

# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 17 Issue 18 Wednesday, October 25, 2023



The Real Estate Quarter in Review ... read on Page OH4

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Rock solid

By Cynthia Brian



Succulents thrive tucked into crevices in rocks. Photos Cynthia Brian

*“River stones remain, while water flows away.” ~ Romanian Proverb*

Growing up on the farm, our home was surrounded on three sides by hills and a creek that flowed year-round. In the spring we enjoyed the emergence of pollywogs and watched them mature into frogs. In summer we hung ropes over the oaks to swing into the deeper pools. Knowing that winter storms would erode the banks, fall was the time to work in tandem with Mother Nature reinforcing the rock formations to ensure the stability of the land.

I still live surrounded by hills

and creeks. River rocks allow the rainwater to flow smoothly and sustainably during winter months while maintaining appealing dry creek beds in summer. By adding terracing and retaining walls, I’ve managed to reduce hillside run-off.

Recently I visited the garden of Victor R. whose home is backed by a running creek. After removing several decaying pine trees with deep roots that were holding the soil, he realized that his creek needed reinforcement. Rocks and stones are effective ways to buttress the banks of creeks, riverbeds, and hillsides, and Victor utilized them.



Riprapping with rocks keeps this stream from eroding the soil.

His rock retaining walls are enhanced with meandering paths, fruit trees, statuary, and flowering plants that provide erosion control and flood prevention.

If your property is flanked by a creek or resides on a hillside, there are various methods to make your landscape rock solid.

**Riprapping:** A common erosion control technique is called riprap which entails placing large rocks and stones along the banks. The rocks absorb and deflect the energy of the flowing water, reducing erosion.

**Gabions:** Wire mesh boxes or bas-

kets are filled with stones to stabilize slopes and creek banks as the water flows through them reducing flooding.

**Terracing:** On steep slopes, using rocks and stones for terracing reduces soil loss.

**Retaining Walls:** To prevent mudslides and flooding, retaining walls made of rocks are beautiful as well as effective.

**Rock Gardens:** Adding well-placed boulders in a garden creates an aesthetically pleasing landscape while also retaining soil stability.

... continued on Page OH6



**JUST LISTED | ORINDAWOODS | 114 RAVENHILL ROAD  
3 Bedrooms | 3 Bathrooms | \$1,750,000**

Prepare to be mesmerized by the panoramic views of the surrounding hills. As the fog gracefully rolls over the landscape, you can indulge in evening dinners on the wraparound deck or welcome the day with a warm cup of Joe as the glow of the morning sun highlights the surrounding hillside.

Step inside and experience the grandeur of this home. High ceilings and walls of glass create a dramatic living area that immerses you in natural light and the picturesque landscape beyond. Rich, cherry hardwoods grace the floors throughout most of the upper level and with a touch of a button you can effortlessly control the lighting and privacy with electric shades. These are just a few of the modern conveniences this impressive home has to offer.

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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	13	\$1,100,000	\$2,618,000
MORAGA	1	\$960,000	\$960,000
ORINDA	8	\$1,325,000	\$4,295,000

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

- 859 Acalanes Road, \$1,698,000, 3 Bdrms, 2495 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 09-14-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,380,000, 09-27-16
- 920 Brown Avenue, \$1,580,000, 2 Bdrms, 1343 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 09-12-23
- 18 Del Rio Court, \$1,295,000, 4 Bdrms, 1685 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 09-18-23,  
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 03-28-12
- 3145 Gloria Terrace, \$1,610,000, 4 Bdrms, 2417 SqFt, 1944 YrBlt, 09-18-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 12-19-17
- 1789 Ivanhoe Avenue, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 2148 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 09-13-23
- 865 Juanita Drive, \$1,855,000, 4 Bdrms, 2657 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 09-21-23
- 1244 Laurel Lane, \$1,785,000, 3 Bdrms, 1740 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 09-11-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,785,000, 03-03-21
- 2 Lois Lane, \$2,618,000, 3 Bdrms, 3498 SqFt, 2005 YrBlt, 09-18-23,  
Previous Sale: \$372,000, 11-13-03
- 4027 Mario Way, \$2,202,000, 5 Bdrms, 4572 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 09-12-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,995,000, 05-05-21
- 110 Peaceful Lane, \$1,860,000, 4 Bdrms, 2479 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 09-12-23
- 1155 Sierra Vista Way, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 09-21-23,  
Previous Sale: \$790,000, 11-10-04
- 1202 Vacation Drive, \$1,219,000, 3 Bdrms, 1243 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 09-12-23,  
Previous Sale: \$514,000, 12-12-11
- 3589 Walnut Street #E, \$1,100,000, 2 Bdrms, 1506 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 09-18-23,  
Previous Sale: \$640,000, 04-15-13

