Pamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 23 Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on page D12

Pink Flamingos Not Included

Pre-fabricated homes again all the rage

By Chris Lavin



Jared Levy, below, and Gordon Stott, above, of Connect-Homes in front of a modular home in Orinda that was built customized for the family then constructed on site.

Photo Chris Lavin

ong gone are the old days of plopping down a double-wide trailer and sticking a couple of plastic pink flamingos in the ground out front. Today's built-to-suit homes have clean lines and customizable features.

While prefabricated home trends have come and gone over the years, today's building materials, improved energy efficiency, and new manufacturing techniques all coincide with the newest addition to the pre-fab homes: the Internet.

"People can get what they want," said Ben Munday of Orinda, the proud owner of a prefabricated home purchased from Connect-Homes. Two homes, actually – Munday put the smallest model out back to use as an office, although it still has a bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. After Munday and

his wife, Sara, decided which company they wanted to go with, they began selecting colors, fixtures and appliances by cruising through the website and clicking away.

"From my point of view, we loved Orinda," he said. But in many cases if you don't have \$1.5 million to spend, middle-class families are often priced out of the market. The Mundays' two-story modern home cost about \$600,000, with the smaller home, the company's cheapest model, running another \$230,000.

Perhaps the most mind-bending aspect of the new pre-fab homes is how quickly they go together. In the old days, a double-wide size home took up major highway space, often requiring a police escort, lead and follow-up cars, tons of flags and "wide load" signs. "It would costs thousands of dollars just for transportation, and then you couldn't just put it anywhere. A winding road or remote location was out of the question," Munday said.

The Mundays' homes arrived in – get this – eight shipping containers, "at a cost of hundreds of dollars, not thousands," Munday said. All the kitchen and bathroom fixtures had been connected at the factory. Connect-Homes builds its homes out of its own factory in San Bernardino, so the trucks packed up and left early in the morning, arriving in Orinda just off Moraga Way at 9 a.m. the day before school started in August for 6-year-old Max and 4-year-old Zoe, who started pre-kindergarten. The amazing thing: The homes were built by 2 p.m. – the same day.

... continued on page D4

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SOLD IN 2015



2582 Oak Rd #218, Walnut Creek, Rep. Seller



97 Oak Rd, Orinda Rep. Seller and Buyer



503 Woodminster Dr, Moraga, Rep. Seller & Buyer



18 Bobolink Rd, Orinda Representing Seller



67 Buckingham Dr, Moraga, Rep. Seller



3523 Wild Flower Way, Concord, Rep. Seller



35 Canyon View Dr, Orindá, Rep. Seller



1002 Santa Monica Ct. Pleasant Hill, Rep. Seller



11 Muth Dr, Orinda Represented Seller



97 Bunce Meadows Dr. Alamo, Rep. Seller



4056 Fiora Pl, Lafayette Represented Seller



3980 Clark Rd. El Sobrante, Rep. Seller



5408 Heatherland Dr, San Ramon, Rep. Buyer



774 Crossbrook Dr. Moraga, Rep. Buyer



1635 Siskiyou Dr, Walnut Creek, Rep. Buyer



La Fond Ln, Orinda Represented Buyer



114 Lucille Way, Orinda Represented Landlord



I Culver Ct, Orinda



117 Coral Dr, Orinda Represented Landlord and Tenant Represented Landlord and Tenant

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT
LAFAYETTE	19	\$640,000	\$3,750,000
MORAGA	6	\$395,000	\$1,525,000
ORINDA	10	\$480,000	\$4,050,000

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

3268 Brookwood Drive, \$1,359,000, 4 Bdrms, 3599 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-7-15; Previous Sale: \$202,500, 12-19-86

3617 Cerrito Court, \$750,000, 2 Bdrms, 818 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 12-10-15; Previous Sale: \$750,000, 04-15-05

2447 Cherry Hills Drive, \$840,000, 5 Bdrms, 2629 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 11-25-15 606 Francis Drive, \$730,000, 3 Bdrms, 2025 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 11-30-15 1201 Franklin Lane, \$821,000, 11-30-15;

Previous Sale: \$859,500, 10-21-15

660 Glenside Drive, \$2,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1952 YrBlt, 12-2-15;

Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 06-07-07

4075 Happy Valley Road, \$3,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 3710 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 12-10-15; Previous Sale: \$2,965,000, 10-19-06

4157 Hidden Valley Road, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2334 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 12-2-15

3320 Las Huertas Road, \$1,460,000, 4 Bdrms, 2173 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-3-15

1060 Leland Drive, \$865,000, 4 Bdrms, 1617 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-9-15; Previous Sale: \$669,000, 12-30-03

3249 Marlene Drive, \$640,000, 4 Bdrms, 1449 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 11-30-15; Previous Sale: \$420,000, 05-11-12

