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Good Karma for Klein's New Art Room

By Sophie Braccini



Carrie Klein in the garden of the new Art Room. Photo Sophie Braccini

especially compared to the old Art Room. "Here you have a room that's all natural light that must have been a sun room," she said, as she entered a space where two walls are made of windows. "It will be a great place for painting!" She then moved into what used to be a large kitchen where mixed media classes are going to be taught starting Nov. 9. "We will keep the fridge for storing snacks and drinks for our camps which have been so successful," added Klein.

The former home has two other large rooms that Klein will use for special events and where the gallery will be located, with direct access to the public deck Klein is building in front. "We have grown by about 50 percent since I took over the Art Room," said Klein. "The former space was definitely becoming too small as we added teen and adult classes to the kids' classes. We sometimes had to have classes in the gallery." Klein always made it a priority to invite other local artists to exhibit.

The home's exterior also has an appeal. A long garage will hold the ceramics and 3D creation space. "Having a whole space dedicated to this is wonderful," she said. A glass panel will soon replace the garage door.

The expansive back garden is filled with beautiful trees, rose bushes, a picnic table, and a large expanse of flat space - a treasure that Klein said she will take advantage of, first by transporting her sculpture garden there, then opening it for classes and even more events. A portion of the fence in the yard that adjoins the Lamorinda Music parking lot can be removed to bring the three arts enterprises together. "Bruce said we could remove some of the fence and create an arched entryway here," said Klein. "The synergy between the three businesses will be enhanced and we will really create a place for all arts here."

Klein is full of plans for the future; she envisions art nights incorporating all forms of art. "Lafayette has its restaurants, it has its boutiques, but it also needs arts and theater and music to give it some flare," she said. The artist and businesswoman also sees expansion possibilities for her

When Carrie Klein took over the Art Room in Lafayette three years ago, across from Chow and The Cooperage in a charming cottage, many warned her that the building was set for the same fate as the old Petar's building: destruction. But Klein trusted in her lucky star. She knew that she would have to go at some point, but that something would come up. Something, or to be more accurate, someone did come up: Bruce Whitten.

"Bruce used to come by and see what I was doing. At one point he asked me what I would want in a perfect world," said Klein. "I told him about my dream of creating an art district in Lafayette, close to Lamorinda Music and Lamorinda Theater Academy. He did not say anything at the time, but a few months later he came back asking me if I'd look at his parents' old house. I looked at it and thought, this is perfect!"

The cottage is located at 91 Lafayette Circle, across from La Finestra and next to the parking lot serving Lamorinda Music and Lamorinda Theater Academy. Leading a tour of the place, Klein marveled at the size and quality of the space,

enterprise. "I will be able to have workshops here, something many people have been asking for, and more classes."

She says she was never worried about the future of her business when the prophets of doom and gloom were warning her of impending demolition. "I have a positive outlook on life, and you have to live one day at a time," she said.

The Art Room

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