

Business

Good Karma for Klein's New Art Room

By Sophie Braccini



Carrie Klein in the garden of the new Art Room.

Photo Sophie Braccini

When Carrie Klein took over the Art Room in Lafayette three years ago, across from Chow and The Cooperage in a charming cottage, many warned her that the building was set for the same fate as the old Petar's building: destruction. But Klein trusted in her lucky star. She knew that she would have to go at some point, but that something would come up. Something, or to be more accurate, someone did come up: Bruce Whitten.

"Bruce used to come by and see what I was doing. At one point he asked me what I would want in a perfect world," said Klein. "I told him about my dream of creating an art district in Lafayette,

close to Lamorinda Music and Lamorinda Theater Academy. He did not say anything at the time, but a few months later he came back asking me if I'd look at his parents' old house. I looked at it and thought, this is perfect!"

The cottage is located at 91 Lafayette Circle, across from La Finestra and next to the parking lot serving Lamorinda Music and Lamorinda Theater Academy. Leading a tour of the place, Klein marveled at the size and quality of the space, especially compared to the old Art Room. "Here you have a room that's all natural light that must have been a sun room," she said, as she entered a space where two walls are made of windows.

"It will be a great place for painting!" She then moved into what used to be a large kitchen where mixed media classes are going to be taught starting Nov. 9. "We will keep the fridge for storing snacks and drinks for our camps which have been so successful," added Klein.

The former home has two other large rooms that Klein will use for special events and where the gallery will be located, with direct access to the public deck Klein is building in front. "We have grown by about 50 percent since I took over the Art Room," said Klein. "The former space was definitely becoming too small as we added teen and adult classes to the kids' classes. We sometimes had to have classes in the gallery." Klein always made it a priority to invite other local artists to exhibit.

The home's exterior also has an appeal. A long garage will hold

the ceramics and 3D creation space. "Having a whole space dedicated to this is wonderful," she said. A glass panel will soon replace the garage door.

The expansive back garden is filled with beautiful trees, rose bushes, a picnic table, and a large expanse of flat space – a treasure that Klein said she will take advantage of, first by transporting her sculpture garden there, then opening it for classes and even more events. A portion of the fence in the yard that adjoins the Lamorinda Music parking lot can be removed to bring the three arts enterprises together. "Bruce said we could remove some of the fence and create an arched entryway here," said Klein. "The synergy between the three businesses will be enhanced and we will really create a place for all arts here."

Klein is full of plans for the future; she envisions art nights in-

corporating all forms of art. "Lafayette has its restaurants, it has its boutiques, but it also needs arts and theater and music to give it some flare," she said. The artist and businesswoman also sees expansion possibilities for her enterprise. "I will be able to have workshops here, something many people have been asking for, and more classes."

She says she was never worried about the future of her business when the prophets of doom and gloom were warning her of impending demolition. "I have a positive outlook on life, and you have to live one day at a time," she said.

The Art Room
91 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette
(925) 299-1515
www.theart-room.com

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Cashmere Sale 'Pops Up' in Lafayette
3604 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
thecashmeresale.com



Nancy Kutz, left, and Julie Horton Peck show off their cashmere in front of the pop-up store. Photo S. Braccini

For the past 10 years Republic Clothing Group, a diversified international manufacturer and wholesale marketer and retailer, has hosted Cashmere Sale pop up stores. This year's East Bay sale will be in Lafayette, two doors west of Pizza Antica. For six weeks, high quality cashmere sweaters, jumpers, cardigans, and scarfs in multiple sizes and colors will be for sale "at wholesale price, less than half the retail price," says boutique manager Julie Horton Peck. The cashmere is made of two-ply cashmere yarn from China. The boutique has a simple setup: a few tables, cardboard boxes where the sale price is marked – the retail price is printed on the label – and fitting rooms, since items cannot be returned. "We won't be there to exchange it," says Peck. For gift items, she recommends one-size-fits-all styles, scarves and blankets. "We never know where the store will be, it depends on where we can find a good retail space available during the season," adds Peck, who is partnering with Nancy Katz, who used to manage Diva in Lafayette. The store will be open every day until Dec. 5. To be informed of boutique locations in 2016, register online at thecashmeresale.com.