3784 Mosswood Drive, \$1,010,000, 3 Bdrms, 1634 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-2-15; Previous Sale: \$749,000, 04-15-13

3986 North Peardale Drive, \$1,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 3682 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-2-15 3536 Oconner Drive, \$1,280,000, 4 Bdrms, 2996 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 12-4-15; Previous Sale: \$463,000, 08-02-90

1064 Orchard Road, \$1,550,000, 5 Bdrms, 3665 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 12-9-15; Previous Sale: \$450,000, 12-20-02

425 Read Drive, \$1,075,000, 3 Bdrms, 1615 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 11-20-15; Previous Sale: \$335,000, 02-15-91

0821 Reliez Station Road, \$2,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 3059 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 12-1-15 3467 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,970,000, 4 Bdrms, 3979 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 12-8-15;

Previous Sale: \$635,000, 12-13-88 13 White Oak Drive, \$1,492,000, 4 Bdrms, 3068 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-20-15;

MORAGA

1086 Baitx Drive, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1688 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 11-25-15; Previous Sale: \$227,000, 08-05-88

Previous Sale: \$470,000, 07-12-9

1369 Camino Peral #C, \$395,000, 1 Bdrms, 951 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-4-15; Previous Sale: \$400,000, 05-31-06

762 Camino Ricardo, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 2259 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-10-15; Previous Sale: \$775,000, 05-10-02

1174 Cedarwood Drive, \$937,500, 3 Bdrms, 1631 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 12-9-15; Previous Sale: \$260,500, 02-19-88

505 Chalda Way, \$510,000, 2 Bdrms, 1114 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 11-25-15; Previous Sale: \$439,000, 10-05-06

1223 Rimer Drive, \$1,385,000, 4 Bdrms, 2290 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 11-24-15; Previous Sale: \$906,000, 09-26-11

... continued on page D13

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Pink Flamingos Not Included

"There were still some gaps, but you could walk through and see what everything was going to look like," Munday said. Lego models take longer to put together. Instead, their home construction was more like opening a pop-up children's book. A time-lapse video of the Orinda construction can be seen at https://vimeo.com/147523892. And the company's website will give you an idea of how pre-fab homes get sold at www.connect-homes.com.

The process goes something like this, or at least this is the way it worked for the Mundays. They found a piece of land they liked. They weren't sure it would work for the company and the house they wanted, so while they were in escrow with the land, Connect-Homes representatives visited to see how the house would be best located, watching for views and sun exposure. Given the thumbs up, the Mundays closed escrow and spent three months building the foundation to specifications, worked with utilities to get pipes and electricity to the site, then waited for the arrival of the containers.

"It was surprisingly pretty easy," Munday said.

The result is a modern house with clean lines, and most importantly to Munday, no cost overruns. "Whenever you have new construction, or even a remodel, the contractors come back and say, 'this went over our estimate,' or 'this took longer than we thought,' and it ends up costing twice as much as they quoted

you in the beginning," he said. "Frankly, I was shocked. They sent me a bill for exactly what they said it was going to cost."

Another thing he likes is that his choice is a safe one in earthquake country. "This is safer than a regular

... continued from page D1

house," Munday said. "Each model has a steel frame and a slight bit of flex."

But alas, with all that metal and glass, pink flamingos are not included.



Modular homes can come with outbuildings that serve as laundry or guest rooms.

Photo Chris Lavin

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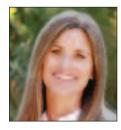
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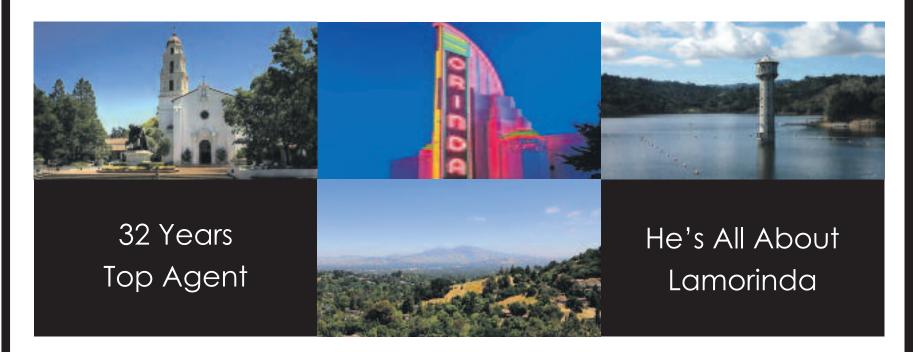


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Page: D8 LAMORINDA WEEKLY OUR HOMES www.lamorindaweekly.com \$\mathcal{C}\$ 925-377-0977 Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Stylish Solutions

Making a Plan to Refurbish and Refresh

By Ann McDonald



The photo above is one example of a great seasonal update. Indoor/outdoor so it can move from family room to outdoor patio, with heavy use — it bridges the gap for people who normally purchase very traditional patterns. This contemporary pillow would work well partnered with a tartan or floral or solid.

