



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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Feng Shui

Front entrance refresh

By Michele Duffy

We all know intuitively that the first impression a home makes, specifically the front entrance, is important for setting the tone for the entire home. Subliminal, hidden and unintended consequences can result from the myriad choices we make, so what's the skinny on preferred doors and why? And what other components enter into creating an entryway that's ready to receive blessings for everyone in the household?

Creating balance means we include all Five Elements (water, wood, fire, earth, metal) and if we do so skillfully with a professional, then we have yin-yang balance. While it's true that we always want all Five Elements to be present for balance, it can vary by room. In the master bedroom, for example, we usually want it to be quieter, more Zen-like or on the yin side so we can sleep, rest and connect with intimacy. The front entranceway has a completely opposite energetic or Qi goal from the master bedroom. Front entrance Qi is active, lively and yang, and it's important that there is a lot of strong yang Qi and lots of activity and movement there. The front entrance is also known as the first pillar or "Power Area" and is where we first place the Feng Shui Bagua map, according to the Ancient Bon Buddhist Feng Shui lineage I practice. Often called the "Mouth of Qi" the front entrance must abundantly amplify nourishing energy to support the energetic needs of whole structure.

Not only is the front entryway door important, but Feng Shui includes the journey leading up to the front door. If on the way to your home the energy meanders along curvy paths that gives the Qi a chance to gather there, and ideally, there should be lots of tidy colorful garden blooms and absolutely no garbage, clutter, or debris anywhere around the front entranceway. That first impression begins outside your home so try to create a front yard that is inviting and welcoming.

In terms of Feng Shui, the actual front door first must provide safety, privacy and a protective barrier from the outside world. Feng Shui always prefers solid wood doors for this reason. There are exceptions, for example, if your front entranceway has very little natural light we approve of glass panels but only along the very top of the front door. If the door is designed with lots of glass panels it can easily be broken and provide a way in for uninvited guests. As for the color of the door, from a Feng Shui perspective there are several reasons why red is often chosen. First, red serves a dual function of protecting the home but also red attracts Qi toward the home and strongly activates the front entrance door with red since it is a yang color.

.. continued on Page D4



Photo provided

Meandering paths and front entrance doors flanked with plants are excellent Feng Shui.

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	5	\$1,050,000	\$2,770,000
MORAGA	5	\$968,000	\$1,875,000
ORINDA	9	\$1,125,000	\$2,470,500

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

3300 Greenhills Drive, \$2,770,000, 6 Bdrms, 5849 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$2,050,000, 05-23-05

615 Murray Lane, \$2,687,000, 4 Bdrms, 3851 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 04-01-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,372,000, 11-21-12

1 Ruppel Place, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2144 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 04-01-19

3167 Stanley Boulevard, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1434 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 03-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$930,000, 02-07-14

3391 Sweet Drive, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 1509 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$470,000, 08-02-00

MORAGA

365 Donald Drive, \$1,875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2643 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 11-02-02

103 Merion Terrace, \$1,135,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 04-01-19,
Previous Sale: \$920,000, 01-05-15

270 Scofield Drive, \$1,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 3153 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 03-26-19

391 Springfield Place, \$1,270,000, 4 Bdrms, 1996 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$297,000, 08-01-87

16 Via Barcelona, \$968,000, 3 Bdrms, 2114 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 03-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 04-09-08

ORINDA

30 Dias Dorados, \$2,470,500, 5 Bdrms, 3407 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,425,000, 04-23-14

11 Donna Maria Way, \$1,845,000, 4 Bdrms, 2300 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,375,000, 07-24-14

699 Ironbark Circle, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3138 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 03-29-19

12 Las Aromas, \$1,837,500, 8 Bdrms, 9232 SqFt, 1936 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,420,000, 01-01-91

110 Lombardy Lane, \$1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2617 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 03-29-19

47 Lost Valley Drive, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 3059 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 03-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$957,500, 05-25-06

91 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 1492 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 03-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$808,000, 07-13-12

1 Tappan Court, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1582 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 03-28-19

5 Williams Court, \$1,606,000, 4 Bdrms, 2475 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 03-27-19,
Previous Sale: \$955,000, 06-30-03



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Feng Shui

Front entrance refresh

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My current favorite red paint color is a Benjamin Moore “Poppy” since it is cheerfully bright with zero purple in it. Yellow is also a popular color and Hawthorne Yellow, also by Benjamin Moore, is not such a blinding yellow; it’s softer and also pops with many different homes.

