

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 10 Issue 1 Wednesday, March 9, 2016



*Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March...read on page D12*

## Home Occupancy Without the Mortgage *Renting in Lamorinda*

By Cathy Dausman

Lamorinda is a wonderful place to live. The schools are good, the East Bay weather is warm and mild, eateries and services are available in abundance, and the quality of life is high. But so is the cost of real estate. Rather than signing on the dotted line for that big mortgage, some decide to spend time as a renter. But even that is not always easy.

"Inventory [of rental property] is really low," says Keith Katzman of Orinda's Pacific Union International. With average home prices in Lamorinda hovering between \$1.2 to \$1.5 million, according to recently published Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics, and with multiple offers on homes for sale once again the norm, the demand for rentals has increased, and with it, rents. Sohelia Smith, a 23-year real estate professional, says she saw rental prices actually increase during the recent recession, and that renters now should expect to pay between \$1 and \$2 per square foot for housing.

A quick online search for Lafayette, Moraga or Orinda single family home rentals or leases revealed a 3,100-square-foot gated, single family Lafayette home on an "estate lot" with four bedrooms, crown molding, beveled glass and a piano. It was available for lease through a real estate company for \$5,950 per month. There was no garage; parking was on-street only.

Another listing, this one for a view home in Orinda says its 2,500-square-foot home situated on a half-acre lot was recently renovated and updated; its owners prefer a two-year lease, and are asking \$5,500 per month. A three bedroom, two bath Mor-



*Photo Cathy Dausman*

aga home slightly less than 1,900 square feet that backs up to open space is listed online for \$4,000 per month.

Katzman generally sees a range of people interested in renting rather than owning homes – some simply "don't want to own," while others prefer to rent first and eventually buy. He says many renters are families with kids.

Katzman recently paired a couple from the East Coast with a rental in Lafayette. He estimates the average renter stays put just one or two years. "Just about everybody [in real estate] has handled a rental transaction," he says. For the realtor, it is about building future relationships and hoping the rental client returns at a later date to buy.

... continued on page D4



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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	10	\$810,000	\$3,275,000
MORAGA	6	\$660,000	\$1,710,000
ORINDA	7	\$823,000	\$2,117,000

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

3402 Black Hawk Road, \$1,238,000, 3 Bdrms, 1835 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 2-12-16

21 Burnt Oak Circle, \$1,080,000, 3 Bdrms, 1481 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 1-28-16;

Previous Sale: \$85,000, 08-16-76

3397 La Caminita, \$1,925,000, 5 Bdrms, 3260 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 1-22-16;

Previous Sale: \$1,420,000, 08-20-10

4146 Los Arabis Drive, \$1,625,000, 4 Bdrms, 1727 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 1-29-16;

Previous Sale: \$725,000, 06-27-14

6 Moss Lane, \$710,000, 2 Bdrms, 1559 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 2-10-16;

Previous Sale: \$220,000, 04-29-88

1100 Rahara Drive, \$2,080,000, 4 Bdrms, 3678 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 2-12-16

20 Ruth Court, \$863,000, 5 Bdrms, 2106 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 1-28-16;

Previous Sale: \$910,000, 07-20-05

23 Sessions Road, \$3,275,000, 5396 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 1-26-16

3331 Vaughn Road, \$1,308,500, 4 Bdrms, 1945 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 1-22-16

## MORAGA

1201 Bollinger Canyon, \$700,000, 662 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 2-10-16

1084 Larch Avenue, \$1,135,000, 2 Bdrms, 2596 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 1-25-16

3 Paseo Linares, \$1,710,000, 4 Bdrms, 5074 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 1-28-16;

Previous Sale: \$725,000, 08-16-90

307 Rheem Boulevard, \$916,500, 3 Bdrms, 1685 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 1-29-16;

Previous Sale: \$235,000, 10-04-88

## ORINDA

53 East Altarinda Drive, \$2,117,000, 4 Bdrms, 3145 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 1-28-16;

Previous Sale: \$890,000, 08-29-01

18 Lind Court, \$1,247,500, 3 Bdrms, 1350 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 1-22-16;

Previous Sale: \$560,000, 05-03-02

21 Sandy Court, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 3311 SqFt, 2005 YrBlt, 1-29-16;

Previous Sale: \$1,650,000, 04-11-06

113 Van Ripper Lane, \$1,180,000, 3 Bdrms, 2393 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 2-11-16



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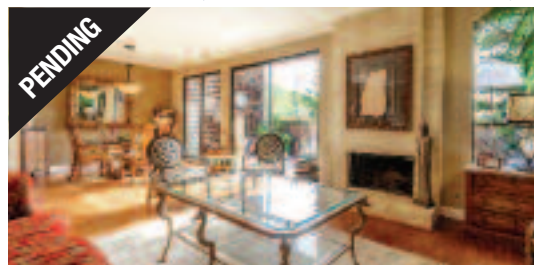
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3360 SWEET DRIVE, LAFAYETTE \$1,270,000



