

# The Airbnb Listing Next Door

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When Anthony and Dormain Drewitz purchased their home in Orinda last November, it already had a cottage on the property that had been an Airbnb rental. The cottage has been rented almost continuously since they've listed it, with only an estimated 10 days of vacancies since their arrival. In Anthony's experience, he sees hotel guests and Airbnb people as completely different constituencies, due to the disparity in price. Because their unit has a small kitchen, living room and bathroom, guests have stayed for months at a time, something that would rarely happen at a hotel. One tenant stayed for two and a half months visiting children and grandchildren in the area.

Using his first name only, John stayed at the cottage in June and was one of many guests who posted a glowing review on the website. "Beautiful views and lots of wildlife. We saw deer grazing on the property with their fawns and also saw a wild turkey. Anthony was a great host and offered any assistance we might need as well as local recommendations. Would love to

make a return visit."

"This is way too small for the city to be concerned about," said Drewitz, who argues that they aren't bothering anyone, and there's plenty of parking on their woodsy 1.4 acre parcel. "It would be a waste of the city's resources to regulate this." He adds their guests frequently spend money in local restaurants and bars, which is good for the city.

Lamorinda is an Airbnb regulation-free zone, at least for the time being. Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter reports that the city council recently discussed having a short-term rental registration program as the city does not currently regulate the rentals. "We anticipate bringing the matter back to the council in July," she says.

With only one complaint in the last year, Lafayette's City Manager Steven Falk doesn't yet see the need for an ordinance. Moraga has nothing on the books and no plans to change the current situation.

Carolyn, who preferred that her last name not be used, is an 81-year-old single woman with a large four-bedroom, three-bath home who just loves being an Airbnb host, preferring to have short-term tenants, a week at the most. She's earned the "Superhost" badge as someone who provides outstanding hospitality. Having a bit of extra income helps defray the expense of maintaining a large home and yard, and she enjoys the social benefits as well. She recently hosted a couple from Provence, France, who were in town to work with their Orinda-based wine distributor, which provided an opportunity to practice her French.

Interestingly, in a completely non-scientific poll, hosts that live in multi-family settings, apartments and town houses were reluctant to talk about their experience for fear the complex or homeowners association might shut down their business.

While San Francisco has wrestled with regulating Airbnb hosts, Lamorinda, at least so far, doesn't share many of these big city concerns. The vast majority of these cottages, in-law units and spare bedrooms are on private property and many hosts argue their rentals don't reduce the amount of potentially available housing for long-term lower-income renters in our increasingly expensive area. Housing activists note that over 350 listings in San Francisco appear to be full-time vacation rentals, which diminishes the city housing inventory.

"That's bunk" said one Moraga Airbnb host, who didn't want his name used. His in-law unit has a separate entrance, but is part of the home he and his wife live in; the space would be sitting vacant almost all the time and only occasionally used by visiting family if it weren't for Airbnb.

Lafayette's city manager agrees. "There's no evidence that it affects the available housing stock."

For more information, and to check out listings, go to [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com).

