

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 04 Issue 10 Wednesday, July 21, 2010

## Ponds of Dreams

By Sophie Braccini



*"When we have guests, they always sit on the coping of the pond," says Kohen, "and they play with the fish."*



*Turtles, goldfish and koi inhabit Al Kyte's pond in Moraga*

*Photos Doug Kohen*

Ponds in Lamorinda gardens come in different shapes and sizes, and with different meanings. They fulfill the universal appeal of water elements in gardens. Some feature fish, others have turtles; some are rectangular, others mimic nature; some are self-made, but most are constructed by professionals; some contain a few hundred gallons of water, while others cover acres. There are ponds for all budget levels, and each seems to bring to its owner an element of peace that is priceless.

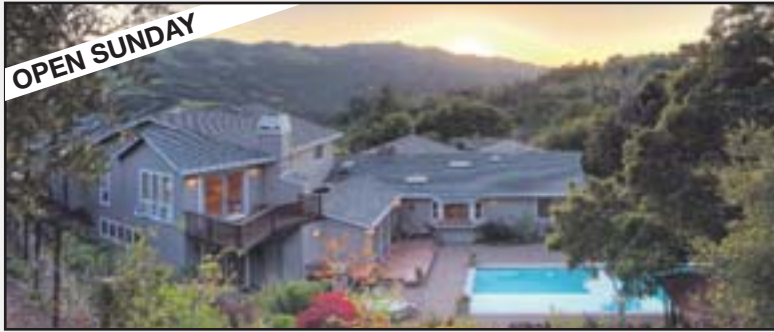
"I like the sound of water," begins Moraga resident Al Kyte, when asked why he has a pond; then he continues, "It's a religious thing, it is contemplative, quiet,

it helps gain a peaceful perspective, it is quiet resting with God."

Kyte built his pond some six years ago with the help of his son-in-law. He researched the subject intensively and came up with a design that creates movement and a variety of habitats for different animals. He describes his pond: "First you see a waterfall, which empties into a pool of water, then the water bed meanders along the side of the hill. After the second water fall, a shallow path with small rocks creates a bird bath and it finally empties into the main pond where the fish and turtles live."

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# DAVID PIERCE PRESENTS



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# Ponds of Dreams

... continued from page OH1



Steve Lambert's daughter in her Orinda garden

Photo Sophie Braccini

Constructing the pond was no easy task. The design was laid down, trenches were dug for an electrical system and piping, and the main pond was dug out at two and a half feet deep. Then a heavy liner was set along the bed, rocks were cemented around the whole perimeter, and filtration and pumping systems were installed. "I bought a dozen goldfish and a small koi for the pond," says Kyte, indicating a gold koi that's now over two feet long. "I have male and a female red ear slider turtles as well, and the pond attracts all kind of wild life." Kyte spotted some Western Tanagers and Townsend's Warblers he had never seen before; dragonflies abound, and he has noticed an increased number of butterflies this year.

If there is one thing that Kyte would do differently today, it would be to provide for a larger pond.

Steve Lambert of Garden Lights Landscape Development agrees with

Kyte's perspective. Lambert's vision is that ponds can be created as live ecosystems which can sustain themselves. "This pond is 40 inches deep with straight sides so the raccoons can't get access," says Lambert of the beautiful pond he built for his own Orinda property. "It contains many plants that the fish can eat and in turn the plants use the fish droppings." The fish feed on insects and larvae, too, which keeps the pond free of pests. Lambert uses no chemicals in his pond; he just adds bacteria to the water and filtering system. Lambert believes that a pond needs to be at least 60 square feet to be self-sustaining.

Large rocks are set around the edge of his pond and water cascades over boulders that seem to have been weathered by water for millennium. The pond contains several koi and goldfish, and some turtles. The plants are water lilies, submerged anacharis, which remove nitrates and add oxygen to the water, and water poppies. "I

feed my fish much less than other people do," says Lambert.

The self-sustaining effect of a well balanced environment was demonstrated recently in the pond of the Creek-Wood family in Moraga, who built a charming cascading stream that emptied into a deep pool of water populated with goldfish and koi. Maybe the fact that they had built a submerged edge created the opportunity for raccoons to come fishing. While the family was on vacation, a neighbor who came daily to feed the fish noticed a lot of damage one morning, and no fish came to the surface when she tried to feed them. Everyone thought that all of the fish had been lost, so the fish-feeding routine was stopped. Two months later, one of the boys spotted 2 fish still alive and well in the pond; they had survived on their environment alone.