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1937 ASPENRIDGE COURT, WALNUT CREEK \$995,000



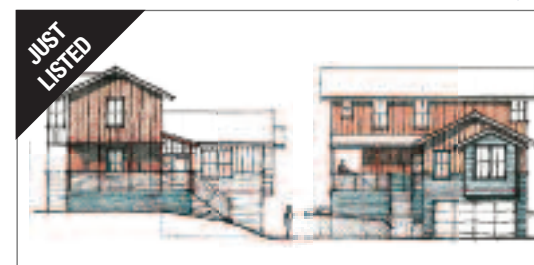
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# Home Occupancy Without the Mortgage

... continued from page D1

Katzman likes to make the search a “group effort” and says that although real estate companies’ multiple listings do include a rentals category, those listings are usually limited to high-end properties. Katzman says most people search online, and Craigslist is the number one resource for finding area rentals.

Smith uses Craigslist and also likes listing homes for rent on Trulia and realtor.com. She says her prospective renters are people who move to the area because of jobs, perhaps temporarily, and “don’t want to buy right away.”

They want to “figure it out” while living in a nicer, well cared for furnished or semi-furnished home in a good area. Smith says “a lot of baseball players; A’s and Giants,” for example, might not want to buy in Lamorinda because their work is only seasonal.

As for who pays for utilities or a gardener, “it varies,” she says. Naturally, when it comes to renting, there are requisites and limitations, even in so-called executive homes (a loosely used term which implies a more expensive home).

Potential renters should approach a property listing prepared to submit income and employment verification, and have financial solvency and credit scores inspected. Finding a landlord who will allow pets is tough, Katzman says, because landlords are concerned about the possibility of damage or that future tenants



Photo Cathy Dausman

may not want to rent if they are allergic to pets or pet dander. There may be an additional deposit required in return for having a pet in a rental. He advises landlords to make their rental home “bulletproof,” by spending a

little extra on appliances to get a good product warranty and to carry an umbrella policy on the residence.

“Don’t do it [manage a rental] on your own,” he says.



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Lynda Catlin, Catlin Design

Jean-Paul Bergez, Bergez & Associates Design Studio

#### Saturday, March 19th

Stephen Elbert, Elbert & Associates  
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#### Saturday, March 26th

Kevin Gregory, Vista Design Group  
Naomie Wert, Naomie Wert Interiors

Jean-Paul Bergez, Bergez & Associates Design Studio

#### Saturday, April 2nd

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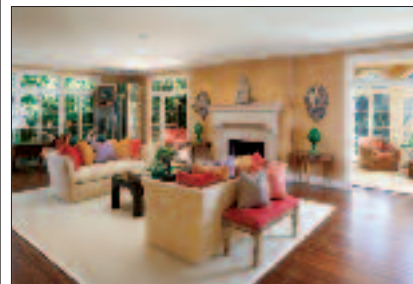
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\*per Public Records





*Stylish Solutions*

# Keeping Spring Clean with a Mudroom

By Ann McDonald



*This mudroom has incorporated a small powder room off to the side and closed doors to hide messes. While wonderful from an aesthetic perspective, consider how your family lives. Will doors hide the very things you need to find or will they keep you sane because you don't want to look at the mess day to day? Your choice. Photos bigstock.com*

This month I wanted to share some inside information on one of the most beloved rooms in the suburban home: the mudroom. As spring rounds the corner, many of us are looking at tidying areas of our garages, starting the beloved spring clean or just rethinking how we would like to function as the weather lightens up a bit.

Here are some tips on what you can include or consider when remodeling your beloved mudroom – whether it's for a small, medium or ideal option.

First, the small to non-existent space. I understand this, because it is my living truth. I had no mudroom. With two boys who were deeply into sports, a husband who did a lot of coaching on muddy fields, three dogs and me with a penchant for hiking, I would have loved to have had a separate mudroom, especially during the growing years, but it never happened in our suburban Orinda home. Then I had an epiphany.

