

Business

## Natasha Grasso Jewelry in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



A display of a few of Natasha Grasso's jewelry pieces

Photo Sophie Braccini

What gave Natasha Grasso the desire to open a shop in Moraga? The young woman is a metal welder, an artist and a businesswoman. A success on Etsy, Instagram, and upscale boutiques and museums around the country, Grasso's creations have been featured in magazines including People. The young Orinda resident is also an archetypal Lamorindan, a creative go-getter who focuses on combining harmonious family life with successful enterprising. She recently moved her first retail shop from Burlingame to Moraga to engage with her clients locally.

Grasso exhibits a wide variety of

creations in her Rheem Shopping Center store, next to Tangelo. The intimate space stocks long and short necklaces in silver and gold with pyrite, fresh water pearls, quartz interlaced with black tourmaline, earrings, bracelets, pendants from the most simple gold drop to ancient coins or keys, infinity knots, and a creative horseshoe series. Prices range from \$65 to \$1,000, depending on type of metal, length and stones used. One of her best-selling creations is the love-knot series available as a necklace, earrings or a bracelet, in silver, yellow and rose gold. "It's been a very successful design," she says. "We sell it as bridal gifts, as birthday

presents, and in a cufflink version for men."

The idea behind Grasso's collections is for the pieces to look great with blue jeans or an evening dress. "These are not disposable pieces," says the jeweler, "but they are still affordable and will enhance your existing collection."

Grasso is a young entrepreneur, but is no novice. An interior designer by training, she worked for years in business development for Ethan Allen, learning the ropes of marketing and branding. But although that job was interesting, it did not fulfill her creative side. "I have a weakness for shoes, bags and jewelry," she says. "I

decided to try jewelry making and started by learning welding." She remembers the first welding class she went to: "When I came out, I told my husband I wanted to get my own torch. I was hooked."

The foundation of her creation is metalsmithing. "I wanted stylish pieces that I could mix with some fine jewelry pieces my husband gave me, and would not make my other jewelry look fake," she says. She started selling pieces from what she was wearing. "That was a little embarrassing," she says with a smile, "so I opened the Etsy site I could refer people to." She quickly started selling all over the world. "I would be working all day at Ethan Allen, then at night I would be making jewelry on my kitchen table," she remembers. The stress level became quite high, but the income from the jewelry was catching up with that of her regular job, so Grasso decided to take a plunge and start a company.

She has now been in business for eight years, expanding online, in upscale boutiques, resorts, as well as museums. "I am at the Getty," she says, "I do special exhibitions at the De Young, we do an exclusive auction at the Academy of Science Museum."

Grasso says her challenge is that

she wants her jewelry to be made in this country, while staying competitive. She is the one creating all the collections, four times a year, by hand. She then works with a network of artisan stay-at-home mothers living in the United States who hand-make each piece sold. "One of my biggest challenges as a small business is to maintain the integrity behind the business and still make money," she says.

The business owner wanted to open her own store to build a more direct rapport with her clientele. "It is important for me to engage with the people who wear my jewelry; it helps me evolve the line so it stays relevant to them," she says. "For a small business owner, it is also important to give a face to the business, since most of my revenue is wholesale."

The fact that her new baby daughter, now 18 months old, attends Child Day School next to the store is no doubt a big reason why Grasso chose that space. The boutique is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. For information, visit

For information, visit [natasha-grasso.com](http://natasha-grasso.com).

*Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.*

## business briefs

### Perfect Services Celebrates 25 years in Lamorinda

1 (855) 552-9100 – [www.perfectservicesllc.com](http://www.perfectservicesllc.com)

Miki and Vivian Erez are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their business, Perfect Services, this year. Erez is a general contractor who prides himself on being able to do anything inside, around and even under the house with his team. "We were first located in Oakland, we moved to Orinda, then to Moraga and now we are back in Orinda," he said. Retired professor Phil Spector has been a customer of Perfect Services for over 10 years and Erez has managed many projects in his house. "He replaced the floors, redecorated the guest house and added a bathroom, repaired the fence, and built a wine cellar," he said. The wine cellar project had been Spector's dream for years; he just could not figure out where it would go. "One day I was talking with Miki in the garden and he said, 'We'll build the cellar under the deck.' And he did!" Spector says he appreciates that Erez takes care of everything, and will follow his customer's lead. For the wine cellar, he found a structural engineer, and the people to pour concrete and to finish the wood of the cave. "It works wonderfully, the temperature stays cool year round and the wine that has been sitting there is aging perfectly." Erez took four years off from construction to support the restaurant, Shish Kabab Show, his wife started in Moraga. "I loved the place and went there to eat," said Spector, "but I was happy when he came back full-time to contracting work."

### Coldwell Banker Relocates to First Floor in Theatre Square

2 Theatre Square, Suite 117, Orinda

Main office: 5 Moraga Way, Orinda

(925) 253-4600



New Coldwell Banker location on the first floor of Theatre Square

Photo provided

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage relocated its Theatre Square office to a newly remodeled, state of the art facility in the complex. The new office is located at 2 Theatre Square, Suite 117, on the ground floor. Val Cook-Watkins, manager of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Orinda, said the new office gives the company even greater visibility in the heart of downtown Orinda compared to its previous location on the second floor of Theatre Square. Coldwell Banker will continue to operate its main Orinda office across the street at 5 Moraga Way. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage has 85 affiliated sales associates to serve the community.

### News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

The three chambers of commerce celebrated the holidays with fun December mixers. No other events are scheduled until after New Year's Day.

### Moraga

Save the date for the Chamber's Business and Community Symposium from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19 at Saint Mary's Soda Center where panelists will discuss the "State of Moraga Business 2016 - Challenges and Opportunities for Businesses in Our Cul-de-Sac Community." Free and open to the community. Refreshments will be served.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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