

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 11 Wednesday, July 29, 2015



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for August ...read on page D10

Stylish Solutions

Finding the Proverbial Vintage “Little Black Dress” for Your Décor

By Ann McDonald



Wing Chairs are classics. I especially like this frame because it has a curved side flange and a curved front leading edge.

It's summer and that means people all over are cleaning out, dusting off and remodeling. Even businesses take time during the slower summer months to clear out storage areas, and tidy up. How do I know? We get called for design solutions during the summer months. It finally dawned on me: People



Photos courtesy Couture Chateau LLC

are clearing the decks and then our phone rings! Garage sales, tag sales and all manner of scouting takes place as clients and friends look for vintage, antique and unique pieces to either streamline from, or infuse into, their interior designs from homes to offices.

This month's stylish suburbanite tip? Pick up

pieces that work into an already established look in our homes: I call it “the little black dress” approach.

Just like building a wardrobe, designing a home takes forethought. One of the best preparations is to have a good understanding of what you need and why, especially if you find yourself out and about. If not, you will end up selling next summer what you picked on a whim this summer.

My favorite tip? Go vintage.

There are perfect well-made furniture frames out there sitting under an old pieces of upholstery. My team and I are constantly on the lookout for these beauties and they come in all shapes and sizes. They can be chairs, sofas, settees, ottomans, stools ... anything that has old upholstery on it. Here's how to change that vintage find into a showstopper:

1) Identify the type of furniture and look for classic styling and good lines, not too many squeaks or tilts. (Note: Some squeaking and tilting may be OK and fixable with smaller repairs and pegs/screws).

Take the example of a chair. Many people like chairs that work in guest rooms and that migrate into an office for clients then move into the family room for a party. Three uses, one piece. I love that. This fits into the “Little Black Dress” type.

One example was a wing chair frame with hideous upholstery. We knew from testing for squeaks and tilts that the frame was solid and well constructed, so \$275 later, the chair was ours.

... continued on page D4



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	5	\$407,500	\$1,487,500
MORAGA	3	\$970,000	\$1,464,000
ORINDA	8	\$466,000	\$2,250,000

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

1 Ewart, \$986,500, 3 Bdrms, 1675 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 5-29-15

3182 Old Tunnel Road #D, \$407,500, 852 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 5-27-15;

Previous Sale: \$442,000, 03-10-06

3198 Stanley Boulevard, \$570,000, 4 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 5-28-15

1255 Sunrise Ridge Drive, \$1,360,000, 4 Bdrms, 2970 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 5-29-15

761 Tofflemire Drive, \$1,487,500, 3 Bdrms, 2302 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 5-29-15

MORAGA

1623 Camino Pablo, \$970,000, 4 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 5-29-15

44 Kazar Court, \$1,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 2053 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 5-28-15

1404 Rimer Drive, \$1,464,000, 4 Bdrms, 2784 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 5-27-15

ORINDA

30 Brookside Road, \$2,190,000, 4 Bdrms, 3181 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 5-29-15

73 Brookwood Road #33, \$466,000, 2 Bdrms, 882 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 5-27-15;

Previous Sale: \$249,000, 02-17-12

464 Camino Sobrante, \$955,000, 3 Bdrms, 2153 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 5-29-15

470 Miner Road, \$1,825,000, 3 Bdrms, 3252 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 5-29-15

735 Miner Road, \$2,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 3248 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 5-29-15

737 Miner Road, \$2,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 4088 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 5-29-15

522 Moraga Way, \$1,390,000, 4 Bdrms, 2872 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 5-29-15

8 Owl Hill Road, \$1,105,000, 3 Bdrms, 2217 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 5-28-15



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*Stylish Solutions***Vintage Décor**

The back will be finished off in our custom lining, making the muslin covered chair ready for a custom slipcover.

If I had contracted my frame maker to create this same model from scratch, the wood construction alone, not including springs and eight-way hand ties, would have been \$650-\$700, wholesale. It has a curved front edge and curved wing flanges – not inexpensive details, yet they were ‘hidden’ under ugly.

As it was, we had a terrific model to work from for less than half the cost. Score!

2) Strip the upholstery using the proper tools. When I purchased this chair, before I sent it off to my upholstery shop, my warehouse manager stripped the fabric to make sure we had a great quality frame.