Gold Coast Chamber Players Recognized by AC5

On Tuesday, Oct. 20 the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County (AC5) awarded a 2015 Arts Recognition Award to Pamela Freund-Striplen and the Gold Coast Chamber Players. The award states, "The Gold Coast Chamber Players are a unique artistic resource with far-reaching influence in Contra Costa County, in the greater Bay Area, and indeed around the world. Under Director Pamela Freund-Striplen's inspired and dedicated leadership, the group has for 27 years given residents of the county the opportunity to hear world-class musicians performing both well-known and rarely-performed works, by the world's greatest composers." The board and AC5 also recognized GCCP's educational and outreach programs such as the Goldberg Project. Information about GCCP can be found at www.gcplayers.org.

Patrizia Marrone: Curated Couture for Women
11 Fiesta Lane, Lafayette
(925) 736-0220

Is Lafayette becoming a fashion destination? So says Patricia Brown, proprietor of Patrizia Marrone, Curated Couture for Women located in the heart of Lafayette. Brown will be welcoming designer Richard Hallmarq for a Fashion Extravaganza from 4 to 9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13 at the boutique located at 11 Fiesta Lane behind The Cooperage. Hallmarq learned to sew in junior high school and reached new levels as a high school fashion design student, creating cutting-edge fashion for fellow students, friends and family. From his first runway show in 2004, to presenting well-received collections at San Francisco Fashion Week, Hallmarq has achieved acclaim for his designs. Hallmarq was a cast member on the Emmy-nominated TV series

"Project Runway" Season 11. With strict attention to fit and detail, Hallmarq takes his preferred textile Jersey-knit from simplicity to luxury. The event is open to the public.

New Ownership at Amarin Thai – All in the Family
3555 Mt Diablo Blvd # B, Lafayette
(925) 283-8883, www.amarinlafayette.com

Tom Karmonphet's Amarin Thai restaurant in Lafayette has been a favorite spot for many years. Karmonphet decided to retire and transferred ownership to the capable hands of his niece, Paramee Phusawadrattana. The new owner said that she would continue in her uncle's tradition while adding some new recipes of her own.

Felder Named October's Employee of the Month



Roger Gregory, Andrew Felder, Gloria Noggle, Kevin Reineau Photo provided

Andrew Felder, the versatile maintenance specialist and security supervisor for 5A Rent A Space, has been named the Moraga Employee of the Month for October. Felder has done a little bit of everything for the storage company, including providing site tours, taking payments, maintaining the yard and buildings and providing security for the complex. He often goes above and beyond the call of duty in helping customers load or unload their belongings. "Andrew is just wonderful with our customers," said manager Gloria Noggle. "He is truly a valued employee." The Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce presented Felder with gift cards to Safeway and Graze restaurant in Moraga at the Oct. 27 Moraga Rotary lunch.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting at new Lafayette business Bistro Burger & Grill at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 5 at 965 Mountain View Drive.

Monthly Mixer at ABsolute Center at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18 at 3658 Mt. Diablo Blvd., #101.

The 37th Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast is scheduled at 7 a.m. Friday, Nov. 20 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane. This year's guest speaker is Rev. Dr. David Sammons, who will discuss "Your Resume vs. Your Eulogy." The event will include music by harpist Wendy Tamis and the breakfast courtesy of Dave's Cuisine. For reservations, visit Lafayettechamber.org.

Moraga

No new events are scheduled at this time.

Orinda

Pre-Holiday Mixer at McDonnell Nursery from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 19 at 196 Moraga Way, Orinda. Come do some early Christmas shopping.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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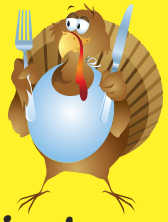
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