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Happy New Year!

Wishing all of my clients, friends and neighbors great health, prosperity and enduring happiness in 2024!

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August and Ivy Salon is thriving in Theatre Square

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Matt Valenzuela

Lily Fortson (front) and Chelsea Salezo work with clients.

August and Ivy Salon Co-owners Lily Fortson and Chelsea Salezo moved to

Orinda Theatre Square last January, charmed by the location, which felt

quaint and perfect to them. They relied on sweat equity to remodel the space, calling in family members to help with everything from paint to lighting, making the remodel a whole family project. And the long narrow space seems perfect for the stations in the salon.

Previously Fortson and Salezo had worked together for eight years in a salon in Martinez before deciding that a new salon was something that Orinda really needed. Fortson lives in

Walnut Creek and Salezo in Brentwood, which is their hometown.

The co-owners have recently hired an additional three stylists, making five in all. Fortson notes that the salon is unique because the stylists are educated and well versed in every type of hair style. They don't aim to serve a single audience, they're not just for hip young girls, but can do little pixie cuts, men's haircuts.

However, those hip young girls will probably realize that the salon is

named for two songs by Taylor Swift, who swept the country with her Eras Tour this year. "We're both big Swifties," Fortson confessed. They wanted a name that was nice and natural. Also, they thought that they would open in August of 2022 but the permitting process took longer. We had a vision, and it took a lot of hope and trust.

Fortson reported that the salon gets amazing foot traffic, and is grateful for how supportive the community of Orinda has been. As the salon is

developing a roster of regulars, Fortson says, "the community wants it. The people of Orinda are really loving having a salon just down the street. I didn't expect it to be such a big deal, but they are really happy." She added that some customers can even walk to the salon.

In the coming year, the co-owners will be focusing on being more in the community. They recently joined the chamber of commerce, and hosted a mixer at the salon on Dec. 14.

New owners at Serika, Theatre Square

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Chef Max Purevdorj and his wife Tuya Oyuntuya at their restaurant, Serika, in Theatre Square.

Chef Max Purevdorj and his wife Tuya Oyuntuya have taken over the Japanese restaurant Serika in Theatre Square. Although the name remains the same, Purevdorj has completely changed the menu and brought in a whole new crew since taking over last August. Purevdorj, a chef for some 20 years, last worked for 16 years at the highly rated Ozumo Japanese restaurant in San Francisco, while his wife spent 15 years

working at Domo Sushi, also in San Francisco.

Serika is the first restaurant that Purevdorj and Oyuntuya have owned, and Oyuntuya reports that things are going great for them in Theatre Square. Under Purevdorj, Serika spe-

cializes in fresh fish. Their fish is hand-picked from their vendors for top quality.

Serika is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner. Diners may eat at the restaurant or order online and pick up food to go.

Free gutter covering available to residents of Orinda and Moraga



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The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors on Nov. 15 approved a continuation of the home hardening grant program. MOFD received a new shipment of "Gutterglove-Leafblaster Pro" gutter covering just in time for the rainy season. These stainless-steel guards are designed to minimize the accumulation of leaves and debris

that will become combustible material in the dry months. Having gutter coverings can protect your home from damage due to flying embers in the fire season. They will also help prevent your gutters from clogging with leaves and reduce the need for maintenance during the rainy season.

The material will be

distributed from the MOFD Fire Station 41, 1284 Moraga Road on Fridays, Jan. 12 and 26 from 3 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays, Jan. 13 and 27 from 10 a.m. to noon.

Please do not apply if you cannot pick up the material on one of these days. Unfortunately, MOFD staff and volunteers are only available to distribute the materials on the days and times listed.

Information and an online tool to determine the quantity of material you will need, installation instructions, material specifications, and how to contact a contractor to complete your installation are available online at www.leafblaster.com/moraga-orinda/. District residents can receive this material at no charge by completing the

request available online at <https://forms.gle/qzJ4hsQ29sfxQhFr8>.

- S. O'Doherty

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