

Burglars, Beware:

The eyes of homeowners may be upon you!

By Cathy Dausman

-----he good news: Lamorindans live in an affluent area. The bad news: that affluence can entice would-be burglars. That is why Moraga Police Detective Will Davis is a fan of residential security cameras.

"A security camera adds a level

of protection," he said. "I'd be the first to voice concerns over Big Brother," Davis added, but he feels the camera benefits outweigh any detractions. Simply put, the cameras never sleep, and the video evidence they produce is readily admissible in court.

Homeowners who are installing security cameras should consider having one that monitors the front of their house, and another that captures a view of the street, he said. The street view will capture auto traf-



The entrance to this gated neighborhood in Lamorinda includes a security camera.



fic, and that could be key to tracking down any suspects.

Davis said Moraga neighborhoods with one or two entrance roads and one or two exits are places which would most benefit from such cameras. Sanders Ranch has a camera at its entry guard shack, and video from the camera helped police search for a suspect vehicle after a burglary there in June.

Police learned a car was involved in that daytime residential burglary; Davis said video from that day was valuable in developing a general vehicle description. Sometimes it will even show the license plates. "Lafayette [police department] has had real success with camera use [to help solve crimes]," Davis said.

Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen said a number of Lafayette neighborhoods have already installed residential cameras, and the city's crime prevention commission is considering installing them at various city entry points. He cited six recent cases in which footage from residential camera systems helped develop leads. In one case, police responded to a break in along Reed Drive.

...continued on page D4

Finola Fellner



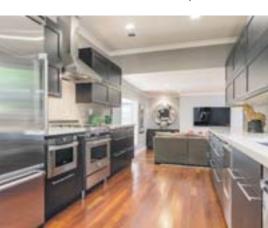
Traditional Rancher with a Contemporary Flair



124 Moraga Way, Orinda

This fabulous updated three bedroom two and half bath home with approx. 2250 sq. ft. home boasts beautiful hardwood floors, chef's

kitchen, fabulous formal and casual dining spaces, large family room, private master suite, spacious decks and outdoor spaces. This gated home offers a spectacular creek side setting and a lovely place to retreat!



Offered at \$999,000



BRE # 01428834

Finola Fellner 925.890.7807

www.FinolaFellner.com

The Beaubelle Group Coldwell Banker's #1 Group in the East Bay

©2013 Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker[®] is a registered trademark licensed to Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. An Equal Deportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office is owned by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. BRE License # 01908304 Page: D2 OUR HOMES Wed., July 17, 2013

