

# Lafayette Bridal Shop is Making Special Dreams Come True

By Diane Claytor



From left, Lace and Bustle "momager" Lilium Hernandez and daughter, owner Victoria Hansen, get a dress ready for display at their Lafayette shop. Photo provided

It's likely that every little girl — and for that matter, every big girl — has, at some time, dreamt of walking down the aisle dressed in a beautiful white, flowy gown. She may not be able to envision a partner, or a location, but, oh, that dress. Its look may change over the years, but the long white wedding gown continues to be part of the fantasy.

Victoria Hansen, owner of Lace and Bustle bridal shop, is

fulfilling those dreams right here in Lafayette. It used to be that Lamorinda brides had to drive miles and miles in search of that perfect wedding gown. But almost a year ago, Hansen opened her elegant, intimate bridal boutique and has been bringing happiness to brides ever since. Just walking in the store brings joy. It smells good. The crystal chandeliers, calming paint color, antique furniture, displays of vin-

tage jewelry and beautiful gowns hanging along the wall indicate a special experience is about to begin. And when Hansen, with her pure enthusiasm for what she does, offers to help, it's easy to understand why Lace and Bustle has already provided that perfect look to hundreds of brides. And now, women are coming from as far away as Seattle to view this incredible selection.

A graduate of Saint Mary's College, Hansen spent 10 years in the retail industry as both a sportswear buyer and marketing analyst. Six years ago, when, newly engaged herself, Hansen began searching for her own wedding dress, she found the experience less than satisfying. It was then she began considering the idea of opening her own bridal store.

"A wedding dress is probably one of the most personal and emotional purchases a woman makes," Hansen said. "And yet I found a real lack of bridal shops making that experience personal or special."

Hansen loved her job but the concept of opening a bridal shop remained in the back of her mind. "I'm so glad I did it that way," Hansen stated. "I learned so much in my retail career and believe it gave me the solid foundation needed to open my own store."

She knew Lafayette, with its quaint yet stylish vibe, was the place she wanted to be. Racks after racks of wedding dresses

can be both daunting and overwhelming, Hansen said, and her vision was to make the experience enjoyable, personal and comfortable.

"Shopping for a wedding dress should be a fun, happy time," she said. Lace and Bustle is "dedicated to making shopping for your wedding dress as beautiful and memorable as the dress itself."

Hansen currently works with five wedding gown designers and has an inventory of approximately 50 different dresses. This number is expected to grow.

"Our focus is to be a modern classic store, offering brides that timeless style," she said. She carries the latest collections of each designer and moves out styles that are not as strong. "It's important that we keep unique and fresh styles for our brides." She's also aware that not every young woman wears a size 2 and tries to offer a sampling of dresses for all different body types.

With her mother Lilium Hernandez as her main helper, Hansen's goal is to make the entire dress-buying process as exciting and stress-free as possible. "We are really trying to redefine the wedding dress shopping experience," she explained. "We take the time to sit down and hear what each bride is envisioning for her special day. Then we help them find the absolute perfect dress. I strive to make sure we're there to give them peace of mind. These young women have so

much going on. We want to make sure we're giving them the best experience, best quality gown and best service throughout the whole process."

Hansen has partnered with Lafayette's Creative Alterations and accompanies each bride to her first fitting to "make sure she's well taken care of," Hansen said. And when the dress goes home, Hansen sends each bride off with a personalized engraved wooden hanger featuring the bride's name, "something they can use for their wedding pictures," she said.

Lace and Bustle also carries beautiful, timeless accessories for the bride's special day — jewelry, veils, sashes. "We've had brides who have purchased their dress elsewhere but come in for that one final perfect touch," Hansen said. One bride recently wrote that "Victoria walked me through how I could transform my dress — with a belt, a veil, and added rhinestone buttons — to make it truly mine."

"Each bride becomes like family to me," Hansen said. And the brides feel it. One Yelp reviewer wrote, "Victoria and her mother made the experience... as perfect as you could possibly imagine. I felt special, beautiful, and truly cared about..." Another said, simply, "Lace and Bustle made my dream come true."

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## Lafayette

### Park Theater... continued from page A1

"We believe we have figured out a plan that will allow the theater to be a successful and sustainable business that adapts to the times and provides a magic mix of entertainment options for people in the local area."