There is also a huge trend I am sure you have seen around town to include more wood and wood stained front entrances but also tying that in architecturally to small siding areas, garage doors and also decks and porches.

Benjamin Moore’s Arborcoat wood stain has many color and stain options, including semitranslucent all the way up to full saturation coverage. Remember, the trick is to use “brush outs” of your color choices and view them at different times of the day so you see and rate each color in vastly varied light.

Here are some other Mandala options to create a front entrance that welcomes good

fortune, happiness, vitality and health to your home:

- 1) Make sure house numbers are hung horizontally and are visible from street.
- 2) The journey to your door should be clean and include colorful fragrant blooms.
- 3) The front entrance area should not have cobwebs and ideally is tidy.
- 4) If there is room, flank your front door with colorful pots filled with flowers.
- 5) A fresh welcome doormat should match the size of your front door.
- 6) Lighting is key so always change light bulbs that burn out and clean fixtures.
- 7) Place a water feature that bubbles up as close to the front door as possible.
- 8) Consider painting your front door a bright color or re-staining, if wood.

Implementing these easy and accessible front entrance tips will allow you to welcome fully and completely the life force Qi to your home and your life.

Happy spring!



Double doors subliminally suggest braggy or bossy behavior. Try to avoid if possible or, at minimum, the doors should be to scale for the house.

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Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating “Space as Medicine” Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2019 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.





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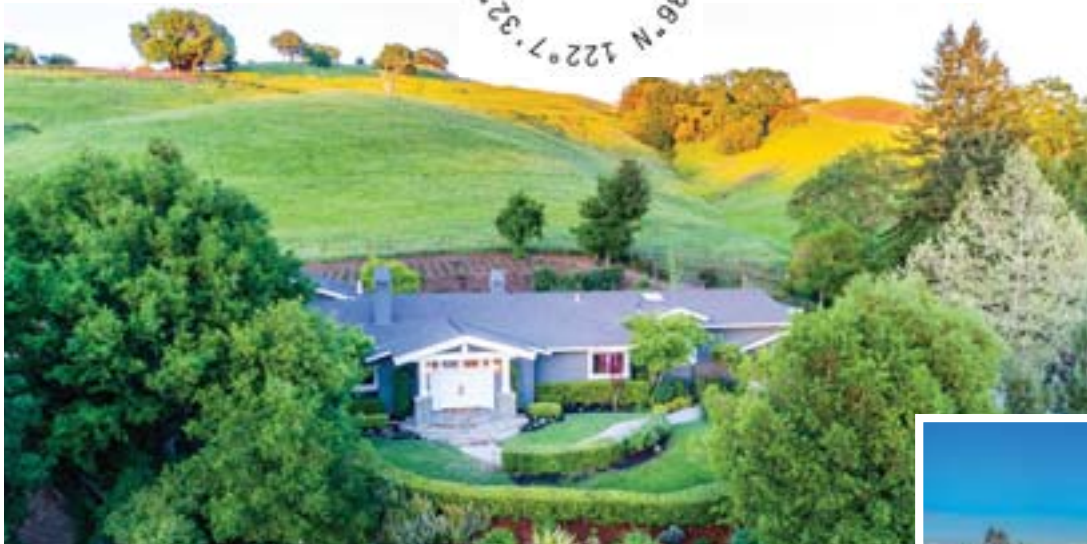
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23 Kellie Ann Court, Orinda
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Interior design questions answered



Photo provided

By Amanda Eck

A few weeks ago I reached out to our Lamorinda Facebook community asking if anyone had any interior design questions they wanted answered. The response was overwhelming and I am so excited to be able to tackle these questions and share them with you. With our increased access to everything online, it can be confusing trying to sort through all the noise. Between Design blogs, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, and Houzz it's easy to get overwhelmed. I'm looking forward to sharing my answers to your questions over the next few months.