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:		
LAFAYETTE	25	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
MORAGA	7	\$437,000	\$2,450,000
ORINDA	15	\$405,000	\$1,350,000
		\$200,000	\$1,000,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company? Safe 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			
10 Benthill Court, \$956,000, 2 Bdrms, 2852 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 6-14-13;			
Previous Sale: \$830,000, 06-18-03			
3633 Brook Street, \$610,000, 3 Bdrms, 1408 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-6-13			
3623 Chestnut Street, \$437,000, 2 Bdrms, 741 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 6-14-13;			
Previous Sale: \$175,000, 05-07-92			
1161 Estates Drive, \$2,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 4224 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 6-11-13			
670 Glorietta Boulevard, \$1,575,000, 3 Bdrms, 2584 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 6-6-13			
3298 Greenhills Drive, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 4034 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-12-13;			
Previous Sale: \$1,450,500, 05-28-04			
3216 Judith Lane, \$833,000, 3 Bdrms, 1969 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 6-11-13			
10 Julie Highlands Court, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 6-18-13;			
Previous Sale: \$1,259,000, 09-15-10			
827 Las Trampas Road, \$1,742,000, 3 Bdrms, 1974 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-14-13;			
Previous Sale: \$542,500, 08-27-90			
3157 Lucas Drive, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 2110 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-11-13			
3925 North Peardale Drive, \$1,255,000, 3 Bdrms, 1707 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-10-13			
3554 Oconner Drive, \$1,187,500, 3 Bdrms, 1708 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-6-13;			
Previous Sale: \$165,000, 12-14-84			
510 McBride Drive, \$1,407,000, 4 Bdrms, 2534 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-12-13			
3279 Mt. Diablo Court #25, \$730,000, 3 Bdrms, 1731 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 6-6-13;			
Previous Sale: \$555,500, 03-03-11			
16 Pidgeon Court, \$965,000, 5 Bdrms, 2359 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 6-14-13;			
Previous Sale: \$686,500, 06-07-02			
1294 Quandt Court, \$1,051,000, 3 Bdrms, 1656 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 6-10-13;			
Previous Sale: \$988,000, 08-11-05			
79 Silverwood Drive, \$825,000, 3 Bdrms, 2344 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-13-13			
3148 Somerset Place, \$1,140,000, 6 Bdrms, 2900 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-6-13;			
Previous Sale: \$670,000, 12-15-99			
3402 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,730,500, 5 Bdrms, 3948 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-6-13;			
Previous Sale: \$1,962,500, 07-26-07			
688 Street Marys Road, \$1,070,000, 4 Bdrms, 2371 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 6-14-13;			
Previous Sale: \$739,000, 06-22-01			
1451 Sunset Loop, \$880,000, 4 Bdrms, 2105 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 6-7-13;			
Previous Sale: \$869,000, 10-06-04			
3356 Victoria Avenue, \$1,207,000, 4 Bdrms, 2031 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 6-18-13			
115 Villa Court, \$860,000, 5 Bdrms, 2389 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 6-5-13;			
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 11-14-03			
3235 Withers Avenue, \$954,000, 3 Bdrms, 1914 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-12-13;			
Previous Sale: \$320,000, 08-01-91			
3280 Woodview Drive, \$725,000, 4 Bdrms, 2477 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-7-13;			
Previous Sale: \$465,000, 01-29-97			
MORAGA			
1476 Camino Peral, \$405,000, 2 Bdrms, 1279 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 6-14-13;			
Previous Sale: \$405,000, 07-30-04			
279 Claudia Court, \$1,350,000, 6 Bdrms, 3103 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 6-14-13			
113 Cypress Point Way, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-11-13;			

- Previous Sale: \$547,500, 09-09-03
- 305 Donald Drive, \$1,205,000, 4 Bdrms, 2564 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 6-5-13
- 158 Paseo Del Rio, \$1,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 2710 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-11-13
- 21 Via Barcelona, \$899,000, 4 Bdrms, 2873 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-13-13
- 538 Woodminster Drive, \$550,000, 2 Bdrms, 1620 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 6-5-13; Previous Sale: \$140,500, 08-19-87 ... continued on page D11

www.lamorindaweekly.com

OURHOMES



Patricia Battersby 925-330-6663 pb@patriciabattersby.com DRE# 00854469 Ashley Battersby 925-323-9955 ashley@patriciabattersby.com DRE# 01407784



www.patriciabattersby.com

An Extraordinary 3.35 Acre Happy Valley Estate



3802 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette

3.35 Level Acres (Two Separate Parcels - .96 Acres & 2.39 Acres)* (Sold as 3.35 Acres, Not Separately)

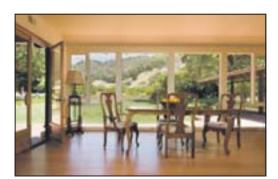
Early California Spanish Architecture

5 Bedrooms 4.5 Baths 4123 Square Feet* Grand sized Living Areas

The most extraordinary country estate in a premier location and private setting in Happy Valley. Totally unique with its spectacular, sprawling level acreage combined with breathtaking views of the surrounding hills. The charming 1940 early California style residence radiates understated elegance and timeless beauty. Beautifully sited on the property and designed with walls of glass that open to the wonderful outdoor spaces and breathtaking views. This distinctive estate property truly offers a once in a life time opportunity.

Offered at \$5,700,000

*Per Public Records









Burglars, Beware

... continued from page D1

OUR HOMES

The homeowners were gone, but a neighbor who spoke to police mentioned a resident's security camera which covered the street. Using the video, police were able to identify the make, model and year of the suspect vehicle, and even saw photos of the female suspect pointing to the victim's house. From that lead, Lafayette Police sifted through Department of Motor Vehicle records and found a matching – stolen – suspect car.

"That's the value," said Christensen. He echoed Davis, saying the "most effective" surveillance cameras are the ones aimed at the street. *"If neighborhoods can* install them near a 'choke [egress] point' that is a *significant* value," he added.

