

# Lamorinda

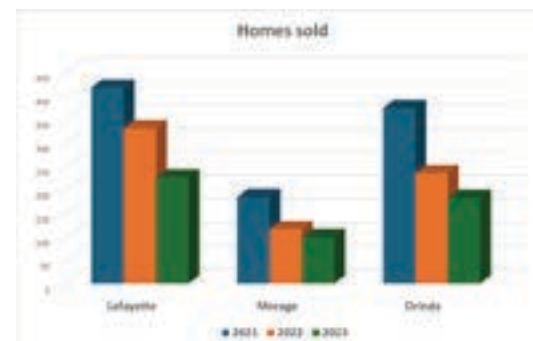
# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly

Volume 17

Issue 24

Wednesday, January 17, 2024



The Real Estate Quarter in Review

... read on Page OH5

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### 2024 Garden Trends Part 2

By Cynthia Brian



Photos Cynthia Brian

January jonquils perfume the garden with their sweet scent.

*"Sometimes in the winds of change, we find our true direction." ~ Source Unknown*

Thus far, January has indeed been a windy month. Optimism is my true direction.

The vernal equinox is still two months away, yet my jonquils are already perfuming my landscape. Daffodils are a symbol of rebirth and usually begin to bloom in March. All jonquils are daffodils (*Narcissus jonquilla*), yet not all daffodils are jonquils. Since winter is my least favorite season, my optimism soars as I stroll through my garden witnessing these adaptable narcissi stretching their yellow and cream petals to the sky whilst most of my garden sleeps.

My bright pink *Bergenia* with large, glossy leaves that resemble elephant ears has been blooming for over a month, lining the edges of beds in front of the privets and along the lawn. I count on *Bergenia* to brighten the garden throughout the drabness of winter. *Bergenia* is easy to propagate by dividing the roots. *Bergenia*'s unflattering name is "pig squeak" because of the sound the leaves make when rubbed together.

The 2024 Garden Media Garden Trends Report shares information to enhance garden customer experiences and shape winning new products. The theme for 2024 is Eco-Optimism. The growing awareness of our global climate's volatility has increased the number of people planting for pollinators. Without birds, butterflies, bats, bees, and other pollinators, we wouldn't have the foods, medicines, beverages, or spices that we need for healthy living. Since pollinator populations have been declining, we must plant to improve their habitat, refrain from using pesticides, and explore methods to be organic. Since 2019, the number of people purchasing native plants has doubled. Native plants are specimens that are region-specific, and adaptable to the soil and climate where they naturally grow.

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Pink *Bergenia* brightens the bottom of the privet bed.

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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	13	\$1,174,000	\$4,581,000
MORAGA	6	\$490,000	\$2,020,000
ORINDA	11	\$700,000	\$2,975,000

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**

- 3351 Betty Lane, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1633 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-15-23
- 916 Brown Avenue, \$1,174,000, 2 Bdrms, 1343 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 11-30-23
- 933 Diablo Drive, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1619 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 12-05-23,  
Previous Sale: \$890,000, 02-17-15
- 3523 Eagle Point Road, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2399 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 11-20-23
- 26 Hidden Valley Road, \$2,060,000, 3 Bdrms, 2180 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-01-23
- 3368 Las Huertas Road, \$3,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3537 SqFt,  
1964 YrBlt, 11-20-23, Previous Sale: \$4,825,000, 02-18-22
- 3963 Los Arabis Drive, \$4,581,000, 3 Bdrms, 2185 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt,  
12-08-23, Previous Sale: \$2,155,000, 12-24-20
- 1141 North Thompson Road, \$1,485,000, 2 Bdrms, 1276 SqFt,  
1971 YrBlt, 11-22-23, Previous Sale: \$1,007,000, 01-27-23
- 3445 Shangri La Road, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3596 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-12-23
- 1025 Silverhill Drive, \$2,584,000, 4 Bdrms, 4196 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 12-05-23,  
Previous Sale: \$1,950,000, 03-24-23
- 88 Silverwood Drive, \$2,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 2998 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-01-23
- 1098 North Thompson Road, \$1,396,000, 5 Bdrms, 2504 SqFt,  
1965 YrBlt, 12-11-23, Previous Sale: \$110,000, 06-01-78
- 95 Woodbury Highlands Court #23, \$1,604,000, 3 Bdrms, 1904 SqFt,  
2022 YrBlt, 12-15-23

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## 5 questions to consider about where to live in retirement

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson



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Where to live in retirement? That is either a challenging question or one that has not been contemplated fully. I hear from many people of all ages that they are concerned about this aspect of their own aging or that of a parent. The good news is there are now many more options for where to live in retirement; the downside is this array of choices can actually cause some of us to procrastinate in thinking the question out realistically.