Lighting

One question I received involved the challenge of finding lighting fixtures, especially when purchasing online. While lighting can be quite challenging, especially if you are trying to source on the internet, scale is key and even designers can be fooled by what they see online versus in person, so you are not alone. One of my favorite vendors to use for lighting is Visual Comfort. They are a to-

the-trade (meaning they sell directly to designers) company, but they also have a retail division called Circa Lighting. They are available online and have recently opened a brick and mortar store in San Francisco. It is a beautiful showroom and they have a plethora of lighting, including lamps – and they are open on Saturdays. It's definitely worth a visit: Circa Lighting, 175 Rhode Island St., San Francisco.

For a more budget-friendly lighting resource there is Shades Of Light. They are online only, but offer a huge selection of chandeliers, outdoor lighting, and lamps.

Paint

One local resident was having trouble navigating whites, since there are so many to choose from, and asked what a color expert is and how to use one. I could spend hours talking paint. And yes whites are especially tricky. You have cool and warm tones. Looking at paint on those small chips you pick up at the hardware store are no help.

Sometimes it helps to take your white paint chip and place it on a piece of white copier paper, it helps to see the undertones of

the paint color. It can have a pink, peach, yellow, green, blue, gray or violet undertone. And just because the paint name has the word "white" in it does not necessarily mean it is going to be "white."

Here are a few of my favorite whites:

- Benjamin Moore
- White Dove- OC-17
- Linen White-912
- Cotton Balls- OC-122
- Decorators White-OC-149
- Sea Pearl- OC-19
- Sherwin Williams
- Snowbound- SW 7004
- Steamed Milk- SW 7554
- Creamy- SW 7012
- Pure White- SW 7005

As for paint finishes, I like to use eggshell or matte finish on walls, flat on ceilings, and semigloss for doors and trim. For cabinetry I recommend an oil based or acrylic latex, but in a matte finish. If you are looking for the high gloss lacquered look (which is trending right now); I suggest hiring a professional that is experienced in lacquer paint, since not all painters are familiar with lacquer. Fine Paints of Europe is my go-to for lacquer paint.

Apps/Tools

One question I received revolved around whether there were any apps I could recommend for toying around with some design/layout ideas – something that your average nonprofessional amateur can figure out and use. The following are a few of my favorite online resources for furniture layout/floor plans. Most of these have a free version that is simple to use and for more complex projects you can pay a monthly fee: Floorplanner.com; Smartdraw.com; and Icovia.com.

I also like Designfiles.com for visual design boards. You can use their handy clipper tool to select a piece of furniture online and upload it to create your design.

For quick room measurements there is an app for iPhone called Measure. It's not 100 percent accurate, but it does work when you are trying to do rough measurements for your space. It's also great for when you are out shopping for furniture and don't have a tape measure on hand.

... continued on Page D12

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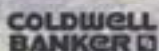
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Interior design questions answered



Photo provided

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Hopefully these tips and tools will help you with your decorating dilemmas. If you have a burning question you would like to see answered here, feel free to email me at: designdilemmas@amandacarolinteriors.com.

And don't forget to sign up for our newsletter at www.amandacarolinteriors.com for more exclusive behind the scenes, tips, tricks and inspiration. Until next time, dear friends!

As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity."

With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art.

Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.