Orinda Police Chief Scott Haggard sees both sides of the coin. Cameras, along with burglar alarms, he said, "may serve as a strong deterrent to your home," especially with signs warning of their presence. They're not foolproof, though.

"Most burglars are aware of the use of cameras and they tend to wear hoods or pulled down caps to conceal their face. I have viewed many video tapes of crimes that are rendered of minimal value because the subject cannot be identified," he said. "Conversely, cameras have identified many subjects."

Haggard suggests homeowners considering sur-

veillance cameras look into the video motion and offsite monitoring which alarm companies offer. "They cost," he said, "but they come with audio that the alarm company can see and hear." Additionally such systems allow the alarm company to give police a 'play by play' until police arrive on site.

www.lamorindaweekly.com

Realtor Diane Reilly of Alain Pinel Realtors echoes Haggard's preference for off-site video monitoring capabilities. "Personally, I have found that for most buyers a security system is a must-have, and an up-to-date, state of the art security system with cameras and being able to monitor on iPad or cell phone is very desirable," Reilly said.

Reilly's co-worker, Ben Marshall, is more cautious: "I think it can come in handy, but it's a relatively cheap thing to install so it wouldn't increase the value of a home. If anything, seeing a security system in a house would give me pause, because I would assume that the previous owners didn't feel safe in that home," Marshall said.

Lastly, an insurance company weighs in on the matter. Abbe Sultan, president of Lafayette's Stone Creek Insurance, said he's actually brought up the use of surveillance cameras with their carriers.

"We live in an area where it's a little more affluent," Sultan said, and although insurance companies n Typical surveillance camera Photo Cathy Dausman

will offer a discount for homeowners who have central alarm systems or fire sprinklers, having security cameras offers "no additional discount."

The camera "doesn't inform," he said, "it only captures."

And that may be the homeowner's ... and law enforcement's ... fondest dream.

KAREN RICHARDSON PRESENTS:





This home is approximately 4,430sq ft. on just over an acre lot. Available for pre-sale. Home to be completed mid-march. Please call Karen at 925.639.3904 to view plans or for more information.





Karen Richardson www.karenrichardsongroup.com BRE#01407557





PRIVATE SANCTUARY IN LAFAYETTE HILLS!



120 Greenbank Drive, Lafayette

Offered at \$1,450,000 • 120GreenbankDr.com

If you are looking for views, privacy & land this is it! Escape to your own private oasis with this custom built 4BR/3BA, 3451± sq. ft. home on 1.59± acres contiguous to Briones Regional Park. Breathtaking views of Mt. Diablo, sparkling pool, hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings & more. Simply unique & rare!

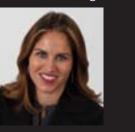






925.818.8000

Christine Gallegos



415.606.2047

Leslie Piper



415.990.4929

Amy Price



925.997.6808

Scott Sans



925.216.7583



www.KurtPiperGroup.com

For more information:

Realtors Recommended for a Reason | A Member of Real Living



In the business of making dreams a reality.

Let Michele and Leslie's experience, expertise, leadership, passion and dedication to their clients and bettering the industry, guide you to your real estate goals and dreams.

If you are thinking of selling or finding the perfect home contact The Manzone Team today!

925.253.7027 ManzoneTeam@gmail.com

Curious About Your Home's Value in Today's Market?

Contact us direct for your free copy of the "29" Essential Tips that get homes sold fast for Top Dollar" And a Complimentary Estimate of Value.



CA DRE # 01028002/ 01120753

Michele Manzone Leslie Dopp-Manzone Realtor®, GRI, CRS, CDPE

397 Springfield Place, Moraga



JUST LISTED

Wonderful Moraga home with private, fenced backyard. Updated kitchen, hardwood flooring, vaulted ceilings with wall of windows. Mostly single level living.

Offered for \$950,000

25 Los Amigos, Orinda

Just Sold Sold for \$1,050,000 Serene Setting on a half-acre! 4bd/3ba within 2420 sq. ft. on cul-de-sac. Gorgeous back yard.



P(B)

Patrice Petersen Sandstrom (925) 639-8646 BRE# 01732310 J



DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...

"Thank you both again for doing such a wonderful job for us in selling our home. We would never hesitate to refer you to any of our friends in need of excellent real estate agents. You two are the best! You both exude total confidence, trust and knowledge... you did not cause us a moment of hesitation!"