First, I looked at our front hall off the main entry and I tore out the closet completely. Yes, completely. No entry closet. I can hear the screams now, but stay with me for a

minute. There is hope, and a clean space, on the other side of this action. With the closet gone, I put three-pronged, sturdy hooks in its place. The express purpose was to train our messy family, me included, to hang up their (my) clothes in their (my) actual closets. What a concept!

These hooks worked. Because the space is small, once they were full, they were full. I lost fewer coats and shoes. Our umbrellas now sit in a nice stand on the front porch. The front hall is actually tidy!

Second, I swapped out simple entry tables for chests of drawers in the front hall. The drawers hide what needs to be out of sight: stamps, letter openers, dog leashes and more. With a bit more storage than your typical console table, this is a great storage solution. So good, in fact, that when our oldest went to college, he took one of the chests with him!

Next, the medium space. Here we often find clients have a “back hall” or smaller area to handle some built-ins but not necessarily enough space to add all the extras. When that happens, we go the built-in route. Less dust around pesky tables or chests, a bit easier to design for ac-

tual needs of specific family members.

Many clients like the concept of separate storage spaces for each member of the family. Much like the traditional ski locker or sports locker, these are wonderful ways to encourage those you live with to place items where they will be found when necessary.

I love this look. For shoe storage in drawers, however, consider an open weave face or metal grate face so the smells dissipate and removable washable trays in the bottom so water, mud and dirt don't compromise the wood cabinets. The cost is more, but it is well worth it for lifestyle.

Now, the fun part. Let's imagine for a minute that budget was not an issue and space was available in droves. What kind of ideal mudroom would you design? With a large-scale space, here are some items we have included in designs past:

- A “double-double” Dutch door
- Additional washer and dryer hidden inside built-ins with lift table
- Round table and chairs where delivery people can relax while waiting
- Built-ins for placing and storing packages
- Floral cutting sink with metal counters
- Large-scale tile floors
- Boot trays
- Racks and hooks for coats
- Small powder room
- Television, and more

... continued on page D13



*One nice thing about using closed doors is the option of having a bar for hanging clothes and linens. This is especially useful if you have a dry cleaner that delivers. Things can arrive in the back door and be separated easily before heading to the proper closet.*



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## Gardening Guide

# March is a Time for Picking, Planting and Looking for Butterflies

By Cynthia Brian

*"That which surrounds you is within you." ~ Karl Schmidt*



*Hillside of daffodils with peach tree in bloom.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*

After visiting the Yucatan Peninsula for a week at the end of February where I snorkeled and swam in underground cenotes (rivers) as well as the aqua waters of the Caribbean, I returned to a garden exploding in blooms. Bearded iris, tulips, anemones, freesia, cyclamen, calla lilies, oxalis, Chinese fringe, rosemary, ranunculus, cineraria, gladioli, periwinkle, plus hillsides of daffodils as well as fruit trees of Asian pear, peach, apricot, prune and crabapple. As the wind blew, the air rained pear blossoms. The soothing smell of springtime permeated my nostrils. How lovely to come home to beauty.

The recent insert in our water bill made me laugh with ways to use only 35 gallons a day. Besides the fact that they failed to recognize that most households contain more than one individual, they also completely overlooked water for gardens, indoor plants and pets. Although my water conservation efforts have placed me in the top 20 percent of savers, the water company also recognized that 68 percent of my water usage is for landscaping. If only we had access to the water of those 6,000 cenotes



*Can St. Patrick's Day be far behind when the shamrocks (oxalis) are blooming?*

from the Yucatan we wouldn't be worrying about irrigating our gardens.

Many emails have arrived asking about more information on the Pearl's Premium lawn seed. Since the ground is warming, yet the heavens still shower us with rainfall, March is an opportune time to seed and reseed your lawns. Since my Nov. 4 article ([www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0918/Digging-Deep-Gardening-with-Cynthia-Brian.html](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0918/Digging-Deep-Gardening-with-Cynthia-Brian.html)) about this award-winning lawn seed, I have learned about new research indicating that the roots grow to 20 inches, making the grass, once established, very drought resistant. The one drawback that I have discovered from my personal experience is that in our area, the birds do indeed like the seeds. Make sure to roll the seeds for good soil contact and water deeply. Water daily until sprouting occurs. You may have to over seed a few times to get the lush green thickness you desire.