Raccoons are not the only enemies of ponds in our area. "One morning I woke up to see a four-foot tall bird standing in the middle of the pond and feasting," recalls Kyte. Herons are said to be able to hear the sound of water from three miles away, and they love fish. Kyte now sets a net over his pond every night. Lambert crosses a few fishing lines over his pond during the dry season and has not had any unwelcome visitors. The Wood-Creeks decided that they would not add more fish to their pond until a net was designed and ready to be set at night.

... continued on page OH6



The Creek-Wood family removes plants from the pond

Photo Sophie Braccini

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32 Maison Court, Moraga



This beautiful 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath Sonsara home features designer touches throughout. Hardwood, granite, stainless, Pella windows. Professionally landscaped yard with patio, lawn, and front sitting area. Located on a cul-de-sac with views of the Moraga Country Club and lush hills beyond. **\$1,325,000**

3798 Via Granada, Moraga



4 bedroom, 2 bath Campolindo home with large level yard and Mt. Diablo Views. Single story with hardwood flooring and new paint. Kitchen/dinette opens to family room. Formal living/dining room. Excellent commute location. Campolindo Cabana Club. **\$875,000**

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Open Sun. 1-4

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# Ponds of Dreams

... continued from page OH1



*The Kohens' rectangular pond, full of goldfish and koi, is the focal point of the patio*

*Photos Doug Kohen*

Strangely enough in Lafayette, Doug and Marti Kohen, who built a 15x5 foot, 3 ½ foot deep rectangular pond that is not protected from predators, have never noticed a problem. The Kohen's pond resembles the antique irrigation basins that have been built for more than 2000 years around the Mediterranean Sea. The simple shape, leaning back against the hill, is the focal point of the main patio. It is surrounded by plants and a cascade adorns part of the far side, creating the movement that's necessary for water circulation and adding the gentle sound effects that seem to be required of all ponds. In the large basin swim 30-40 goldfish and five koi. "When we have guests, they always sit on the coping of the pond," says Kohen, "and they play with the fish."

All of these pond owners have noticed the strong attraction of people to ponds. Kyte remembers that the sound of the cascade was the only thing that soothed a col-

icky grandchild, while Anita Wood says that when her mother-in-law visits, she always takes her breakfast by the pond. They all concede that while ponds bring joy and relaxation, it takes work to maintain them. A weekly cleaning of the filters is required, some ponds need weed clearing, especially in the summer; a serious general system cleaning is required once a year, and as far as feeding, it is more often than not a daily chore.

The last aspect of these attractive features is their price. "I would say that the price range is between \$7,500 and \$15,000," said Lambert, but there is no upper limit. For example, a few years ago Lambert created a "swimming pond" in Lafayette, a self-sustaining system large and clear enough to swim in. The biggest water feature he worked on covered many acres, which sounds more like a little artificial lake than an average family home pond.



One of the waterfall features of Al Kyte's pond



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**4 Sparrow Ct.  
Moraga**

**\$869,000**

**4BD 2BA  
1776 SQFT  
.21 ACRES**



**121 Via Joaquin, Moraga - \$599,000  
3BD 2.5BA / 2044 SQFT**



**942 Raintree Place, Lafayette - \$1,219,000  
4BD 2.5BA / 2710 SQFT / Flat .49 ACRES**



**314 Overhill Rd, Orinda - \$1,150,000  
3BD 2BA / 2406 SQFT / .38 ACRES**

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# BASMAA Offers Tips for Remembering Your Green Bags

Submitted by Meagan Miller



How many times have you laid out your week's worth of groceries at the check stand and then, as the speedy clerk begins to scan your items in a flurry of electronic blips and beeps, you realize that you've left your impressive collection of environmentally friendly "green" bags at home? With a potential plastic bag ban in the offing for California this year, the Bay Area

Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA), wants residents to start taking action now to break the plastic bag habit.

"Putting 'bring bag' at the top of your shopping list is an easy addition," says James Scanlin of BASMAA, a consortium of municipal stormwater pollution prevention programs from around the region that includes the Contra Costa Clean Water Program.