Judy & Frank DeCarbonel, 45+ year residents of Lafayette

"You have dotted all the "I"s and crossed all the "T"s from the inception to the completion of this transaction. I am a stickler for detail and have appreciated greatly your consistently outstanding performance. You are the BEST!"

Bert Gilling, MD, Anesthesiologist



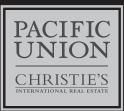
Ron and Susan Rothenberg

925.286.5530 info@teamrothenberg.com www.TeamRothenberg.com BRE# 01309986 | 00857547

A Member Of Real Living



Real estate with a difference.



WWW.HOLCENBERG.COM Client satisfaction: a family tradition

Be awed by the views and enchanted by the home

15 Kings Crown Court, Moraga

Set at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac in the Rheem Valley Manor sits a special house with lots of light and views to amaze. This single-story home with lush landscaping was remodeled in 2007 and has the feel of a marvelous vacation home. With 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths and a 3-car garage, the sweeping views of the surrounding mountains, valley and hillsides can be enjoyed from almost

every room. There is a solar-heated saltwater pool, level lawn and patio area, and so much to enjoy you need to see it to fully appreciate it.

Offered at \$1,299,000

www.15KingsCrownCourt.com





Wendy Holcenberg wendy@holcenberg.com

> 925.253.4630 BRE#00637795

Michelle Holcenberg michelle@holcenberg.com

> 925.253.4663 BRE#01373412



Kerey is a registered trademark licensed to Colowell Banker Real Estate LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing portunity. Each Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office is owned by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. BRE License # 01908304

Fabulous Home! Desirable Corner Lot! Entertainer's Delight!

1903 Saint Andrews, Moraga









Magnificent views and yard! Stunning three bedroom, three and a half bath corner property located in the Moraga Country Club. This one of a kind home was built in 1983 and has approximately 3424 sq ft.

Rarely available, level entryway and fabulous outdoor decks with exceptional views, patio, and professionally landscaped yard. Enjoy the amenities of the Moraga Country Club in addition to this fabulous property.

Offered at \$1,295,000



Presented by SUE LAYNG

Cell: 925-963-7189 • Sue@SueLayng.com • www.SueLayng.com BRE # 000970956



The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS

The second quarter of 2013 showed a continued increase in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate with supply continuing to be low, pending sales down, and closings up with the average sales price higher in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda – much higher than the same period a year ago.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from April 1 through June 30, 105 single-family homes closed in Lafayette, an increase from 95 a year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$420,000 to \$3.2 million, averaging 18 days on market versus 29 days on the market during the second quarter of last year, and 44 days in 2011. The average sales price was \$1,226,216 which was a significantly higher number than \$1,053,173 in the second quarter of 2012. It should be noted that there was one sale of a home in excess of \$2 million that was not reported to the MLS with a sales price.

In Moraga there were 36 single-family closings, down from 51 in the second quarter of 2012, 40 in 2011 and 34 in 2010. The drop in the number of closings is attributable to the lack of available homes. Prices ranged from \$665,000 to \$1.85 million. The average sale price was \$1,144,668, an increase from the \$983,785 a year ago. The average marketing time was 18 days, the same as the second quarter a year ago. In 2011 it was 72 days and 85 days in 2010. In Orinda, there were 83 single-family closings, up dramatically from 65 a year ago and 44 in 2Q2011. Sales prices ranged from \$260,000 to \$3 million with an average price of \$1,282,236. In the year ago period it was \$1,132,702. In 2Q2011 it was \$1,073,694. It took an average of just 20 days on the market to sell a home versus 36 in the identical quarter in 2012.

So far this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$495 per square foot, up from \$433 in 2Q2012. Moraga homes sold for \$458 and Orinda was at \$498. In 2012, in the same calendar quarter, these amounts were \$402, and \$421 respectively.

In Lafayette, the average sales price was 103.4 percent of the final asking price. In Moraga it was 104.1 percent and in Orinda it was 102 percent.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had six closings between \$513,000 and \$750,000, Moraga had 16 ranging from \$269,000 to \$899,000 and Orinda had one – in Orindawoods – for \$920,000.