... continued on page D14



*Iris are already in bloom.*



# Mudroom ... continued from page D10

For large-scale mudrooms that need to function for high traffic catering events or other large-scale living, include: recycling bins, hidden charging stations, a coffee/tea bar and a small built-in microwave for quick snacks, as well as calendar boards and more.

We are past the days of Downton Abbey, when large families or multiple generations are living under one roof. However, the practical application of a centralized 'drop station,' whether it's a room, closet or full-scale area of your home, remains.

Happy spring cleaning, Stylish Suburbanites!

If you are interested in joining us for a free trend talk, make sure to send an email to [ann@couturechateau.com](mailto:ann@couturechateau.com) and visit [www.couturechateau.com/trend](http://www.couturechateau.com/trend) for more information.



*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](http://www.couturechateau.com/blog)*

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**Leslie & Michele Manzone**

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## What to do in your March garden:

**PICK** up all fallen camellias to prevent petal blight on the plant. Remember that camellia bushes grow into camellia trees so plant in an appropriate location.

**PLANT** asparagus crowns as soon as the soil is dry enough to work.

**SOW** Irish potatoes, English peas, radishes, turnips, kale and carrots any time this month.

**ATTRACT** Monarch butterflies to your garden by planting milkweed. A caterpillar increases its body mass 2,000 times as it nibbles on milkweed.

**ADD** the perennial vegetable rhubarb to your potager along with strawberries. They'll be ready to harvest at the same time, just right for pies, jams, sauces and other treats.

**ESPALIER** apples, kiwis and grapes for easier picking as well as space saving.

**THICKEN** and reseed lawns in thin spots. Clover is an excellent option if you are seeking something other than grass.

**FERTILIZE** lawns with an organic feed high in nitrogen. All plants can use a boost of nitrogen.

**TIME** for a tetanus shot if you haven't had one in 10 years. Tetanus does not occur just from rusty nails. You can get it from digging in the dirt.

**REPEL** insects naturally with swaths of pennyroyal, nasturtium, calendula and marigold.



*A landscape of blooming crabapples and periwinkle, and blue rosemary.*

**NET** plants, shrubs and trees that you don't want nibbled by birds, deer, rabbits and other foragers.

**DIVIDE** agapanthus, daylilies and iris while they are still semi-dormant.

**COMPOST** all organic matter to add to your garden. This includes newspaper, shredded cardboard, food scraps (except meat), eggshells, tea leaves and coffee grinds.

**BUILD** hugels now while the soil is still easy to dig to help with moisture retention for the summer months.

**PLAN** your vegetable garden. Check the soil, turn over the cover crops, determine the sunlight conditions, choose your seeds, and write a list of plants you wish to purchase to keep you eating fresh all season.

**PLANT** culinary herbs including cilantro, chives, dill, mint, parsley, rosemary and thyme to spice up your meals all season.

**PREPARE** for Easter celebrations with arrangements of tulips, hyacinths, lilies and colorful annuals.

**START** seeds of eggplants, tomatoes and peppers indoors to get a head start on your summer barbecues.

**WEED!** After all the rainfall, weeds are proliferating. Start pulling them up or turning them under before seedpods set.

**EXHALE!** Winter is almost over and the sunny, warm, longer days of March are here. Getting ready to balance eggs on end on the vernal equinox ... or at least crack a couple of fresh ones for breakfast.



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Happy Growing!  
Happy Spring!  
(almost)



Cynthia Brian snorkeling in a cenote lily pond in the Yucatan.