I like doing this before it goes out because it gives my upholstery shop a clean slate to work with. It also lets us examine the frame to see if glue, pegs or screws will be required to strengthen it before any fabric goes on. You can also change paint/stain at this point.

3) Cover in well-made muslin. People often ask us why we do this. I want to make sure it sits properly. By covering a frame with muslin, a client can sit and test. It costs more, but better before than after.

The muslin is an undergarment for slipcovers and a test model for upholstery.

4) Have a slipcover made (even if re-upholstery is the goal). Yes, we still do this. Many slipcovers of old have bad raps – poor quality, with no lining or details. I like slipcovers because they suit mind-changing. We often spec seasonal incarnations for rooms, so spaces are refreshed easily. They also protect upholstery

... continued from page D1

fabric from sun during harsh summers. It’s why we line and interline whenever possible.

Let me know of your finds and frames, hits and misses, and if you find the perfect “Little Black Dress Frame.”

Happy Summer!



Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda. For a complete blog post including other design ideas, visit www.couturechateau.com/blog. Join Ann and her team at the annual Designer Clearance Sale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, July 31 at 5 Tappan Lane in Orinda. For our exclusive sale email list with coupons, visit <http://couturechateau.com/designer-clearance/>. To see what a sale is like enjoy this video from 2012: <https://youtu.be/jgxl4XmOYQ>.

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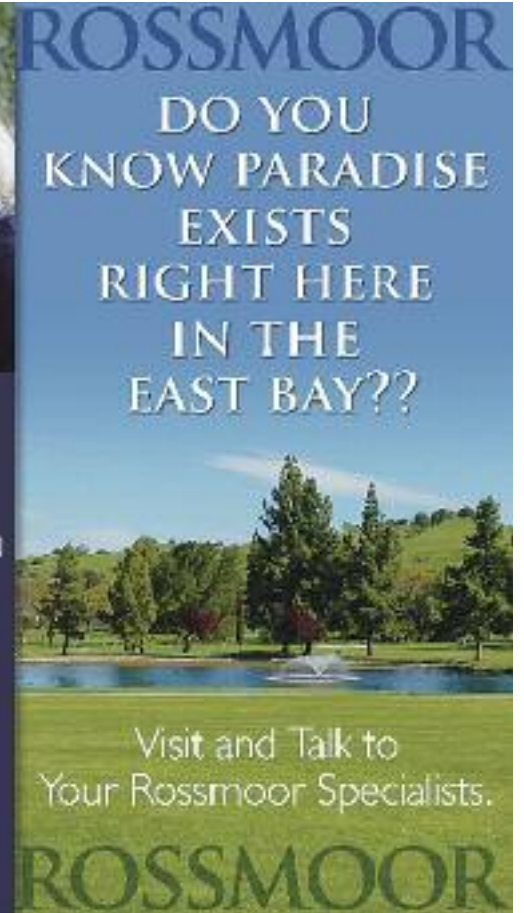
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welcomes

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Lamorinda Landscapers Earn Beautification Awards

By Cathy Dausman



Special Effects Lighting winner by Garden Lights Landscape and Pool Development



Medium residential installation winner by Garden Lights Landscape and Pool Development



Small Design Build Installation winner Calvin Craig Landscaping Photos provided

Twelve local landscapers were recently honored with beautification awards “for excellence in landscape installation and maintenance,” said the East Bay chapter of the California Landscape Contractors Association. A total of 25 awards were presented in 15 categories culled from 42 entries, encompassing residential and commercial landscape construction, maintenance and renovation, water features, outdoor lighting and water-saving, California-friendly landscaping contractors. Seven awards went to projects completed in Lamorinda. In Lafayette Roxy Designs won an award for a “new normal”

landscape, as did Calvin Craig Landscaping (outdoor living and hillside restoration category), Lazar Landscape Design & Construction, and Garden Lights. Terra Landscape was recognized for both small commercial installation and large commercial maintenance in Moraga. Lazar Landscape picked up a second award for an Orinda project, as did Garden Lights. California Landscape Contractors’ Association is a nonprofit, statewide trade association of licensed landscape and specialty contractors. The East Bay chapter has approximately 91 regular members.