As of July 9, there were 102 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined with asking prices of \$407,900 to \$3.595 million. A year ago at this same time there were 141 pending properties. It should be noted that there are nine "Potential Short Sales" currently pending and were subject to lender approval. At this same time a year ago there were 29! Two of the pending sales are REOs (bank owned properties.)

This is due to property values increasing versus a year ago and many of those sellers are no longer "under water" or have been able to refinance their homes and are no longer at the point of foreclosure.

Inventory, however, has plummeted from a year ago with a current supply of 96 properties, down from 129 properties in early July, 2012 and 219 homes in early July, 2011.

There are "only" 49 properties on the market in Lafayette – about the same as the 52 reported a year ago during this quarter. In July, 2011 there were 102. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$679,500 to \$7.75 million. Of these, only one is a distressed sale – attempted short sale or REO. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of only 20 homes or condominiums listed between \$299,000 and \$3.65 million. A year ago at this time there were 24 and in July, 2011 there were 54. There are only two short sales or REOs currently on the market in Moraga.

In Orinda there are 36 on the market, down from 53 in July, 2012. The list prices range from \$599,000 to \$5.8 million. There are no bank owned or short sales currently in the MLS.

At the high end, 12 homes sold above \$2

million in the three communities combined. A year ago there were seven sales in the \$2 millionplus range in the second quarter. There are 27 currently available above this amount in the three communities combined.

Interest rates continue to be at very attractive levels and many corporations have expanded their activity and continue to relocate families both into and out of the area.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices, and they do not sell, but in the second quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 105 single family sales that closed in Lafayette in the second quarter of 2013, 74 sold at or above the list price. All six of the non single-family homes in Lafayette sold at or above the asking price.

In Moraga, 26 of the 36 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 53 of the 83 sold at or above the final listing price.

One issue that has come up recently is having a property appraised for loan purposes. As appraisers use closed sales in establishing their values, they can trail a rapidly increasing market. In these situations, purchasers have often had to come up with the difference between sales price and appraised value in additional down payment or attempt to negotiate a lower sales price with a seller.

1541 Pyrenees Place, Walnut Creek



51 Moraga Way, Suite 1, Orinda

MASON-McDUFFIE

Jim Colhoun Presents Change Your Lifestyle or Investment Opportunity

Consider a single-level 2BR-2BA home in Walnut Creek's desirable Heather Farms with low maintenance, swimming pools and tennis. Available now or hold as rented investment income until you're ready to move. Call Jim for a private showing.

Great value at \$495,000.



Jim Colhoun

Relocation & Home Marketing Specialist BRE# 01029160 www.jimcolhoun.com (925)200-2795

Architectural Gem

4077 Coralee Ln, Lafayette



If you're looking for a house in Lafayette that is uniquely designed, and not the ubiquitous "slicked-up rancher", one that offers various options and has over 2600 sq ft of living area, is conveniently located, yet sited in a quite sylvan Hidden Valley setting, and is within the Happy Valley School district, then you should consider this lovely and unique home.

Asking \$985,000.



(925) 297-9150





Dick Holt .9150 cell 253.6332 office direct Email: rwholtcb@aol.com BRE#00827803

> e LLC. An Equal Or oportunity Company. Equal Housing Öpportunity. Each C ed by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. BRE License # 01908304

ROMANTIC PRIVATE HIDEAWAY Style, Flair and Appeal!



Imagine yourself sitting quietly on the patio, enjoying your morning coffee or evening cocktail, viewing the trees and hills, hearing the birds and just relaxing. Wouldn't you love to do that every day? This absolute gem of a home affords you that opportunity and more.

Lovingly updated and maintained by the owners for 15 years, this gracious home has been enhanced with quality features that convey attention to detail. 51 Valencia offers a warm woodsy feel from the cedar clad exterior to the beautiful hardwood floors, (Brazilian Cherry and Oak). An exquisite "Volcano" Granite sets the stage for the updated Chef's kitchen and is complimented by custom Cherry cabinets and stainless appliances. The floor

plan is spacious and open with easy access to the outdoors. The home offers 4 bedrooms, 2 baths and approximately 1,959 square feet on .73 acres. The setting is tranquil, serene & private great for outdoor entertaining, play or soaking in the spa!

