

Hacienda's kitchen walls depict works of art



Teresa Onoda stands proudly beside her pear tree Photos Vera Kochan

By Vera Kochan

You'd be hard pressed to find anyone living in Moraga who hasn't at one time or another visited the Hacienda de Las Flores. However, how many folks can say that they've actually been inside the kitchen? What stands out the most are the beautifully painted tiles decorating the walls and making anyone's cooking for an army, or pot scrubbing experience, quite a bit more cheerful.

It all began between 2002-03, when the Moraga Park Foundation was gifted a generous monetary donation, with the stipulation that the money be spent on upgrading the Hacienda. Under Board Member Judy Dinkle's supervision, one of the projects tackled was the renovation of the kitchen. Her skills

with construction and remodeling made her the perfect person for the task at hand. Other Park Foundation members, Bob Reynolds and former president Chuck Treat, helped with the organization. However, the actual artwork adorning the tiles can be credited to Teresa Onoda (www.onodaart.com), current town council member and former Moraga mayor.

Onoda became involved in the project when word got out that the Park Foundation contacted some local artists for their ideas as to how the kitchen's tiles should be decorated. The tiles themselves came in earth tones, and Onoda's vision was to celebrate Moraga's values, open spaces and history. With that in mind, pears and scenes of Saint Mary's College cur-

rently grace the walls of the kitchen.

Unfortunately for Onoda, a contract was already awarded to artist Matt Palsa for the actual application of her artwork ideas onto the tiles. "It drove me crazy," she stated. "I used to teach ceramics and art. It was hard not to be more involved, but he stayed true to what I had planned."

Onoda's color schemes meshed with the earth-toned tiles by using various shades of orange for the pears and capturing the yellow hills of summer with green foliage surrounding SMC's buildings. "I came to the artist with my sketches which were in actual size and the colors that I had envisioned," she explained. "The tiles of Saint Mary's above the stove are from a painting I had done looking from Bella Vista."

Sketches weren't Onoda's only involvement, she worked with the artist in laying out where each of her "paintings" would be positioned around the kitchen. For example, her pears come in clusters of one, two or more, and they are aesthetically placed for maximum affect.

"We volunteers gave our talents to make the Hacienda so special," said Onoda. By the looks of the kitchen, it was a labor of love!



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