What does one do to be prepared for the long lives we all hope to have? I have 5 questions along with options for you to ponder as you look at the New Year!

**1) What do you or your family member value? What gives your life meaning?** The answer to this question is going to help you make a decision about where to live in retirement. Your desires, wishes, and/or needs should lead you. You want to keep some elements of your answer to this question in the decision. For example, even if you can no longer sail, can you get to a marina and watch the activities?

**2) What are your health needs or that of your family member?** Do you have any progressive issues you need to prepare for? For exam-

ple, do you have arthritis or any mobility challenges? Do you or your family member have any issues with memory? If not, are you continuing a healthy lifestyle—maintaining a heart healthy diet, exercise, social engagement, good sleep, and a positive attitude? You will also need to look at options for the possible “what ifs.”

**3) Does your or your parent's existing living environment address all those suggestions for healthy aging in question two?** Is the environment conducive for progressive issues, and can you continue with your socialization if you cannot drive? Are you able to afford and find help should you need it to age in place? A consultation with an Aging Life Care Expert could help you with the answers to this question.

**4) What about your or your family member's finances?** This is a very important question to answer in order to help you decide the type of retirement living that will best meet your needs. Your answer might include more than one option. For example, you might decide to stay in your own home until X or Y happens.

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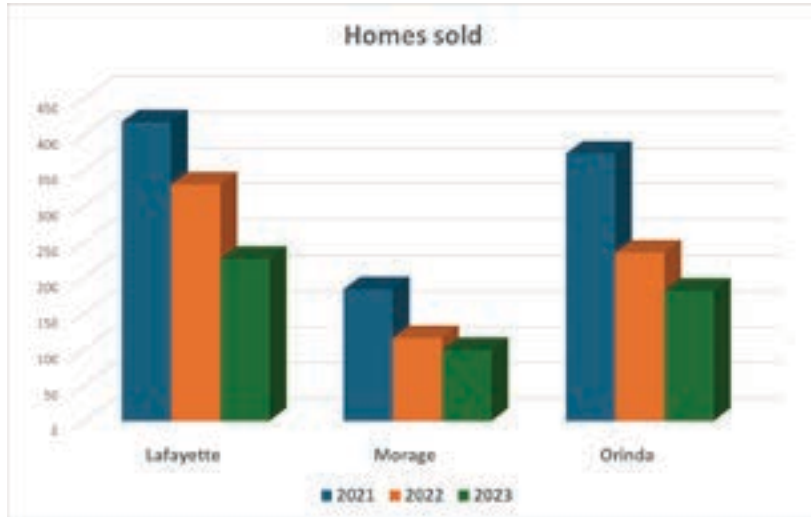
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# The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett, Licensed Real Estate Broker and CRP, GMS-T



It was an interesting year for buyers and sellers of residential real estate during 2023 in Lamorinda. The higher interest rates as well as a lack of supply kept the number of transactions down for the year. Sales volume was much lower in each community and the average sales price in each community moderated somewhat.

Homes stayed on the market for a similar limited time like in 2022 and 2023 and the majority of homes still sold near or above their final asking price.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2023, 226 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 330 in 2022 and 417 in 2021. For the 226 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$750,000 to \$13.69 million and the average time on market was 24 days, up from the 17 days in 2022.

The average Lafayette sales price was \$2,230,387. This was a large decrease from the \$2,456,834 in 2022. It was \$2,124,266 in 2021. (It was \$1,248,532 in 2013.)

The average sales price was just over 100% of the final list

price which in 2023 was \$2,218,569. This comes from a combination of properties being listed at or near actual values rather than in the past years where many were listed well below value in order to hopefully promote a "bidding war." There were no REO or short sales in Lafayette sold on the MLS.

Only four homes closed below \$1 million ... there were seven in 2022.

In Moraga there were 99 single family closings in 2023. There were 116 in 2022 and 184 single family closings in 2021. Prices ranged from \$1.3 million to \$4 million. The average sales price was \$2,029,624, down from \$2,214,037 in 2022. In 2021 it was \$1,926,353. The 2013 average was \$1,147,207.

