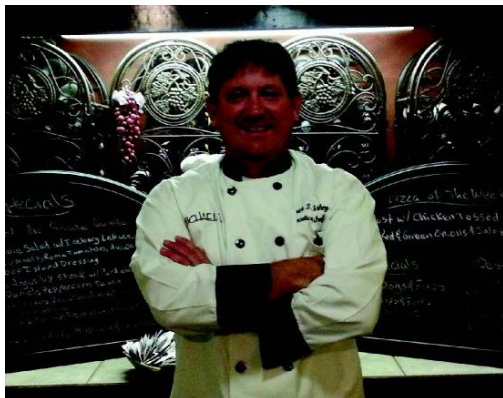


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Three local businesses given East Bay Leadership Council awards



Patrick Vahey Photo provided

The East Bay Leadership Council recently honored three Lamorinda businesses selected by their local Chambers of Commerce as Small Business of the Year at a luncheon held during National Small Business Week.

Moraga

Penninis/Michael's Ristorante

Chef Patrick Vahey has owned Penninis Pizza and Pasta and Michaels Ristorante in Moraga Shopping Center for just over 10 years. Pennini's Pizza & Pasta was founded in 1998 by Michael Pennini, with the vision of becoming a true neighborhood destination. Vahey joined the Pennini's team in 2002 and helped to launch Moraga's Michael's Ristorante for fine dining. Vahey took over when Pennini retired.

The closest thing Moraga has to a "sports bar," Pennini's is a favorite Moraga hangout spot for Saint Mary's students and the community. Michaels continues to offer Italian-inspired cuisine prepared simply and properly, with fresh ingredients and "served with joy," the owner says. Vahey is known for generously supporting the community with donations and fundraisers.

Penninis Pizza & Pasta

1375 Moraga Way Suite D, Moraga, CA 94556

925.376.1515

Michael's Ristorante

1375 Moraga Way Suite A, Moraga, CA 94556

925.376.4300

Penninis@sbcglobal.net

Lafayette

Lamorinda Theatre Academy

If you visit Lamorinda Music on Lafayette Circle, you will find a door tucked in the back of the parking lot that leads upstairs to a space that most kids think is magical. Over the last five years Renee DeWeese and Rena Wilson have been teaching technique-based acting, singing and dancing, and cultivating confidence in their students.

Lamorinda Theatre Academy opened in Lafayette in 2012. DeWeese and Wilson are no strangers to the stage. DeWeese studied musical theatre at New York University's Tisch School of Arts. She has been teaching, directing, choreographing and running children's theater programs since 2004. She is a recipient of two Shellie awards and a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award.

Wilson currently performs with "Beach Blanket Babylon." A two-time Bay Area Critics Circle Award winner, she received a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from San Jose State University.

Kids of all ages attend programs, classes and camps throughout the year to become what DeWeese and Wilson call a "triple threat," which includes acting, singing and dancing.

83 Lafayette Cir, Lafayette, CA 94549

(925) 385-0354

www.lamorindatheatreacademy.com

Orinda

Land Home Financial Services, Inc.

Land Home Financial Services Inc. is a private mortgage banker headquartered in Concord, comprised of six divisions, 80-plus branches nationwide and licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Land Home opened its Theatre Square location in early 2013 to much acclaim. Bridging the chasm between business and community, Land Home's lending model is driven by local relationships, community prosperity and disconnectedness.

Led by Angela Erves, Land Home Orinda annually hosts two chamber of commerce events, provides its space to the Orinda Action Day committee, and sponsors Orinda's July Fourth Parade, Action Day, and the NorCal Kids Triathlon.

With resources geared for home buyers, real estate agents, mortgage brokers and builders, its services span the spectrum of commercial and retail lending, offering specialized products to meet the unique needs of the community of Orinda.

"They have been very active in the community, and so welcoming to all chamber members!" says chamber board member Holly

Henkel.

2 Orinda Theatre Square #146, Orinda, CA 94563

(925) 885-6760

www.lhfs.com or www.facebook.com/LandHomeFinancialServices.

-Peggy Spear



Rena Wilson receiving the award Photo provided



Land Home Financial Services Inc. Photo Sophie Braccini

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