

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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Picturing the Paw-fect Pet Photo

By Diane Claytor



Barbara Brady-Smith photographs dogs in her home studio.

Photo provided

“Mom, you need a passion in your life.” This sentence, spoken by Barbara Brady-Smith’s daughter several years ago, was the beginning of a life-changing adventure. “At the time she said it,” Brady-Smith laughingly acknowledges, “I felt like poking her little eyes out. But then I realized she was right.”

A native of Southern California, Brady-

Smith came to Berkeley to attend college. She fell in love with the area (as well as with her husband, Scott) and never left, moving to Lafayette in 1984. At the time, Brady-Smith, a self-described “math-nerd,” was working for Wells Fargo Bank, eventually becoming an executive vice president. At 40 years old, Brady-Smith left the world of banking, “because, fortunately, I could afford to,” she said gratefully. Her mother had

moved in with them, her daughter, Chrissy, was entering middle school, and, “I figured it was the perfect time for me to stay home and dedicate myself to my family,” she happily recalls.

Looking for a fulfilling hobby, Brady-Smith decided to explore digital photography, which, at the time, was in its infancy. She attended classes and read books. She learned everything she could. With both her daughter and high school coach-husband heavily involved in Campolindo sports, Brady-Smith started photographing their teams.

“I started with a digital camera that was lousy at low light and lousy at action sports,” she says. But cameras got better and so did Brady-Smith.

“I loved that instant gratification of immediately seeing the pictures,” she says. Becoming intrigued with lighting and the digital post-production process, Brady-Smith again took classes and read more books, learning about Photoshop and Lightroom. And then she volunteered, taking pictures of sporting events, choir performances and class activities. “It was such fun,” Brady-Smith said.

“So, several years later, when Chrissy noticed that I seemed bored and in need of something more, I realized that what had started out as a hobby – digital photography, studio work, lighting and post-processing – had become something I really loved doing.”

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