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Our Lafayette office is located at 3799 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide For August

By Cynthia Brian

"Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

August is nearly upon us, the most traveled month of the year. Before the craziness of the school year begins, families are rushing to enjoy the last of the lazy, hazy days of summer. Summer has sped by and before we know it, autumn will be here. The drought has been the conversation du jour at every gathering I've attended. There's nothing we can do to prevent a drought, but there are some strategies we can enact to help minimize the effect it has

on our landscapes. As our healthy green foliage droops and wilts, leaves develop crispy brown edges, flowers fade quickly, and everything grows more slowly. The weakening of our plants encourages insect infestation and disease. Before we embark on additional August adventures, it's important to prepare your garden for your absence. This month's gardening guide includes a few tips so that you can carry your "beautiful" with you wherever you go.

- **APPLY** mulch in a layer of two to three inches deep. Mulching your garden will keep the soil cooler while keeping the moisture near the roots longer. Plus mulch shields plants from the direct sunlight.
- **RUN** soaker hoses under the mulch to maximize water savings. Soaker hoses keep the foliage dry, preventing common fungal diseases while reducing evaporation from the heat.
- **REPAIR** leaks in hoses and check your irrigation system before you go on holiday. A single broken sprinkler head will waste copious amounts of water and you won't be happy with an outrageous water bill upon your return.
- **WATER** deeply before you leave on your trip. Most plants need an inch of water a week to stay healthy. Set sprinkler timers accordingly.
- **DEADHEAD** annuals. When your zinnias, marigolds, dahlias and petunias start getting leggy or are spent, clip off the blooms. Plants exert extra energy to produce seeds. By deadheading, you'll get more blooms!
- **WEED**, weed, weed. Even in a drought, weeds sprout up robbing your precious plants of the water they require. Be an extreme weeder and pull out anything that doesn't belong in your garden. Your other plants will thank you.
- **MOVE** container plantings to the shade of an overhang as they demand more frequent watering when days are warm.
- **THINK** about planting a more drought tolerant garden in the fall. If you need to fill in your landscape, consider native grasses, yarrow, and a plethora of beautiful succulents.
- **PRUNE** suckers growing from trees and roses as these zap the strength of the mother plant and may kill the rootstock.
- **PICK** peaches, nectarines and apples as they ripen. Place a bowl on the counter, pack a few in your backpack, refrigerate the extras, or make simple cobblers, pies and crisps, even on camping trips.
- **INSTALL** a dry creek or river rock bed. Your dry creek will be pretty and useful all year long. When winter rains come, the water will be directed to areas you wish.
- **GROW** sunflowers not only for the ornamental or decorative value, but for the nutritious seeds that birds adore. Sunflowers can also bring a smile to your face.
- **ZERO-SCAPE**, actually xeriscape, to conserve water while benefiting from a beautiful garden. The benefit of xeriscaping is a low-maintenance garden that is drought resistant, water conserving, with a habitat for wildlife.
- **DRY FARM** your tomatoes and grapes. The vines may look terrible, but the fruit will be filled with flavor, richness and color.
- **LEAVE** your grass clippings on the lawn to act as recycling mulch. Make sure your mower height is set to three inches high, as high mown grasses can better withstand drought conditions. When winter rains arrive, lawns will bounce back.



A swath of marigolds lights up a soothing garden area.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Get creative with your castoffs. Add art to the garden!



Sunflowers make us smile.

- **TRASH** can become artistic treasure in the garden. Can you be creative with repurposed odds and ends? Give it a try. The recycle bin is nearby when ingenuity fails.
- **PLANT** drought tolerant perennials such as pentstemon, agastache, yarrow, blanket flower, lamb's ear, Echinacea, lavender, Russian sage and sedum.
- **DRY** herbs before they go to seed. Cilantro (coriander), dill, fennel, parsley and mint are welcome ingredients in winter cuisine when the fresh herbs are not available.
- **PERUSE** bulb catalogues to determine what you want to order or locally buy to plant in the fall. Narcissus, tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, anemones and more will be available in a month.
- **WATCH** out for errant sparks from fire pits, barbecues, candles, and tiki torches. It's fire season all year! Make sure the perimeter of your house is brush and weed free providing a safety zone and firebreak.
- **INVOLVE** your children in maintaining the vegetable garden. They will want to eat what they grow as summer snacks. Once school commences, they'll be proud to pack a healthy lunch that they grew themselves.
- **SAVE** seeds from marigolds, hollyhocks, cosmos and other annuals as their summer life span ends. Next spring, plant these seeds for another display of splendor.
- **SAVOR** the sweet days of August whether you are at home or away. Lounge by the pool, curl up on the chaise with a great book, water ski, visit a botanical garden, hike in the hills, or roast some marshmallows! Have fun!