### MORAGA

- 1430 Camino Peral, \$960,000, 3 Bdrms, 1360 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-15-23

### ORINDA

- 44 Bates Boulevard, \$2,110,000, 3 Bdrms, 2060 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 09-22-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 03-20-17
- 367 Dalewood Drive, \$2,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2832 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 09-22-23,  
Previous Sale: \$2,565,000, 06-04-07
- 270 Holly Lane, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 3031 SqFt, 1981 YrBlt, 09-19-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 09-26-17
- 51 La Cuesta Road, \$1,875,000, 5 Bdrms, 3712 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 09-21-23
- 56 Oak Drive, \$1,350,000, 2 Bdrms, 2823 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 09-20-23
- 28 Southwaite Court, \$1,650,000, 3 Bdrms, 2780 SqFt, 1981 YrBlt, 09-22-23,  
Previous Sale: \$700,000, 07-11-02
- 248 The Knolls, \$1,325,000, 1 Bdrms, 1532 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 09-14-23,  
Previous Sale: \$375,000, 09-28-98
- 59 Tiger Tail Court, \$4,295,000, 5 Bdrms, 4640 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 09-13-23,  
Previous Sale: \$2,895,000, 06-04-08

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The information contained herein has been received from Vanguard Properties' clients, third parties and/or public records. Vanguard Properties has not verified the foregoing information and will not confirm the accuracy of same. Buyers are advised to investigate all information important to Buyers and to verify the accuracy of the representations contained herein.



# The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T

The third quarter of 2023, as expected, showed a significant slowing of the volume of closings on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate. This is mostly a result of the continued increase in mortgage rates over the last several months and a lack of supply.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from July 1 through Sept. 30, 66 single-family homes closed in Lafayette which was a decrease from the 85 in the year ago quarter and from the 120 that closed in the third quarter of 2021. In the quarter of 2020, 136 homes closed.

Sales prices ranged from \$830,000 to \$13.69 million. The average number of days on market was 26 versus the same period a year ago when it was 17. The average sales price was \$2,198,109, a decrease from the third quarter in 2022 when it was \$2,273,646. In 2021 it was \$2,067,747. In this same quarter in 2020 it was \$1,972,380. In 2019 it was \$1,716,517.

In Moraga, the number of single-family closings was 22, versus a year ago at 25 – a big drop from the 53 in 3Q2021. Prices ranged from \$1.4 million to \$3.55 million. The average sales price was up at \$2,094,182. This was an increase from \$1,890,272 a year ago. In 2021 it was \$1,993,792. In 2020 it was \$1,588,132 in the same three-month period. In 2019 it was \$1,443,253. The average marketing time was 15 days, down from 18 days a year ago.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings continued to fall to 48 from 56 a year ago – more than half as many as the 111 in 3Q2021. Sales prices ranged from \$1.15 million to \$4.295 million with an average price of \$2,265,458 – close to 3Q2022 when it was \$2,243,571, continuing to rise from the \$2,147,497 in 2021. It was \$1,900,069 in 3Q2020 and \$1,651,117 in 3Q2019. It took an average of 20 days to expose a home to the market this last quarter. One year ago, it took 19 days.

In the third quarter of this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$835.79. This is a decrease from \$897.11 a year ago. Moraga homes sold for \$822.43, a slight increase from a year ago at \$817.63. In

Orinda it was \$821.29, an increase from summer 2022 when it was \$781.02.

The biggest change came in the area of list price versus sales price. In Lafayette, the average sales price was at 102% of the final asking price in this quarter of 2023. In Moraga, it was also about 102% of asking, and in Orinda it was just under 102%.

This is likely a factor of sellers realizing that they needed to be more realistic in pricing and buyers understanding that there were fewer buyers to compete with so they were not as aggressive in their offers.

On the Oakland/Berkeley side of the hills, many agents have still been asking far below the market value of homes in order to generate the multiple offers and the sales prices well above asking. Often this has failed to work so they raise the asking price and call the list price “Transparent.” This phenomenon (sometimes known as “Teaser Pricing”) has started to slow down in Lamorinda.

In Lafayette, 40 of the 66 sales sold at or above their final asking price. A year ago, it was 45 of the 85. In Moraga, 16 of the 22 sold at or above asking. A year ago, 15 of the 25 sold at or above asking and in Orinda it was 28 of 48 versus 35 of 56 in the third quarter of 2022.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 10 resale closings. They were priced from \$581,784 to \$2,144,672. Moraga had 17, up from 15 a year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$425,000 to \$1.8 million. Orinda had two sales at \$1.325 million and \$1.85 million.