All of these wonderful natural and artistic features are within minutes of town, BART, Highway 24 and 12 years of Orinda's outstanding schools. Wouldn't you love to enjoy all this home offers? Call me for more information or to schedule your showing.

Offered at \$987,000

It's April in Lamorinda For Real Estate



April Matthews 925.253.2147 dreamhomelamorinda.com aprilmat@comcast.net BRE#01221153

Consistently Representing Buyers and Sellers in Successful Transactions

The Home Designer First Impressions

By Brandon Neff

ccording to recent national survey of both men and women on what qualities each sex notices first about the other on initial introductions, the results were fairly typical – men say they notice nice hair and posture (yeah, right), and women claim that good teeth and a great smile are at the top of the list. (I cannot speak to the honesty of these answers, people.)

Interestingly, neither gender listed a "winning personality" or the ability to speak in complete sentences as a priority – looks trumped all. Please, don't kill the messenger.

The reason I bring this survey up is to remind us all that when it comes to making a good first impression, how we present ourselves aesthetically matters. From finding a mate to finding a job, what we present to the world is often judged and evaluated. And it matters in other aspects of our lives – specifically our homes.

Walking into an unknown domicile for the first time one draws conclusions about who lives there – the resident's style, their personality and overall taste level all jump to mind as we cross the threshold.

Truly, if we connect this hypothesis to the importance of how first impressions impact the respective value of our homes, it starts to add up. As the real estate market



Fresh orchids, contemporary lighting and an antique Chinese cabinet make an interesting composition in a small entry. Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design

continues its assent into the stratosphere, and home selling becomes even more congested – each seller competing for the same buyer's dollar – distinguishing your listing is essential to capturing top prices. If, as I've said in this column before, making a great first impression is everything when selling a house, then let's focus on the first thing they see when they open the front door – the entry.

Remember, I was a home stager long before I entered the world of design – I know of what I speak. Pulling in a buyer, or simply extending a gracious welcome to guests for that matter, is all about setting the tone from the first step inside. Here then, are a few of my first impression "greatest hits" to create an inviting and personal foyer. **An entry table or bench.** Whether you're working with a tiny vestibule or grand foyer, you need a place for your visitors to land upon entering. A graceful chair in an interesting fabric, or a vintage hall table, gives your guests a place to set down a coat or purse (or housewarming gift!),

before you properly invite them into the rest of your home. Even an interesting coat rack standing guard can offer real interest to a typically dead corner. **A mirror.** From contemporary and clean to ornate and

embellished, a mirror can offer a reflective energy to a dark space, or even embolden a light filled one. Not to mention it's always handy to have a mirror by the front door to check your cow lick, or that spinach in your teeth before you throw open the door to collect your Publisher's Clearing House prize money!

Beautiful wallpaper. Small spaces are perfect for bold statements, and an ideal place to experiment with something daring. Look, you don't spend a lot of time hanging out in your foyer, so take a risk. Set a dramatic tone with a textured grasscloth, or add some panache with a historical Morris floral that lets all who enter know that you've got personality. I advise this even if you're planning to sell. Never before have buyers been more informed about interior design, and offering them something other than beige walls will be appreciated.

Good lighting. Unless you're fortunate to have a foyer flooded with natural light, most homes need a boost. Entering a dark space feels depressing and a little scary. Unless you're the Addams Family, install adequate lighting – a properly placed recessed can, a pair of eye level sconces or just a stylish table tamp can make all the difference.

Art. Last, but never least. A well-chosen canvas or provocative photograph works like Prozac for your home – it elevates the mood like no other. Art speaks to your in-



A well lit foyer highlighting the natural stone flooring and custom iron work sets the tone for the rest of this Mediterranean style home.

dividual style, and gives your guests an insight into how you live in the world. Art, more than any other home accent, gives the strongest first impression. I love to scour flea markets and consignment shops for vintage portraits, cheeky abstracts, and black and white architectural photographs. Look for something that's meaningful, that draws an emotion and offers a subtle, personal introduction to all who enter.

Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer. He can be reached at BrandonNeffDesign.com or at brandonneffdesign@ yahoo.com.