Carry your beautiful world with you. Mother Nature rules!

Happy Gardening and happy growing.



Cynthia Brian in the Shasta Daisies

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ORINDA



New Listing

136 Ravenhill Road Lovely 2bd/2ba, 2216sf townhome full of space, oversized rms, high ceilings + light. Charming decor, natural colors, lots of style by artist owner. Easy in/outdoor living, patios, very tranquil. **\$899,000**

ORINDA



20 Austin Court Beautiful 2 story, 2529 sf home situated on cul de sac on priv. 1.45 ac. lot w/pool, spa & extensive patios, master retreat, office, gourmet kitchen, spacious living room & formal dining room. **\$1,350,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

224 La Espiral Spacious open flr pln features extensive oak millwork, hdwd & travertine floors, Anderson wndws, skylights, beamed ceilings, granite countertops, stunning gourmet kitchen. Priv. gated .5ac lot. **\$1,375,000**

ORINDA



25 Rustic Way Impressive property w/top-of-the-hill privacy, fab. views & custom built 6bd/5.5ba home of apx. 8514sf on 8.14 acres. Racquetball court, pool w/unique waterslide, tennis court. Mins to top-rated schools. **\$3,695,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

633 Augusta Drive Fabulous sunny end unit located at court's end. Deck opens to lagoon + greenbelt. Walk to clubhouse, tennis, pool, shops. Large bonus can be 3rd bdrm. Versatile loft ideal for ofc/ sitting rm. **\$795,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

44 Lynwood Place Single-level on cul-de-sac. Great possibility for expansion of house and huge potential in yard. LP neighborhood. Large .41 acre lot backs to open space. **\$995,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

390 Birchwood Drive Rheem Valley Manor executive 3bd/2ba, 2,060sf rancher on .37ac w/big views, HW flrs, new carpet & paint. Low maint. level yd w/raised beds for veggies off kitchen/family room combo. **\$1,050,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

5 Whiting Court Sonsara Mediterranean 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath, open kitchen/ family room combo, spa-like master bath, in-door laundry, sunny courtyard. Single level, like new. **\$1,485,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3755 Highland Road Incredible Views Abound! Fantastic 4bd/2.5ba, 1972sf home situated in one of the most convenient, close-in Laf. neighborhds near schools, downtown, BART, Hwy 24, & Laf. Reservoir. **\$975,000**

LAFAYETTE



4038 Happy Valley Road Happy Valley premium location. Gated estate on private 2+ acre setting, views, two offices, high ceilings, walls of glass, level yard, resort pool/spa. 4 car garage. Unique & priced to sell! **\$2,295,000**

LAFAYETTE



3921 Happy Valley Road Fabulous gated estate in coveted Happy Valley. Custom home w/beautiful landscaping, pool w/waterfall, patios & decks. Hdwd & marble flrs. Chef's Kit/Fam. rm. Au pair set-up. Walk to HV School. Views! **\$2,595,000**

LAFAYETTE



23 Sessions Road Gated English Manor 12.18 acre 5bd/6ba Estate. Grand foyer, living, family rms + "Club" rm, deluxe kitchen, dramatic solarium + executive office. Gorgeous grounds w/lap pool/lawns, views. **\$3,696,000**

LAFAYETTE



1141 Vallecito Court Treasured Happy Valley estate custom built in 2006 w/finest craftsmanship. Chef's kitchen, gorgeous master, ofc, fam rm, home gym. Pool, spa, frplc & level lawn w/views. Detached guest house. **\$3,900,000**

LAFAYETTE



1155 Camino Vallecito Happy Valley masterpiece by architect Joseph Esherick. Exquisite sophisticated style, high ceilings, French drs, walls of glass. Priv. 2 ac w/views, guest quarters, beautiful grounds, pool. **\$4,150,000**

PLEASANT HILL



New Listing

2180 Geary Road #1 Lovely single level end unit. Rare 3 bedroom & 2 bath condo that lives like a single family home. Fabulous location. A must see! **\$489,000**

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

241 Walnut Avenue Wonderful updated ranch home in desirable Northgate! Gorgeous remodeled master baths, hardwood flrs, dual pane windows, paver driveway & patio, huge level yard & much more! **\$759,000**



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