As of Oct. 6, there were 50 pending sales in the three communities combined. A year ago, there were 56 pending sales per the MLS. The asking prices for the pending single family detached homes range from \$899,000 to \$4.4 million. It should be pointed out that there are no “Potential Short Sales” or foreclosures that are currently pending although this trend may change.

It is interesting to note that of the 56 pending sales in the area, 11 received acceptable offers in the first six days of October. That is an average of almost two per day. Usually many of the sales are completed prior to the start of school. Depending upon

how many of the homes are being purchased by families with children who are new to Lamorinda, it may impact certain grades at the elementary level.

Inventory, however, is fluctuating. When looking at the available homes in Lafayette there are 36 homes on the market as of Oct. 6 and there were 57 at this time one year ago.

In Moraga buyers have their choice of only 20 properties, consistent with the 18 properties a year ago.

Orinda inventory has decreased to 23 currently available from 45 one year ago.

Current asking prices range from \$519,441 for a BMR (Below Market Rate) condo in Lafayette to \$12.9 million for a Lafayette property.

At the high end, 17 homes closed above \$3 million in the three communities combined during the quarter – down from 22 one year ago.

There are 19 currently available above this amount, while a year ago there were 25.

The increase in interest rates that were at historical lows have forced some people out of the market as affordability has decreased.

You also have a lot of homeowners who refinanced when rates were very low that are reluctant to sell their homes because they do not want to have to give up this “cheap money” that they may have at 3% or less to go and buy something and have to pay 7% or more. This will help limit supply.

And, some buyers are in the market to buy anything, regardless of the interest rates. They feel that if rates fall, two things will happen...more buyers will be back in the buyer pool and if rates go down, they will just refinance again.

We are still seeing Oakland, San Francisco and Peninsula agents representing buyers in their purchase of Lamorinda homes. They are coming from higher priced areas and have more available equity to use in Lamorinda.

Corporate relocation has also increased as more workers who were working remotely from their old locations are now moving to work in the destination offices.

# A Happy Valley Playground on Double Lot



3943 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette

Listed for \$10,995,000

This retreat sits on a dual lot at the end of a private drive, a world away from life's cares. The principal lot (3941 HV Rd) is 2.3 acres, adjoining the undeveloped second lot (3943, .98 acre), now a garden, which can be preserved as open space or developed or sold separately. It offers entertainment for those of any age and so much more!

Call Ann for a private showing.



**Ann Newton Cane**

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Golden Gate

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## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for Mid-October

- **BOOST** your levels of vitamin C before flu and cold season begins by brewing a homegrown rose hip, sage, and peppercorn tea. Pick ripe red rose hips from your rose bushes and red peppercorns from your pepper tree. Smash or grind and add to a teapot with shaved ginger, lemon rind, lemon juice, sage leaves, and honey. Peppery and delicious, hot or iced. Substitute garlic for the honey for a zesty herbal broth yummy with steamed vegetables.
- **AVOID** pruning hydrangeas that bloom on old wood as you won't have flowers the following year or more.
- **FERTILIZE** and aerate lawns this month.
- **PRUNE** shrubs and overgrown branches.
- **CLEAR** gutters and drainage lines of leaves and debris.
- **PROVIDE** food and water for migrating birds.
- **PLANT** cool season vegetables including kale, lettuce, arugula, and broccoli.
- **PROTECT** sensitive plants by covering them with burlap or bringing them indoors.
- **APPLY** a layer of mulch to garden beds to retain moisture and regulate soil temperature.
- **FILL** cracks in the driveway or garden paths to prevent further cracking.
- **APPLY** snail bait around plants susceptible to snail and slug damage.
- **TREAT** for aphids with a spray of water mixed with dishwashing detergent.
- **RAKE** fallen leaves to add to the compost pile or make a mulch.
- **GREEN TOMATOES?** Here's a tip for rapid ripening from reader Sally F. "In late fall, cut tomato vine at the base and hang upside down in a dry place, such as a garage or shed, with newspaper or cardboard underneath to catch any falling tomatoes. Tomatoes will ripen from the nearest stem base."
- **CARVE** your pumpkins, light the Jack-o'-lanterns, weave your webs, and decorate your yard with skeletons, ghosts, and scarecrows.

Happy Gardening! Happy Growing. Happy Halloween!