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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

The next best thing

“Do what you can for as long as you can and when you can’t, do the next best thing.”—Chuck Yeager



Photos Cynthia Brian

The glorious restful rose garden of Orinda gardener, Steve Giacomi By Cynthia Brian

Back in 1999 when I was co-authoring what became a New York Times bestseller, "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul" with Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and my new writer colleagues, besides the chapters that we penned, over 5,000 submissions were mailed to us from around the world as possible story inclusions. Five of us diligently read every contribution judging the contents on a 1-10 basis, then, after editing and revising the submissions that received an 8, 9, or 10, we sent them to 25 readers from all over the United States for their judgments. It was a long, slow, tedious task that took over two more years because only the very best and most appropriate 101 stories to sow seeds of love, hope, and laughter were destined for publishing.

I remember one very short story that made the final cut that at the time I didn't especially feel was deserving of this carefully curated book. It was titled, "The Next Best Thing," by Washington gardener and horticultural teacher, Ann Pehl Thomson. She wrote that when her parents reached their 70s, they had difficulties doing the things that they had previously done with ease. Their motto became a quote from test pilot Chuck Yeager, who in 1947 was the first person to break the sound barrier: "Do what you can for as long as you can and when you can't, do the next best thing."

One morning Ann's mom spied her dad lying flat on his stomach under an apple tree. Alarmed, she scurried out to help. When she got closer she saw that he had a trowel in his hand and was weeding. Exasperated, she asked, "What are you doing?" He replied, "The next best thing."

Fast-forward 20 years, and although I am not in my 70s, and still have

plenty of spring in my step, I am no spring chicken. I now appreciate fully doing the next best thing. As much as I adore gardening and laboring in the landscape, I have to be more careful and diligent to avoid injuries, aches, pains, bruises, falls and insect bites. The season has barely begun and I've already endured two tick bites, numerous cuts, and a splattering of slips down the slopes. Every rose bush and tree branch reaches out to hug me. Have you experienced similar mishaps in your garden?

How can we stay safe and work in our gardens at every age? Naturally, I have a few tips:

1. Avoid bending, twisting, and stooping by either sitting on the ground or using a stool or chair to pull weeds and do light tilling. I use a pad to sit on the ground, then, scoot around to do my chores. It saves my back from BLT (bending, lifting, twisting).
2. Wear long sleeve shirts and long trousers. This one is hard for me because I come from a long line of bikini gardeners. My preferred clothing when it's warm is to wear my bathing suit or tank top and shorts. Unfortunately, the scratches and bites multiply in this attire.

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If space is an issue, shelves of succulents are attractive.

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

The Next Best Thing



Pick dandelions from an organic lawn and add to salads.

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3. Spray DEET or other bug spray on your clothing and wear a scarf and gloves to deter the biters. I have purchased scarves, shirts, socks, and leggings from Insect Shield (www.insectshield.com) with a technology that was originally developed to protect the United States Military. Their process binds a proprietary permethrin formula tightly to fabric fibers—resulting in effective, odorless insect protection that lasts through seventy-two washings. It repels ticks, mosquitoes, ants, flies, and more. And it

works! When I don't wear it, I fall prey.

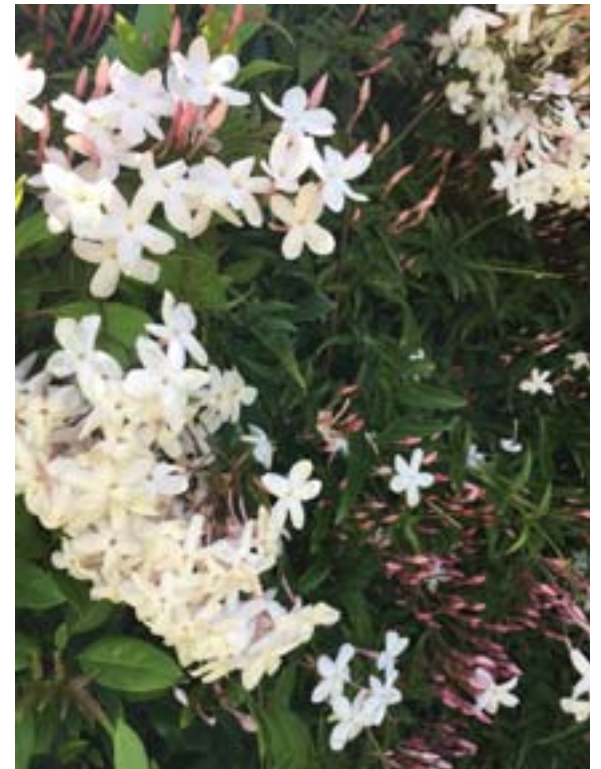
4. Paint tool handles a bright color. When my hand clipper fell out of its holster into my lush ground cover, the bright red handles were easily discoverable.