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded ... continued from Page D2

ORINDA

- 75 Ardilla Road, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1513 SqFt, 1929 YrBlt, 6-6-13; Previous Sale: \$450,000, 04-27-99
- 11 Calvin Court, \$1,610,000, 4 Bdrms, 2602 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-18-13; Previous Sale: \$690,000, 06-30-94
- 21 Camino Del Diablo, \$1,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 2470 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 6-11-13; Previous Sale: \$47,000, 06-07-74
- 181 Camino Pablo #183, \$1,100,000, 2 Bdrms, 1338 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 6-18-13
- 11 Cedar Lane, \$1,735,000, 4 Bdrms, 3300 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-10-13; Previous Sale: \$562,000, 06-30-89
- 41 Charles Hill Circle, \$1,322,500, 4 Bdrms, 2298 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 6-12-13; Previous Sale: \$985,000, 09-17-03
- 44 Coachwood Terrace, \$1,900,000, 6 Bdrms, 3847 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 6-10-13
- 9 Corte Bombero, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1251 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-11-13; Previous Sale: \$789,500, 03-06-08
- 48 Crestview Drive, \$885,000, 3 Bdrms, 2351 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-13-13

21 Don Gabriel Way, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2597 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-6-13; Previous Sale: \$865,000, 03-20-03

- 20 Ellen Court, \$1,400,000, 5 Bdrms, 3264 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 6-7-13; Previous Sale: \$1,550,000, 12-04-06
- 107 Estates Drive, \$1,475,000, 3 Bdrms, 2223 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 6-11-13; Previous Sale: \$890,000, 05-29-02
- 140 Glorietta Boulevard, \$809,000, 4 Bdrms, 1723 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 6-12-13; Previous Sale: \$635,000, 02-28-03

Mary Robbins Proudy Presents

- 4 Loma Vista Drive, \$929,000, 3 Bdrms, 1833 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-18-13; Previous Sale: \$309,500, 04-30-97
- 2 Patrick Lane, \$1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 3183 SqFt, 1995 YrBlt, 6-5-13; Previous Sale: \$270,000, 09-19-94

Just Listed! Mid-Century Contemporary perched atop a knoll

offering complete privacy and panoramic views from the main house,

the cabana/guest house and the pool area. Stroll through the gated

Get Ready to Sell Your Home!

Home values are up, and rates are still low, making this the best time in years to make your move!

Visit www.Lamorinda.net

- See details on each home that has sold this year in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda.
- At a glance, see sold price vs. list price for each.

..... I recommend doing inspections up front, as part of preparations to sell, and to give you the upper hand in negotiations. Mention this ad and get a professional home or pest inspection, before marketing your property, ordered and paid for as soon as you list your home with Troy Feddersen. Offer good thru 8/15/2013.



Troy Feddersen, CRS Broker Associate J. Rockcliff, Realtors

Presidents Club

(925) 550-2353



Troy Feddersen & J. Rockcliff, Realtors **Two Names You Can Trust**





Who doesn't hear the words "summer" and "bugs" and think of a neat line of ants getting ready to trespass on plaid blanket supporting a

Your friendly neighborhood arborists Darren and Lew Edwards

picnic basket full of delicacies. But pests can be a serious summer problem,

and can threaten more than your turkey sandwich and potato salad. Left unchecked, these summer invaders can quickly turn your tree and landscape assets into liabilities. That's why insect and disease management is such an important part of summer tree care. A keen eve is essential, and proactive monitoring goes a long way towards early detection.

So don't wait until it's too late, have a complete inspection by a Certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping.

Advance Tree Service Your Authority on Trees and Landscape.



925-376-6528

advancetree@sbcglobal.net www.advancetree.com

Follow us on Twitter (advancetree) and like us on Face Book (ADVANCETREESERVICEANDLANDSCAPINGINC.)

arbor and into what will feel like a much awaited vacation paradise.

4 Donald Dr.

ORINDA



Offered at \$1,799,000.

MARY ROBBINS, Partner (925) 963-8294 Mary@MaryRobbins.com www.MaryRobbins.com

Lamorinda's Leading Independent Real Estate Firm

ORINDA



8 La Campana Super clean & ready one level living with 3bd/2ba, floor to ceiling windows, vaulted ceilings & lots of light. Easy access outside. New kitchen. Special setting, great high-end street, set for occupancy. \$865.000

ORINDA

5 Lavenida Location, Location,

Location. Beautiful 3bd/2ba + office

neighborhood. Close to K-12 Orinda

17 Tappan Lane Vistas across

ba. High ceilings & light & bright.

pool, & vineyard on 1.15 ac.