Fred Abbott is an international law professor, specializing in trade, public health and intellectual property; he's also a fan of science fiction and film noir. Originally from Scotland, Happy Valley resident McDonald is an oral and maxillo-facial surgeon who says he is committed to showing movies again at the theater.

They acknowledge that a number of things will need to come

together to get this project off the ground: finding the right architect that could restore the theater and make it more functional, working with the city about parking, and especially finding investors to breathe new life into the vintage gem. Noting that the city recently purchased a nearby parking lot, and with plans for alternative transportation, Cathy Abbott hopes for a compromise on parking, especially since a renovated business would bring vitality and additional tax revenue to the city.

Built in 1941 and opening its doors with a screening of an Abbott and Costello film, the popular theater entertained generations of

Lamorindans. Fast forward to 1987 and the Park Theater was taken over by Allen Michaan's Renaissance Rialto Films.

But over time, it wasn't profitable, so it closed for good after more than 60 years in business in September 2005 with "Cinema Paradiso" and "Amelie."

Stanley Middle School student Joel Braunstein made a six-minute documentary film on the history of the theater, including information from the city's point of view. To check it out on YouTube, go to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) and type in "The Park Theater Movie" in the search box.

## Business Bites

By Victor Ryerson

### New on the Food and Drink Scene

Some interesting changes have taken place recently in the ever-changing world of Lamorinda's eateries.

On July 15 **Baja Cali Taqueria and Grill** opened at 23 Orinda Way, Suite H, in the space formerly occupied by La Cocina. Featuring traditional Mexican cuisine with some interesting variations, Baja Cali may offer the only Michelada in town, a concoction of beer, tomato juice and hot sauce. The menu cover alone will make you want to head for the tropical waters of Los Cabos. Find it at [BajaCaliTaqueriaGrill.com](http://BajaCaliTaqueriaGrill.com) for dine-in or takeout orders.

Not far away at 21 Orinda Way, Suite C, **Gen-uine Goodness** opened up its storefront cafe Aug. 1. Its featured fare is handcrafted, all natural smoothies, soups, salads and goodies, available by ordering online or in person. Find out more at [www.gen-goodness.com](http://www.gen-goodness.com).

Orinda's popular **Table 24** has a new chef and a new menu to please your palate. Visit the Theater Square favorite to see what's up.

In Lafayette, the award-winning **Coffee Shop** has opened a new location at 50 Lafayette Circle, providing yet another option for devoted coffee lovers.

And Moraga? The **food truck nights** at the Hacienda are turning out to be big winners with sociable Lamorinda residents, who showed up by droves to eat and drink al fresco at picnic tables on the beautiful lawn until the food started running out after dark. The first of these events attracted three times the number of people expected, and even with more trucks, the coffee and donuts were gone by dusk. It's like a monthly Fourth of July picnic, and it gives every indication of being a regular part of Lamorinda life.

### Smaller Changes

**Branagh Realty** has moved into new digs at 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 200 in Lafayette.

Back in downtown Orinda, the name of Canetti's Books has changed to **Sleepy Cat Books**. Find out why at [www.sleepycatbooks.com](http://www.sleepycatbooks.com). And across the street, **Sanvitalia Home and Garden** in Theater Square has expanded its offerings, in case you are doing a bit of browsing.

### Chamber Music

Not much is happening on the chamber of commerce scene during the dog days of summer, but the Aug. 16 Beer at the Bruns mixer was well attended, with a happy crowd enjoying some excellent food and drink catered by Classic Catering of Pleasant Hill. Some of the group stayed on to enjoy the performance of George Bernard Shaw's comedy, "You Never Can Tell."

### Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

[www.lafayettechamber.org](http://www.lafayettechamber.org) (925) 284-7404

### Moraga Chamber of Commerce

[www.moragachamber.org](http://www.moragachamber.org) (925) 323-6524

Don't miss the Entrepreneur's Lunch, noon, Wednesday, Sept. 7 at Ristorante Amoroma, 360 Park St in Moraga. Digital strategist Robin S. Fox will share "5 Easy Ways to Leverage Social Media to Support Your Business" during the lunch hour. Open to members and non-members. Lunch is \$10. RSVP to [kathe@moragachamber.org](mailto:kathe@moragachamber.org).

### Orinda Chamber of Commerce

[www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org) (925) 254-3909

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