By now, seeing a plastic bag perched on a tree branch or hugging the pavement near a storm drain is a normal sight. Often these bags find their way into storm drains, local waterways, and eventually the ocean. Plastic bags and plastic garbage represents nearly 90 percent of floating marine debris, according to the California Coastal Commission.

"Plastic bags are a huge environmental issue," says Scanlin. "Plastic never breaks down. It's little bits of litter, including plastics that have added up to the immense island of garbage floating in the Pacific." According to



The Clean Water Program is now offering free reusable bags.

Photos provided

the Earth Resource Foundation, over 100,000 marine animals die from plastic entanglement each year because they mistake plastic bags for food.

The Contra Costa Clean Water Program is offering residents free reusable bags, just for pledging not to use plastic. Take the pledge at [www.cccleanwater.org/pledge.php](http://www.cccleanwater.org/pledge.php). BASMAA offers these tips to residents to ensure they have reusables at the ready:

- Keep a rolled up or Chico-style bag in your purse to have handy for quick shopping trips.
- Leave reusable bags by the front door near keys, cell phones and other must-have items.
- Place some in the trunk or on the front passenger seat of your car so they're easily available when running errands.
- Just say no! If buying a small item, just refuse a plastic bag from the store clerk.

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# Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

**LAFAYETTE** Last reported: 17  
 LOWEST AMOUNT: \$598,000  
 HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$3,000,000

**MORAGA** Last reported: 7  
 LOWEST AMOUNT: \$530,000  
 HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,270,000

**ORINDA** Last reported: 6  
 LOWEST AMOUNT: \$740,000  
 HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,400,000

## LAFAYETTE

1 Aspen Court, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2441 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 6-15-10; Previous Sale: \$514,000, 08-15-96  
 639 Augustine Lane, \$745,000, 3 Bdrms, 1584 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 6-15-10  
 968 Carol Lane, \$800,000, 3 Bdrms, 1616 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-25-10; Previous Sale: \$310,000, 12-04-92  
 953 Foye Drive, \$785,000, 2 Bdrms, 1528 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-16-10; Previous Sale: \$400,000, 07-24-97  
 3 Gilmore Court, \$876,000, 3 Bdrms, 1766 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 6-15-10; Previous Sale: \$520,000, 07-09-08  
 1893 Hannibal Drive, \$832,000, 4 Bdrms, 2023 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-25-10  
 1902 Hannibal Drive, \$732,000, 4 Bdrms, 1823 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-21-10  
 6 Juniper Drive, \$1,385,000, 4 Bdrms, 2609 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 6-22-10; Previous Sale: \$1,405,000, 04-26-06  
 4150 Los Arabis Drive, \$1,325,000, 3 Bdrms, 2299 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-18-10; Previous Sale: \$1,510,000, 06-20-08  
 3555 Old Mountain View Drive, \$899,000, 5 Bdrms, 3082 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 6-24-10; Previous Sale: \$430,000, 01-10-97  
 1995 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 2649 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 6-22-10; Previous Sale: \$925,000, 03-26-08  
 10 Springhill, \$3,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 4761 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 6-15-10  
 1275 Summit Road, \$947,500, 4 Bdrms, 1941 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-24-10; Previous Sale: \$220,000, 04-03-85  
 3333 Victoria Avenue, \$945,000, 4 Bdrms, 1565 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 6-23-10; Previous Sale: \$640,000, 03-21-03  
 109 Villa Court, \$720,000, 4 Bdrms, 2121 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 6-22-10; Previous Sale: \$949,000, 05-30-07  
 3322 Walnut Lane, \$1,081,000, 4 Bdrms, 2093 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-23-10; Previous Sale: \$360,000, 04-16-99  
 3600 Walnut Street, \$598,000, 2 Bdrms, 854 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 6-24-10; Previous Sale: \$395,000, 11-12-09

## MORAGA

339 Calle La Montana, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2346 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 6-25-10; Previous Sale: \$53,000, 03-20-72  
 3960 Campolindo Drive, \$1,015,000, 5 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 6-22-10; Previous Sale: \$447,000, 10-21-92  
 127 Cypress Point Way, \$530,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-23-10  
 463 Fernwood Drive, \$1,115,000, 4 Bdrms, 2443 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 6-24-10; Previous Sale: \$820,000, 05-12-00  
 8 Pimentel Court, \$800,000, 4 Bdrms, 1644 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 6-25-10; Previous Sale: \$970,000, 08-23-05  
 62 Sanders Ranch Road, \$1,270,000, 4 Bdrms, 3513 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-16-10; Previous Sale: \$1,462,500, 06-17-04  
 231 Scofield Drive, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1602 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-18-10; Previous Sale: \$50,000, 02-17-99