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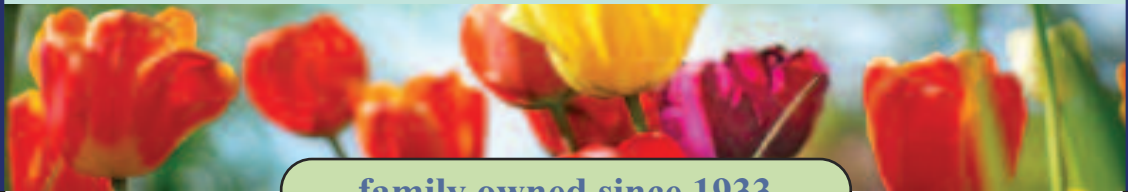
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**4 Quail Ridge Lane** This 2.87ac lot enjoys valley views, filled w/mature trees. Priv. lane off prestigious street w/luxurious custom homes. Complete w/approved plans to build 3276sf home. Award winning schools. **\$450,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**407 Ridge Gate Road** Rarely available detached one story in Orindawoods on sought after cul-de-sac. Open flr plan w/vaulted ceilings. 3rd bdrm used as ofc. Stunning outdoors w/generous decks for ultimate privacy. **\$1,395,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**15 Estates Drive** Redesigned & renovated. Living, dining & island kitchen all in a "Great Room". 4bd/3ba + study/den. Hwd floors thruout. Patio & side yard. Close in loc. on .53ac lot. Top rated Orinda schools. **\$1,698,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**8 Camino Del Diablo** Stunning Contemporary 4bd/5.5ba home rebuilt in 2002 by MGHG Designs. Impeccable design and architectural finishes. Chef's kitchen with Carrera marble counters, radiant floors. **\$1,795,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**111 Bear Ridge Trail** Gated 1.22ac lush knoll parcel. Custom 5bd/4.5ba, 3952sf home w/light & bright rooms, walls of windows & high ceilings. Modern kitchen. w/informal eating area & adjoining fam. rm. Views! **\$1,895,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**8 El Sueno** Custom ranch of the finest quality w/exceptional attn. to detail. This 3450 sq. ft., 4bd/3.5ba home overlooks the 8th fairway. Swimming pool w/waterfall, gazebo & extensive patio. **\$3,150,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**125 Alta Haciendas** The views don't get better than this! Breathtaking 3.5acre parcel w/architect. designed apx. 5000sf contemporary. 5bd/5.5ba+ ofc+ studio+ workout room, pool, tennis court & more! **\$3,950,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**160 Camino Don Miguel** Magnificent Spanish Mediterranean estate on 2 adj. lots, located on 4th hole of OCC. Main house completely rebuilt in 1996 is over 5800sf with 5bd/5.5ba & sep. 627sf 1bd/1ba guest house. **\$6,200,000**

## MORAGA



New Listing

**35 Ashford Place** Sought after Corliss neighborhood! 4 bedroom, 2 bath home on prime cul-de-sac location. Updates include fresh paint, hardwood floors, new lighting and carpet. **\$1,375,000**

## MORAGA



New Listing

**422 Fernwood Drive** Phenomenal 4bd + media rm/guest rm, 3 ba, Rheem Valley Manor exec. home on over .50ac w/views, pool, outdr BBQ's, putting green & amazing in/outdr entertaining space. By appt. only. **\$1,695,000**

## LAFAYETTE



New Listing

**Springhill Road** Great opportunity to build approved to setting for 8.41 acre location. Design in place by AIA James Wright. Road & utilities all at site. City approval for approach & layout dimensions. **\$879,000**

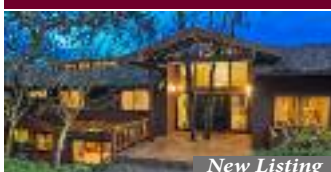
## LAFAYETTE



New Listing

**3957 Woodside Court** Situated on .83ac park-like lot adj. to Laf. Reservoir w/private gate to Res. Redwds, azaleas, fruit trees & grapes. Best views! Updated kitchen & master ba. Hdwd flrs. Spacious family room. **\$1,595,000**

## LAFAYETTE



New Listing

**858 Mountain View Drive** Wonderful, spacious Contemporary 5bd +ofc +bonus rm, 3.5ba, 4280sf home. Peaceful retreat yet mins to town. Views, walls of glass, beaut. updated. In-law potential. Top rated schools. **\$1,795,000**

## LAFAYETTE



New Listing

**15 Via Magnalena** Mid century classic .8 acre Happy Valley home designed by owner/architect. Preserved high beam ceilings, walls of glass & every rm opens to gorgeous priv. yard, pool. Bonus suite. **\$1,850,000**

## LAFAYETTE



New Listing

**5 Burton Vista Court** Spectacular 7bd/9+ba, 8986sf estate w/ luxury amenities in all grand oversized spaces. Premium 2.25ac parcel w/sport court, pool & pavilion w/kitchen, dressing rooms & showers. **\$5,599,000**

## OAKLAND



New Listing

**11 Reata Place** Rockridge charmer! 2465 sq. ft. 3bd/2ba home w/1 bd/1ba in-law unit. Mid-century modern, bright home on a cul-de-sac. Walk to Chabot Elementary, College Avenue & Bart! **\$995,000**



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