The average number of days on market in 2023 was 18. In 2022 it was 12. The average home sold for 103% of its asking price. The average list price was \$1,968,099. There were no REO properties that closed on the MLS and no short sales.

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Tom Stack  
REAL ESTATE



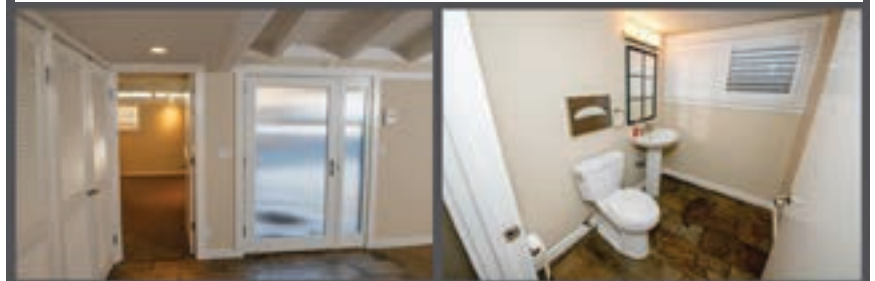
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# The Real Estate Year in Review

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In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 182. A year ago it was 235. In 2021 there were 373 closings. The reported sales ranged in price from \$700,000 to \$4.295 million with an average price of \$2,091,048. In 2022 it was \$2,291,847 and in 2021 it was \$2,187,385. In 2013 it was \$1,240,158.

The average market time was 23 days – about the same as the 22 days a year ago.

The average sales price was an average of 102% of the final list price. A year ago, it was 106.4% of the final list price for the reported sales. There was one REO (bank owned) sale in Orinda in 2023 and one short sale in the MLS.

There were no reported sales in Canyon in the MLS in 2023.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2023, Lafayette homes sold for \$832.06, well below the \$945.10 in 2022.

In 2023, Moraga homes sold for \$842.26 per square foot. In 2022 it was \$872.73 and in 2021 it was \$775.04 per square foot.

In Orinda last year it was \$807.87. In 2022 it was \$862.26. In 2021 it was \$797.26.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 30 closings – down from 34 closings in 2022. Sales prices ranged in 2023 from \$581,784 to \$2.675 million. Moraga had 54 closed non-single-family closings in 2023. In 2022 there were 81 closed units – down from the 118 in 2021. Sales ranged from \$410,000 to \$1.8 million. This includes “attached” homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had eight closings, down from 16 in 2022. Three of these were in the complexes on Brookwood Road and the others in Orindawoods. They sold from \$515,000 to \$2.275 million.

It should be noted that there are always a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These are usually sales between private individuals.

As of Jan. 8, there were only 27 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$609,000 to \$4 million. It should be pointed out that there are no pending REOs or short sales. Prices have continued to rise over the last few years and more owners now have equity in their homes and have not had to go the short-sale process or face foreclosure.

A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined shows 28 homes on the market. Last January there were 38 homes on the market. Seasonally the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer. The current asking prices range from \$470,000 to nearly \$5.9 million in the three communities combined.

In Lamorinda in 2022, 118 homes sold for over \$3 million. This number dropped to 66 in 2023! In Lafayette alone, 63 sold for \$3 million or more in 2022; it fell to 38 last year.

Mortgage rates have moderated somewhat in the last month or so but are still above historic lows. Corporate relocations have increased as many companies want their staff to be in their destination offices rather than working remotely from their departure locations. We have not seen many outbound relocations for people working for companies who have announced that their corporate headquarters will be moving out of the state.

One other factor that will continue to affect the markets will be the reluctance of those who financed or refinanced at a rate below 3% to want to make discretionary moves and pay rates of twice as much as they have today. This will limit supply.

The East Bay communities like Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda as well as Piedmont and several neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley continue to benefit from their proximity to San Francisco where prices remain very high but have also started to moderate.

Comparably speaking, the East Bay is still relatively more affordable and many of the buyers in the East Bay have come from the Peninsula and Silicon Valley and San Francisco.

## Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page OH2

### MORAGA

1967 Ascot Drive #A, \$490,000, 2 Bdrms, 964 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-06-23,

Previous Sale: \$310,000, 10-28-14

81 Ashbrook Place, \$1,935,000, 3 Bdrms, 3055 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 12-15-23

1026 Larch Avenue, \$2,020,000, 5 Bdrms, 2711 SqFt, 1995 YrBlt, 11-21-23

1290 Larch Avenue, \$1,875,000, 3 Bdrms, 2169 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 07-12-23

1874 School Street, \$1,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 2638 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 12-12-23

820 Villa Lane #4, \$525,000, 2 Bdrms, 882 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 12-13-23,

Previous Sale: \$96,000, 11-01-85

### ORINDA

70 Citron Knolls, \$1,740,000, 5 Bdrms, 2666 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 12-07-23

228 El Toyonal, \$1,121,500, 3 Bdrms, 1445 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 11-30-23

34 La Campana Road, \$1,010,000, 3 Bdrms, 1476 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-12-23

51 Las Palomas, \$1,375,000, 4 Bdrms, 2124 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-11-23

7 Los Amigos, \$700,000, 2 Bdrms, 1591 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-04-23

7 Oak Flat Road, \$2,975,000, 4 Bdrms, 3891 SqFt, 2020 YrBlt, 12-08-23,

Previous Sale: \$217,000, 07-01-89

58 Orchard Road, \$2,011,000, 4 Bdrms, 3950 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-28-23

1 Poco Paseo, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 1554 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 11-22-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,165,100, 06-21-18

44 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 1404 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-08-23

48 Singingwood Lane, \$2,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2854 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 11-28-23,

Previous Sale: \$2,005,000, 06-01-15

324 Tappan Terrace, \$1,960,000, 3 Bdrms, 3592 SqFt, 1982 YrBlt, 12-08-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,878,000, 07-10-19



# 5 questions to consider about where to live in retirement

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

... continued from Page OH4

But that “X” could change – we do not have a crystal ball. So, consult with your financial planner or estate attorney and talk about this sensitive but important issue. Assisted living is averaging around \$6,000+ monthly without any additional services. Home care averages around \$40 per hour. The New York Times did a recent series on the cost of care called Dying Broke; this is a revelation for us all.

## 5) Have you looked at the current options available?

Many communities have senior housing that provides rental units for those over 55 years of age; these usually don’t offer any support systems except for socialization. Then there are senior communities like Rossmoor in Walnut Creek that have lots of activities and security; however, you purchase them like a home and still have a monthly expense to the community.

Assisted Living Communities can accommodate independent seniors, as well as those that might need some level of assistance, including “memory care.” This option can often be good for couples that have different needs but want to stay close to their partners. You must ask good questions about all the different levels of care. It’s a good idea to tour at least three and choose one you like, even if you plan to stay in your home – because life happens, and it is good to have an idea of places you like if you cannot stay in your home for any reason.

Continuing Care Retirement Communities are appealing to healthy seniors without family and couples who no longer want to maintain a home and garden. You pay a very large purchase price for your unit, plus a monthly fee that covers meals, cleaning, and the amenities of a large community. Many offer you all levels of care including skilled nursing and some only to the level of “memory care”. For solo seniors, this is often a good choice if you have the financial means because you have secured for yourself a place to age with support systems that often prevent moves.

Staying in your own home with maybe just some community support systems may be an option when choosing where to live in retirement. Perhaps your area has a local senior center. Maybe there is a nearby “village” you can join; these are organizations that for a low membership fee provide free volunteer services, socialization and educational opportunities, and much more (for instance Lamorinda Village).

Small residential homes for six persons are an option for very frail seniors, and most individuals have lived in other levels of care before this is their best choice. The setting is very homey and comfortable, but there is a lack of the programming and social stimulation provided by larger Assisted Living Communities.

There are other choices in senior housing, like “co-housing”. This option is a purchased small home/condo with a common community room and individuals provide some support and common meals for one another.

There are low-income senior housing apartments that are a good option for low- and middle-income seniors. The wait list is typically quite long, but if this is something you or a family member would like, get on the lists sooner rather than later. You can call senior information in California at 1-800-510-2020 and ask for a list of these facilities in your area.

As you can see from these five questions above, a lot goes into choosing the right environment for each individual or couple. Your choice should be made with eyes wide open to the realities of what can be provided, the cost, and how they match your values and wishes for aging well.

My book, “The Empowered Caregiver: Practical Advice and Emotional Support for Adult Children of Older Adults,” is still a resource I encourage

you all to have as a reference for the many challenges faced by those living a long life. Older adults tell me they buy it and underline what is important to them and then give to their children!