## ORINDA

39 Ardilla Road, \$1,205,000, 4 Bdrms, 3129 SqFt, 1924 YrBlt, 6-23-10; Previous Sale: \$799,000, 07-11-01  
 1 Camino Del Cielo, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 3372 SqFt, 2003 YrBlt, 6-25-10; Previous Sale: \$1,600,000, 09-27-05  
 39 Claremont Avenue, \$860,000, 3 Bdrms, 1869 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-15-10; Previous Sale: \$237,000, 07-31-97  
 105 Coral Drive, \$740,000, 3 Bdrms, 1512 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-25-10; Previous Sale: \$1,060,000, 06-13-06  
 19 Dos Posos, \$1,017,500, 3 Bdrms, 1987 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-18-10  
 1836 El Nido, \$1,304,000, 4 Bdrms, 3159 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 6-15-10; Previous Sale: \$560,000, 08-31-95



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded is also available on our web site [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). Go to "Archive" if you're looking for an older listing. You will find a link to the list under each issue.

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.

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## Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

### LAFAYETTE

3936 South Peardale Drive, 94549, US Bank,  
 06-28-10, \$1,147,113, 2594 sf, 3 bd  
 1480 Shulgin Road, 94549, US Bank,  
 06-02-10, \$1,080,000, 4259 sf, 4 bd

### MORAGA

2079 Ascot Dr. #139, 94556, Federal National Mortgage,  
 06-08-10, \$145,800, 713 sf, 1 bd  
 811 Villa Lane #4, 94556, Rww Properties,  
 06-15-10, \$216,100, 882 sf, 2 bd

### ORINDA

134 Ardith Drive, 94563, Imb Reo Limited,  
 06-15-10, \$738,348, 1560 sf, 3 bd  
 23 Hall Drive, 94563, Deutsche Bank,  
 06-25-10, \$616,250, 1806 sf, 4 bd

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**NEW PRICE!**



**SURROUNDED BY  
 NATURAL BEAUTY**



**60 KNOX DRIVE, LAFAYETTE**  
 OFFERED AT \$960,000

Lovingly maintained traditional home featuring 4 spacious bedrooms, 2.5 baths, crown moulding, marble & travertine finishes, and Santos mahogany floors. Large living room with elevated ceilings, pellet fireplace and hillside views. Situated on .63± acres of lush terraced gardens with hardscape, built-in BBQ, waterfall, pond & covered spa. Highly ranked schools. Ideal location with easy access to downtown Lafayette, BART, Lafayette Reservoir, hiking trails and freeway.



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 Realtor  
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## NEW LAMORINDA LISTINGS

*Building Community One Family At A Time*

### REMODELED ORINDA CRAFTSMAN



**53 Knickerbocker Lane, Orinda**

- 3340 Sq.Ft.,
- .537 Acre,
- 4 Bedrooms Plus Office,
- 3 Bathrooms



Filled with charm and character, this beautifully remodeled Craftsman on a quiet cul-de-sac is seconds from town and commute. With amazing indoor/outdoor flow, the eat-in kitchen overlooks the family room and opens to the spectacular backyard of patio, level lawn, winding gardens and mature trees. There are 3 fireplaces, wonderful built-ins, maple hardwood floors and a fabulous, finished 3-garage. **\$1,585,000**

### SPACIOUS HOME WITH 2 BONUS ROOMS



**20 Greenfield Drive, Moraga**

- 3175 Sq.Ft.,
- .50 Acre,
- 5 Bedrooms,
- 3.5 Baths



Spacious home has a wonderful kitchen with granite countertops that opens to the family room with informal dining, fireplace and wetbar. The huge bonus room is perfect as 5th bedroom, media room or office. The master bedroom has a walk-in closet and updated bath with heated floors. There is a level backyard of lawn, patio and deck. Conveniently located within walking distance of elementary, park and trails. **\$950,000**



**Angie  
 Evans Traxinger**  
 Realtor Assistant  
 DRE # 01828901

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# Lamorinda's Leading Independent Real Estate Firm.



