" makes us feel weighed down? Visualize your home with a declutter facelift – tidy, relieved of the burden of too much stuff crammed in too little a space. If you clench your fist tightly around something your hand remains un-open and unable to receive any additional gifts. When you let go of the unnecessary and unwanted, you make more room for the blessings you are meant to receive.

Feng shui addresses a person's life holistically; dieting, exercising, meditating, attending workshops, and pursuing work you love are only part of the picture for a healthy and prosperous life. The homes and offices we spend our lives in have as much to do with our

path for health, prosperity, wellness, and resilience as anything else, and if they are clogged with clutter we are undermining our wishes for sustainable health.

In feng shui we call clutter "sha" Qi or "killing" Qi and the reason why is that clutter is devoid of life and represents dead energy. Since feng shui is based on the ancient Chinese philosophy of the Tao (pronounced Dao) which, since ancient times, has asserted that we are connected to our environment and our environment is connected to us, it stands to reason that the energy of our spaces have an influence on our health and, subsequently, many areas of our lives.

Clutter is unhealthy on many levels: First, it creates real chaos, especially when we cannot find what we need or what we are looking for; second, it is not cost effective to continually accumulate "stuff" we already have and do not need more of; and third, clutter is not sustainable, and since we cannot live in ever

smaller areas when clutter takes over, we need to make the choice to pare it down to a manageable level.

Clutter can snowball and overwhelm our spaces and lives, and create that depressing stuck Qi that holds us back from experiencing the ideal shifts in our destiny.

Where to start the decluttering process? The garage.

1. Schedule a pick up day with the Salvation Army or other nonprofit. Try to pick a bright sunny day to start, firmly schedule two to four hours to begin, get a good night's sleep, make sure you have your tools ready to go (e.g. large black garbage bags, storage bins, non-toxic cleanser and cloths).
2. Begin in the garage to create the extra storage for some of the household items you may store later.
3. Begin with a mental intention to work happily. Change your perspective from the "drudgery of cleaning" to the act of "space clearing" – use orange cleanser for abundance. Be mindful that you are getting rid of what's weighing you down and holding you back, and are making room for new opportunities, new growth, and a fresh start. Feel the shift.
4. Try your best to get to the bottom of boxes and to the back of shelves. Pull everything out so you can really eyeball what you have since you may have forgotten all that's there.
5. Organize multiples of items together or donate them.
6. Make one pile for donations, one pile for storage and a third pile for garbage. Complete the process by tying up the bags, placing them immediately on the curb for garbage or donation pick up, or in your car for donation drop off or for your storage unit, and acknowledge and admire your organized space.

... continued on next page



Garage storage systems and shelving units can help keep your items organized and avoid encroaching clutter.

7. Next, organize your master bedroom, bath and closets, creating a vision for what should be sacred adult space. Repeat all the above steps. From a feng shui perspective, if we make improvements in the master bedroom power area, where rest and romance nurture the keepers of the castle, that positive energy will spread to the rest of your home. No room in a home is more important to a couple or an individual than their bedroom.

8. Next do the kitchen, children's rooms, family room.

Decluttering must begin with your mind and heart's sincere and honest invitation for vitality, happiness, confidence, creativity and abundance to come into your space and life. With a firm mental commitment to start where you are, start small, and build upon your successes, the follow through will be there. If you are worried about letting go of sentimental items or family heirlooms, consider storing them elsewhere and freeing up your space for the living we are meant to do. If you cannot tackle it yourself, consider asking for help from professionals who can assist you in at least getting the ball rolling.

Meditate honestly about any attachments to your stuff and remember the age-old wisdom that if we cling too tightly to anything we are not allowing ourselves to be open to accepting the new gifts we are meant to receive from the universe.

Now please go scan this article, then throw *it away!* Happy New Year!



Although shelving is used in this garage, the amount of boxes and items on and near the shelves has led to disorganization and a sense of chaos.



Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, spending

time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. For more info, visit [www.mandalafengshui.com](http://www.mandalafengshui.com), email [spaceharmony@gmail.com](mailto:spaceharmony@gmail.com), or call (520) 647-4887.



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## ORINDA



### 207 Camino Sobrante

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## ORINDA



### 500 Dalewood Drive

Beautiful home ideal for in-law & family living. Very private. Two Master Suites of his/hers. One level living w/large Living Rm, formal Din Rm, open Kitchen to FR w/refreshment bar. 2 car garage.

**\$1,795,000**

## ORINDA



Pending

### 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



Pending

### 157 Miramonte Drive

Fantastic bright townhome overlooking MCC Golf Course, including 2 carports each w/storage. New oak hrdwd flrs, wall to wall carpets & freshly painted. Fenced patio. Walk to Miramonte High.

**\$629,900**

## MORAGA



Pending

### 82 Miramonte Drive

Fantastic Miramonte Gardens Opportunity. Rare 1798sf, 4bd/3ba, updated twnhm w/new carpet, updated kitchen, dual pane windows, expansive bkyd/patio. Conv. locale w/2 carports & storage.

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## MORAGA



### 267 Paseo Bernal

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## LAFAYETTE



Pending

### 1142 Glen Road

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