5. Buy a box of surgical gloves to wear under your regular gardening gloves. I love the feel of the dirt and the plants, which means I am always removing my gardening gloves. The surgical gloves provide protection and I can still feel my way around.

6. Invest in a pair of good boots with durable, nonslip soles. Use your clogs for simple things like watering, but for the heavy tasks, boots are the answer. On our ranch boots are the required footwear as rattlesnakes may be lurking in the grass. Plus balance is increased with sturdy footwear.

7. Grow vegetables and flowers in raised beds. Besides easier harvesting, when you design your raised beds with tough meshed wire underneath, you'll keep the rodents, rabbits, and other diggers out of your precious treasures.

8. Make paths wider. When I first created my stairways and walkways, they were a narrow 30 inches. I have now redesigned them to be more open, up to four feet wide, allowing me to maneuver easily with my myriad tools and plants.



Photos Cynthia Brian

Jasmine perfumes the air and is a great climber.

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Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Guide for May

CHECK irrigation system for leaks or broken heads. Make sure to test your lawn sprinklers, which could be buried by newly growing grass.

WATER lawns infrequently yet deeply to maintain green space.

BEE CAREFUL as bees are busy pollinating.

WATCH out for gophers, moles, voles and other burrowing pests.

AERATE your lawn allowing oxygen and water to penetrate roots.

CONTINUE to collect and discard fallen camellia blooms until your bush or tree has stopped blooming.

BAIT for snails and slugs.

INHALE the sweet scents of jasmine and roses in full bloom.

EMPTY the water from all containers. Change birdbaths often to keep mosquito larvae from developing.

PRESCRIBE parks instead of pills. Get outside every day in nature.

PLANT deer resistant bearded iris rhizomes in sunny spots for perennial flowering in spring and fall. They will multiply to allow you to divide and replant elsewhere,

COLLECT dandelion leaves daily from your pesticide-free lawn or garden to add tang to salads and soups.

ADD waterwise succulents to your garden environment.

SPRAY crape myrtles and roses for mildew.

Thank you to everyone who sent comments and compliments about my article on Firescaping. I am happy it is beneficial. If you missed it, you can read it at www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1305/Digging-Deep-with-Cynthia-Brian-for-May-FireScaping.html

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



A hillside of purple bearded iris and California poppies.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Camellias and Chinese fringe set a colorful stage.

... continued from Page D17

9. Sport a wide-brimmed hat and an apron with pockets. My straw fire hat keeps the tree leaves out of my hair and my cooking apron keeps my clothes from becoming tattered while allowing me to store my bottle of water in a pocket for rapid rehydrating. A bottle of sunscreen resides in a side pouch for reapplication during my time outdoors.

10. Know when to ask for help. In my youth, I prided myself on doing everything myself from chopping wood to building stairs up or down steep hillsides to digging trenches for irrigation pipes and carrying hundreds of pounds of rock to create dry riverbeds. Now I'm wiser and ask for assistance with heavy jobs that could present a safety hazard for me.