21 Tamarisk Beautifully

eat-in kitchen, indoor laundry,

maintained Moraga Country Club

home with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths,

hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings,

new deck, and private backyard.

Orinda come alive from all rms of this

spacious 4,155 sf w/ 6 bd/4 ba & 2 half

Perfect for fun in the sun w/yards, decks,

MORAGA

backyard is perfect for many.

Orinda charmer located in the Del Rev

schools, this updated home w/spacious

ORINDA

\$1.199.000

\$2,495,000

New Listing

\$789,000



51 Valencia Road Ideal home with spacious and comfortable floor plan boasts great curb appeal. Remodeled with quality and attention to detail. Beautiful Chef's kitchen, hardwood floors, quiet and private.

ORINDA

27 Via Hermosa Beautiful updated

4bd/3ba, 3172 sf traditional in desirable

family rms, lovely patio w/water feature.

ORINDA

40 Los Altos Majestic, inspiring,

tranquil. It doesn't get any better!

Country Club location. Formal LR &

DR w/hwd flrs & Mt. Diablo view,

updated eat-in kit. w/fplc, office, 2

\$987.000

\$1,350,000

& pool!





3 Overhill Road Charming updated 4bd/3ba, 2559 sf traditional on .38 ac in premium location. Short walk to downtown & BART; home theater w/surround sound; updated kit. & baths; Irg level fenced bckyd. Top schools. \$1,050,000

ORINDA

6 Hillcrest Drive Special

4bd/2.5ba family home w/incredible

attention to quality & design integrity

garage not incl. in sq. ft. Ideal location

ORINDA

92 Sandhill Road Absolutely One-

of-a-Kind Bay Area Home w/captivating,

\$1,450,000

by architect owner. 3207sf w/easy

access outside. Bonus "studio" off



83 Zander Drive Spectacular view of Mt. Diablo & Diablo Valley. 4bd/2.5ba, 2500 sf on .78 ac. Grand living room, formal dining, family room off spacious kitchen all overlooking sparking pool. Detached in-law & workshop \$1,195,000

ORINDA



29 La Vuelta Custom built contemporary in heart of OCC. Impressive entry, spacious living & wellappointed kitchen, walls of windows, master w/private terrace. Au pair quarters w/full kitchen. Separate office. \$1,595,000



1369 A Camino Peral Cozy first level 2bd/1ba 951 sq. ft. with fireplace & private patio. Close to St. Mary's, shops, park & Sunday Farmer's Market. Ample storage in kitchen. Access to award winning schools.





3802 Happy Valley Road Most extraordinary Happy Valley estate. Rare 3.35 level acres - two separate parcels sold as one. 1940 charming Spanish Hacienda, walls of glass, views of hills, grand sized living areas. \$5,700,000



THE VILLAGE **ASSOCIATES:**

Ashley Battersby Patricia Battersby Joan Cleveland Shannon Conner Joan Eggers Linda Ehrich Joan Evans Linda S. Friedman Marianne Greene Dexter Honens II Anne Knight Susan Zeh Layng Art Lehman **Charles** Levine April Matthews *Karen Murphy* Ben Olsen Sue Olsen Tara Rochlin Jaime Roder Altie Schmitt Judy Schoenrock Ann Sharf Amy Rose Smith Molly Smith Jeff Snell Lynda Snell Clark Thompson Angie Evans Traxinger Ignacio Vega Terri Bates Walker Ann Ward Dan Weil Margaret Zucker



facebook.com/VillageAssociates

twitter.com/villageassoc



v Listin

single level home. Hardwood floors, eat-in kitchen, updated baths, fresh paint, plenty of built-ins and storage. Convenient location.



10 Ross Drive Charming 4bd/3ba

\$1,050,000



1903 Saint Andrews Drive "Stunning One of a Kind", wonderful views & lvl yd, fabulous patios. Quality abounds in this 3+bd/2.5ba, aprx 3424 sf hm. Hdwd flrs, vaulted ceils, gracious hm w/all the amenities of Moraga CC included. \$1,295.000



Visit www.villageassociates.com Click on Sunday Open House