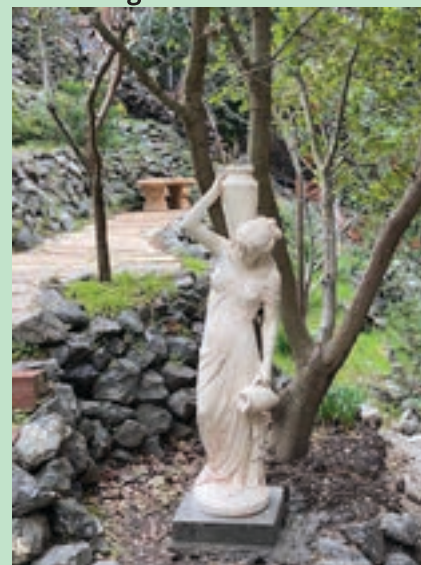
Photos Cynthia Brian



Yellow seaside ice plant grows in sand and gravel.



White lantana spills over a rock wall flower bed.



Terracing with rocks, Victor placed a statue Cynthia calls, The Water Bearer, along the stone pathway at the base of the creek.



Place a few significant rocks appropriately with plants or grasses to instill interest.



Rocks and stones anchor this spectacular waterfall and pool.

*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## Rock solid

... continued from Page OH1

**Pathways:** For improved accessibility that adds a much-wanted decorative element to the environment, add pathways with stepping stones along creek banks and hillsides.

**Habitat:** Strategically placed rocks in creeks create habitats and shelters for pollywogs, frogs, turtles, fish, salamanders, and other aquatic species. On hillsides, rocks provide hiding places for terrestrial wildlife.

Before embarking on any erosion plan for your creek or hillside, consult with experts and local authorities to ensure the correct methods for your project. You want the result to be environmentally friendly and ecologically effective. Local regulations and permits may be required, especially when working with bodies of water or hillside landslide areas. Once you've completed the rock work, make sure to add plenty of plants to complete the design and make the area aesthetically pleasing.



Cynthia Brian with her newest children's book, *Family Forever*. Proceeds benefit *Be the Star You Are!*® charity.

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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 *StarStyle*® Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Her newest children's picture book, *Family Forever*, from the series, *Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures* is available now at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com>

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# LAMORINDA'S LEADING INDEPENDENT REAL ESTATE FIRM

## ORINDA



### 41 La Noria

Top quality 5 bd/ 4 ba home around the corner from OCC w/ an incredible layout & magical spaces indoor & out!

**\$3,795,000**

## ORINDA



### 2 Stanton Court

This open concept 4 bd/ 3 ba home feels like a brand-new build! Bright & airy w/ 2782 SF, chef's kitchen, wood oak floors & a detached office!

**\$2,250,000**

## ORINDA



### 51 Las Palomas

A light-filled home on a sun-drenched lot features 4 bd/2 ba, a glistening pool & expansive views in the hills of OCC!

**\$1,480,000**

## ORINDA



Lease!

### 102 Camino Don Miguel

Old World charm in a 1937 Orinda hacienda, updated w/ a chef's kitchen, wood floors throughout, private office & an open floorplan!

**\$9,800/mo.**

## LAFAYETTE



### 3445 Shangri-La Road

Desirable Reliez Valley neighborhood offers amazing privacy, stunning views, beautiful architecture on an almost 1 acre lot!

**\$1,999,000**

## LAFAYETTE



Lease!

### 3152 Maryola Court

3 bd/ 2.5 ba rancher located near town/trails/freeway w/ bonus room downstairs & additional sun room!

**\$5,850/mo.**

## MORAGA



New Lease!

### 56 Wandel Drive

This single level home features 4 bds/2.5 ba and 2,178 square feet plus a bonus office space in the garage!

**\$6,000/mo.**

## MORAGA



New Price!

### 1944 Ascot Drive

Amazing 2 bd/ 1.5 bd 1234 sqft Moraga townhome w/ views of the hills from the upper & lower decks!

**\$3,200/mo.**

## PLEASANT HILL



### 550 Odin Drive

Single level 4 bd/ 2 ba rancher has a great floor plan w/ wonderful indoor/outdoor flow!

**\$975,000**

## WALNUT CREEK



Lease!

### 1655 N California, #312

Beautiful 1 bd + den/ 1.5 ba condo with modern finishes in the highly sought after Mercer building in downtown Walnut Creek!

**\$3,500/mo.**

## OAKLAND



### 2014 13th Avenue

This single family home features 5 bd/ 3 ba, laminate floors & plenty of room to entertain family & friends!

**\$595,000**

## BERKELEY



### 1409A Spruce Street

Beautifully refreshed & filled with light! 1bd/1ba unit is quiet & private yet close to UC, shops, transportation & parks!

**\$589,000**

## The Village Associates:

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Shannon Conner  
Meara Dunsmore

Linda Ehrich  
Emily Estrada

Joan Evans

Linda Friedman

Liz Gallagher

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Ari Hatton

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