Gardening enriches our lives in every way. We become physically stronger, mentally more acute, and definitely less stressed. I lose track of time when I'm gardening and a cascade of ideas for various enterprises floods my brain. The bottom line is that being in nature is mandatory for our pleasure and health of body, mind, and spirit. The sounds, smells, and sights of the natural world are soothing and enhance appreciation for life.

Hopefully, like Ann's Dad, I, too, will be found face down with a trowel in hand under a tree digging in my 70s, 80s, 90s, and beyond. Whatever it takes to supplement your abilities, here's permission to do the next best thing!



Cynthia Brian at sunset amidst the roses and bottle brush.

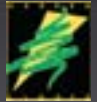
Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com.

Buy a copy of her books, *Growing with the Goddess Gardener*, *Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul*, and *Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers* at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Hire Cynthia for projects, consults, and lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com
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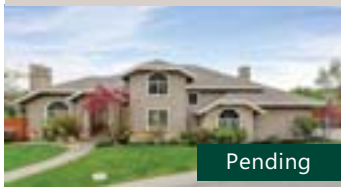


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Gorgeous home with classic character and stylish open floor plan. Ideal for entertaining.

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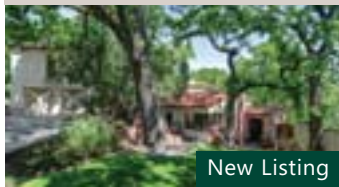
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121 Oak Road

Beautiful high ceilings, hardwood floors, natural sunlight, spectacular views, pool & outdoor space.

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Restored classic Spanish style home with Carmel by the Sea ambience.

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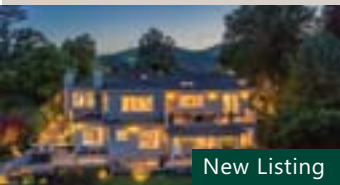
New Listing

26 Via Hermosa

Scenic property located on ideal knoll top setting! Over 4000 SqFt of living, views, prime double lot.

\$1,995,000

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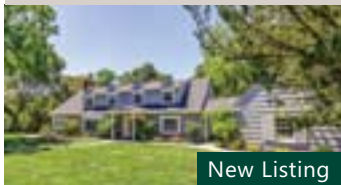
New Listing

11 Crestview Court

Bold modern Mediterranean inspired villa. Ideal for privacy and luxury. Open floor plan, views.

\$2,100,000

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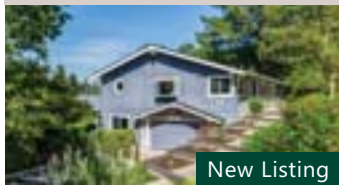
New Listing

383 Miner Road

East Coast meets West Coast! Orinda Country Club Cape Cod home on 1.32 acres, updated.

\$2,695,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3620 Cerrito Court

Stunning 4 bed/ 3 bath contemporary! Walk to town cul-de-sac, views, updated throughout.

\$1,489,000

MORAGA



100 Oxford Drive

Single story 4 bed/2 bath rancher with hardwood floors, new light fixtures and timeless finishes.

\$1,195,000

MORAGA



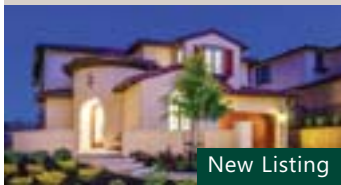
Pending

60 Wandel Drive

Beautifully remodeled 4 bed/2 bath home at end of cul-de-sac. Private yard, close to town/trails.

\$1,495,000

MORAGA



New Listing

218 Willowbrook Lane

Beautifully designed 4 bed/ 4.5 bath. Dramatic entry, vaulted ceilings, hardwood floors.

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WALNUT CREEK



212 Ludell Drive

Fabulous 4 bed/2 bath. Sparkling kitchen, hardwood floors, great yard! Adjoins Iron Horse Trail!

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114 Stonehurst Court

Stunning Alhambra Valley home with 360 degree unobstructed views of Mt. Diablo.

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