

Business

Dover Saddlery Offers Everything Equine at New Moraga Store – and Horses are Welcome

By Sophie Braccini



Dover Saddlery ribbon cutting ceremony. Moraga Mayor Roger Wykle, right, and Dover Saddlery Executive Vice-President James Cullen cut the store's ribbon. To Cullen's left, store manager Marc Ayala-Bass Photo Sophie Braccini

More local businesses are becoming dog friendly, but Dover Saddlery, which opened its 30th retail store in Moraga Friday, Nov. 13, has gone a step farther – with horses. Patrons can bring their horse to the store at 444 Center Street, so equipment can be selected and tried on the spot.

"We offer services in our stores that Bay Area clients are now going to be able to take advantage of," said Janet Nittmann, head of corporate communications at Dover Saddlery, a

leader in equestrian equipment. "We have a test ride saddle demo program where clients can try a saddle on their horse for three days; and an onsite saddle consultation program, custom boots and coat fitting. We can also come to your barn, bringing several saddles to work with you on the better fit."

The Rheem Shopping Center is likely to become a hub for horses, ponies and their happy owners as Dover Saddlery plans future events that will focus on everything equine.

Friday morning's ribbon cutting ceremony was a big event at Dover, including Moraga's mayor, Roger Wykle. Councilmember Teresa Onoda, a rider herself, said she was excited to see the store coming to town. "This is huge for the horse lovers all over the region," said Onoda. "Dover is a well-known and well-respected equine retailer. I do not know a rider who has not bought from Dover." The equestrian equipment store already has a large customer base online. "The problem in the past was it took a long time to get what you purchased because it was coming from Kentucky. That has all changed. Dover chose wisely when they chose to open a store in Moraga."

Dover Saddlery caters to English saddle riders, from the novice to those involved in riding competitions. The store offers specialized clothing, boots and chaps, horse tack including numerous dressage, jumping and close contact, all-purpose, or junior saddles, stable supplies, and items for horse care. Western saddle riders can order equipment online at Dover's other business, Smithbrothers.com.

Dover Saddlery was founded in 1975 by Jim and David Powers, two 1972 U.S. Olympic riders, and is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The Powers were impressed by the quality of the equipment their competitors used at the Olympic

games in Germany that they decided upon their return to distribute the best English, French, German, Italian and Argentinian equipment in the United States. The online business grew rapidly as the Internet developed, and stores were added over the years. It is now a publicly traded company grossing approximately \$100 million a year. The Powers sat on the board of directors until last year. "The current management is maintaining the same direction of excellence that was given by Jim and David," said Nittmann. "All our management, all our employees are passionate riders, moved by the same passion for horses."

The Moraga store will employ 30 to 40 people. There are still some vacancies, and anyone passionate about horses is encouraged to apply. "We

will be an active part of the community and of the local horse shows," said Moraga resident and store manager Marc Ayala-Bass. "We will have ongoing activities at the store, including book signings, talks by various professionals, and events for children as part of the pony club program." The store is open every day, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Dover Saddlery
444 Center Street, Moraga
doversaddlery.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

Sanvitalia Opens in Theatre Square 2 Theater Square, 110, Orinda (925) 258-6900

Helen Bentkowski has several passions: food, interior decoration and plants. Her new Orinda store, Sanvitalia Home and Garden, located on the first floor of Theater Square, across from Sweet Dreams Toy Store, combines her love of plants and decorations. The store is currently filled with festive decorations, orchids and succulent arrangements. Inside, unique Christmas ornaments adorn trees, and tables are cheerfully dressed up. "I was a nursery manager for the longest time," says Bentkowski, who has a love for food as well as the plant world, "and several years ago I opened a gift store and cafe combo in Oakland, Terrace Gifts and Coffee." Sanvitalia offers high-end lotions and candles, jewelry and handbags, and even cookbooks. "I love cooking and growing vegetables and fruits," she says. Leelyi, who has been working for years with Bentkowski, will be managing the store when the owner is at her Oakland café.



Helen Bentkowski in her new Orinda store, Sanvitalia Photo Sophie Braccini

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Vogue Cleaners and Alterations Moves Near CVS 3629 Mt. Diablo Blvd., # B, Lafayette (925) 283-9696

Following a rent hike at her former location next to Novina Fine Jewelry, Mino Motlagh, owner of Lafayette Vogue Cleaners and Alterations, recently relocated to the store between GNC and Johnny's Donuts. "I've had this business for 12 years in Lafayette," said Motlagh. "Finally I (found) this location and I am very happy here." Motlagh says her customers are happy, too, and she has the best customers in the world.

Glamorous Boutique Celebrates Four Years in Lafayette 1048 Brown Ave., Lafayette (925) 284-1217 – www.facebook.com/glamorouslafayette

Eliza Jamkochian will celebrate the fourth anniversary of Glamorous Boutique from 4 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 19, where beverages and light appetizers will be served to clients. Glamorous Boutique's all new fall and winter inventory of special occasion and cocktail dresses has arrived, including something for that special night out. Corrine Christensen, a stylist with J. Hilburn, a men's clothing brand that offers custom shirts made to order and many ready-to-wear options such as cashmere sweaters, custom belts, cufflinks, ties, socks and pocket squares, will be at Glamorous Boutique for the celebration.

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

The Cashmere Sale pop up store in Lafayette, two doors west of Pizza Antica, is continuing its sale of high quality cashmere sweaters, jumpers, cardigans, and scarfs in multiple sizes and colors offered at less than half the retail price. The boutique will be open every day until Dec. 5 featuring gift items such as one-size-fits-all styles, scarves and blankets, all made of two-ply cashmere yarn from China, according to boutique manager Julie Horton Peck, who is partnering with Nancy Katz, former owner of Diva in Walnut Creek. To be informed of boutique locations in 2016, register online at thecashmeresale.com.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Save the date for the annual Holiday Mixer at U.S. Bank from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 3498 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. The party includes food, fun, beverages and a big holiday raffle. Cost: \$10 for members; free for those who bring at least three canned items for the Food Bank.

Moraga

Save the date for the Chamber Holiday Party from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10 at Aegis of Moraga, 950 Country Club Drive, Moraga. Registration required at MoragaChamber.org. Cost: \$15 per person.

Orinda

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

Save the date for the Christmas Holiday Party at the Hilton House on Thursday at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3, 21 Orinda Way, Orinda.

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



Photo Jaya Griggs

When you need a doctor **STAT.**



Two Convenient Locations:

Downtown Lafayette: 970 Dewing Ave. **925-297-6396**

Pleasant Hill/Concord: 901 Sunvalley Blvd. **925-234-4447**

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