My next free Zoom class will be at 11 a.m. Feb. 9. It is called “What is Dementia?” Just send me an email to attend this free class – LindaFJ620@outlook.com

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.





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## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

### 2024 Garden Trends Part 2

Photos Cynthia Brian



**Noxious weed and invasive Euphorbia, leafy spurge, killed native plants.**

... continued from Page OH1

We must also garden for wildlife to ensure the viability of our landscapes. One of my apple trees supplies late-harvest tasty treats not only for my family and friends, but also for the birds, bees, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, rabbits, and other creatures that frequent the orchard.

The United Nations projects that by the year 2050, 89% of people will be living in urban areas. Container gardening increased by 200% in 2022 and as people move to smaller spaces, demand for container gardening will continue. Bring a pot of amaryllis into the house and watch the blooms unfold. Hanging gardens will be a trend for 2024 while edible gardens are all the rage. In addition to herbs and vegetables, I am cultivating mustard greens which are harvested young to be added to salads or steamed as a vegetable.

Trees of the future is a theme as we save our vital canopies. As people learn more about the benefits of trees, they will want to plant specimens that will enhance their spaces while also providing shade for humans and a habitat for wildlife. Trees will be up-lit to add drama to the night garden. In the past few months, I have reinstated landscape lighting to showcase the architecture of my trees. A favorite tree for our environment is the crape myrtle. Crape myrtles offer four seasons of splendor, including breathtaking bark in

winter. Birds and hummingbirds flock to my trees.

By reusing and repurposing many home products, we will neutralize our carbon footprints. The vivid, wild, and powerful color of the year is called cyber lime. This is a hyper-bright green that signifies the connection between nature and technology. I see it in the new leaves on my sage plants, and naturally on my lemon and lime trees. According to the Garden Trends Report, cyber lime is gender-inclusive, fashionable, and complements most colors. It looks terrific in combination with purple, pink, orange, yellow, white, and other neon. The color “green” echoes nature and will continue to work in harmony with interior décor, stimulating and energizing our body, mind, and spirit. You’ll find this bold lime hue in many indoor and outdoor plants including hellebores, heuchera, spirea, echinacea, hydrangea, zinnia, pothos, philodendron, lemongrass, mint, coleus, potato vine, and many more.

Though its bracts are a gorgeous lime green, one plant that I don’t recommend because it is terribly invasive is euphorbia, also called leafy spurge. Its root system spreads rapidly and produces a chemical that stops other plants from growing. The leaf’s milky juice irritates the skin. Leafy spurge was introduced from Europe as a garden plant, but it has now escaped into hills, fields, roadsides, and my orchard. What began with a single specimen in my landscape exploded to cover a hillside and kill the growing natives. I have been working to eradicate it from my land for at least two decades. It is a noxious weed to be avoided.

Let’s be eco-optimists in 2024 and assist the winds of change to help us find our true direction.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



**The citron lemon reflects the cyber lime color of the year.**



**Plant sage for its color, flowers, and flavor.**



**Clip baby mustard leaves to add a peppery flavor to food.**

Photo Cynthia Brian



Crape myrtle bark is artfully captivating in winter.



White amaryllis blooms indoors in a container.



Cynthia Brian

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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# The choice is simple.



## It's Village. Of Course.

### The Village Associates:

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Linda Ehrich  
Emily Estrada  
Joan Evans  
Linda Friedman  
Liz Gallagher  
Claudia Gohler  
Ari Hatton  
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SUNDAY OPENS



211 Corliss Drive, Moraga | Open 2-4pm  
5 Bd | 2.5 Ba | 2538 Sqft | \$1,699,000

Fabulous family home nestled on prime private .42 acre in sought after Rheem Valley Orchards neighborhood!



165 Via Del Sol, Walnut Creek | Open 1-4pm  
3 Bd | 2 Ba | 1632 Sqft | \$1,125,000

Light filled charming home, 3 beds, 2 baths in approx. 1632 sq.ft. on .23 acre lot. Great central location and nearby walking/bike trails.



2965 Carlsen Street, Oakland | Open 2-4pm  
3+ Bd | 3 Ba | 2125 Sqft | \$985,000

Perched on a gentle slope with views of the bay from multiple rooms, this corner lot home is an opportunity for all!