**28 Lost Valley Drive**  
 Fabulous custom home. Incredible pvt 1.48 ac knoll site w/level lawn & gorgeous view! Soaring ceiling, hardwood flrs, fab kitchen, Andersen doors!  
**Offered at \$939,900**



**24 Camino Sobrante**  
 Fabulous custom of approx 2400 sf, 4bd/2ba updated hm. Elevated for privacy & views w/fab lvl yard, decks, gardens & play area. Wall of glass, vaulted ceilings.  
**Offered at \$1,075,000**



**81 Coral Drive**  
 5bd fully remodeled home in popular Ivy Dr. neighborhood. Lg eat-in kitchen, huge fam rm, romantic master suite. Within walking distance all 12 yrs of school.  
**Offered at \$1,295,000**



**29 La Vuelta**  
 Fabulous OCC hm in pvt hillside setting. Remodeled kitchen adj to fam rm, 2 din areas, 5bd/4.5ba, au-pair, huge patio & pool area, Fr drs, tile, hdwd, marble floors.  
**Offered at \$1,395,000**



**68 La Cuesta**  
 Live large in this spacious contemp home. Experience sweeping views of romantic sunsets. Prime country club loc, nr town, Bart & great schools. Ital designer interior.  
**Offered at \$1,500,000**



**53 Knickerbocker Lane**  
 Charming 4bd/3ba Craftsman on gorgeous .53 ac setting, convenient to shops & commute. Mstr suite has adj office w/elegant built-ins & trplc. Remodeled in 2005.  
**Offered at \$1,585,000**



**1365 B Camino Peral**  
 Comfortable 2bd/2ba, 1281 sq ft w/fireplace, washer/dryer, deck & 2 dedicated parking spaces. Near shopping, park, library, and trails. Best Schools!  
**Offered at \$359,000**



**114 Merion Terrace**  
 Ideal MCC hm & location. Quiet cul-de-sac w/views of town & hills. Fam rm off kit. Mstr suite. Bonus rm perfect for teens. Golf/swim/tennis. New clubhouse coming.  
**Offered at \$775,000**



**3 Camelford Court**  
 Charming as can be 3bd/2ba hm w/hdwd flrs, crown molding. Eat-in kit, sep fam rm, formal LR/DR. Lovely brick patio & pvt bekyd w/pool, lawn & gardens. Cul-de-sac location.  
**Offered at \$835,000**



**132 Greenbriar**  
 Great space includes a large family room & a very spacious master. Vaulted ceilings & open floor plan. Beautifully updated & maintained. Lovely location w/views fo hills. Pvt yd.  
**Offered at \$798,500**



**794 Augusta**  
 The best of the best! Lovely home on the 6th hole at MCC. Beautiful remodel, crown molding, newer windows & doors. Lux master w/updated bath. Great outdoor living w/pretty yard.  
**Offered at \$1,175,000**



**787 Augusta**  
 Lovely home on 7th hole at MCC. Remodel incl newer kitchen, gorgeous hdwd flrs, huge mstr suite w/incredible views. Awesome creekside lot. Lg lvl yd w/pool & golf course views.  
**Offered at \$1,179,000**



**3363 No. Lucille**  
 Absolutely adorable 3bd Pottery Barn charmer! Sunny eat-in kitchen w/granite and SS. Level yd with huge lawn. Shaded patio, Fr doors, fresh paint in/out.  
**Offered at \$679,000**



**1014 Katherine Lane**  
 Located on quiet lane, updated 4bd/3ba rancher, .30 acre pvt corner lot w/lush landscaping, open floor plan for entertaining & day to day living, lg Trex deck.  
**Offered at \$1,095,000**



**1 Green Acres Court**  
 Burton Valley 3200 sf beauty, 4bd/3ba + ofc space on totally charming cul-de-sac w/lg pool, lawns, gardens & perfect in/out entertaining. Soaring wood ceilings.  
**Offered at \$1,425,000**



**15 Candlelight Lane**  
 Stunning sgl lvl 4bd/3.5ba 3417 sf custom-blt home nr Springhill Elem & Acalanes HS. Fab floor plan, sep office, many high end finishes, 3-car gar, guest quarters.  
**Offered at \$1,795,000**

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