

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 3 Wednesday, April 22, 2015



'Through the Garden Gate'

Garden tour showcases spectacular outdoor spaces

By Cathy Dausman



Japanese maples frame the front of the Diraimondo's Lafayette home.

Photos Cathy Dausman



Wild grasses are found throughout Pat Rose's Moraga garden. A vineyard is tucked behind this grassy knoll.

The 2015 Moraga Junior Women's Home and Garden Tour showcases a collection of five fabulous spaces owned and occupied by Lamorinda residents in Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda. Here is a preview of what to expect for the 10th anniversary tour:

The Rose Garden. It seems unfair to call Pat Rose's tour location a simple garden. It is more correctly a collection of outdoor spaces – acres of them – in a setting that feels remote yet is only a short drive from Moraga Commons.

By her estimation, Rose owns a property spread over six acres. It includes a vineyard, a man-made pond and island, a pool, a backyard cook island, a wood burning fireplace, an on-site cottage, a side yard with clear bulbs laced overhead for night time garden parties, and outlying corrals and coops. Rose acts as her own gardener and brings in help when she needs it. In the two-plus years since moving in, she has replaced two lawns with a vineyard and planted a small apple orchard.

Sal Captain designed the vineyard; its 450 vines are a 50/50 mix of petite Syrah and Grenache grapes. Thanks to an on-site well and drip irrigation, Rose's water bill

has fallen by 26 percent. The grounds are a collection of vistas, pathways and sitting areas with a purpose: Rose is developing the site as a wedding and events venue called Campana Farm. There is poolside seating, covered entry seating and side-yard seating – even a picnic bench on the artificial island Rose's grandson christened "Pirate Island."

Wild grasses cover swaths of land. Potted plants include a containerized orange tree – left behind when the previous owners moved to Seattle. Two wheelbarrows house a collection of succulents. Houses set in trees welcome birds. Frogs croak midday on the property edge.

The Geary Garden. Lisa Geary loves the three-quarter acre lot she shares with husband Scott and their children, describing it as a combination of sunny, shady, sheltered and windy areas. "It's tucked away and flat and overlooking the Orinda Theatre," she said.

Seeing the theater marquee at night from afar is a special treat, she noted. Even with the yard's natural shade – the lot is laden with mature oak trees – and a heightened water rationing awareness, Geary said, "There's always something to be done."

... continued on page D6