Photos Couture Chateau LLC

h, January – the perfect time for resets, clean-outs and editing. I love the month of January from a design standpoint. Last year, we wrote about the deep clean (see the Jan. 14 Lamorinda Weekly article "Stylish Solutions: The Intrinsic Nature of Deep Cleaning and Design" in the online archives) and this year I wanted to share our inside tips for developing your own yearlong home accessory update calendar.

Every year our design clients ask questions about how to update realistically with manageable time frames and budgets.

Just like you allocate time and funds for things like hair color, oil changes or cleaning supplies, taking the initiative to budget out accessory updates goes a long way to gaining mastery over your home. It no longer feels out of control when you realize it's OK to spend "x amount of dollars" and "x amount of time shopping" on simple beauty during the year.

Some clients like the monthly approach, but I have found, for most, setting aside time to shop and money for each quarter of the year is more realistic. That way if you decide to host a spring party, you aren't robbing from March to pay April, but instead have a larger allocation of both (time and money) for the "first quarter" to purchase the niceties you were hoping for.

First, divide the year into quarters. Just like a well-run business, a well-run home has seasons. Remember, this is not the line item for the deep clean or the changing of the dryer filter, this is for the seasonal updates you need to make so your home doesn't look dated.

I like January through April (different from financial quarters to accommodate for Easter), then May through June, July to September and October to December.

One of the keys: Push yourself outside your normal limits of style. It's OK to start small at first. Do you always purchase plaid? Try a contemporary style in a pillow or something non-committal. These small increments of money and time allow for great experimentation. If you are really unsure, experiment in guest rooms and home offices, where you can go and visit your new styles rather than live with them every day.

How to determine numbers? Use a simple per square foot model. If you allocate approximately \$1 to \$5 per square foot to update accessories throughout the year, for a 600-square-foot family room/kitchen area, you would be setting aside approximately \$3,000. That budget would be used for everything from updated pillows, throws, accessories and books for shelves, an ottoman or even an extra chair and side table.

Many clients with larger homes used for entertaining may set aside up to \$15 per square foot for accessory updates throughout the season and more.

... continued on page D10



A Moraga client had a plate as a family heirloom, and found these bunny plates that matched the color palate in a nice home-store catalog to possibly use seasonally, after the design of their kitchen is completed. For seasonal, inexpensive updates, this is an ideal influx of non-committal pretty.



1438 Camino Peral, Moraga

You'll love the many aspects of living in this terrific Moraga townhome. With its premium end-unit location, you are a short walk to the Moraga Commons Park and Trail, the year-round Farmers' Market, and the nearby community pool.

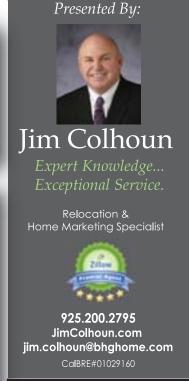
The home features beautiful hardwood floors and an updated kitchen with heated tile floors. The spacious rear patio is private and excellent for BBQ's and outdoor living. Additional storage is available in the large two car garage. Offered at \$649,000. See more at www.1438CaminoPeral.com











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Making a Plan to Refurbish and Refresh

... continued from page D8



We pulled the color wheel out using a simple app to match the colors in this heirloom plate. I like it because vou can easily see how the colors work, even though at first glance the patterns might not seem like a good fit for a space.

A great exercise if you are unsure and have never done a line item or calendar for such things is to take a few hours and review your purchases from last year, or use a nice home catalog like Pottery Barn or a visit to Home Goods to come up with a baseline you are comfortable with.

Write down the items you might like to incorporate and add up the totals. You might be surprised at how quickly those numbers add up. While I love HGTV and the other design networks, the numbers are not always so forthright. Sponsor heavy shows, no tax and deep discounts are most often the reason for the low numbers. It is best to not use those programs as guidelines for your Lamorinda accessory updates or budget numbers. Use real time retail stores for baselines. That way, if you spot a bargain, you will be confident to jump on it because you will have done your homework.

Give yourself some time to have fun with this process. We once brought a group together in a workshop to add up a typical room of accessories only, out of a nice, but medium-priced home store catalog. It was a great exercise. It also showcased visually how you can pull a picture out, circle the items you like and then recreate that same look in your own home, all while knowing precisely what it would cost to achieve that look.

Tip: No need to reinvent the wheel. These large stores with beautiful catalogs hire excellent stylists, use their visual expertise and translate what you like from them into your own home.

Remember my strong feeling about colors, and use one of the color apps on your phone. Simply take a photo and let the app show you what will work and what won't.

Let me know how it goes! Just this past week, I used part of my first quarter budget to bring two new flower

pots, a new candle and a sweet gold bird accessory to my desk at home. The simple fresh change of colors and display has energized me. Next? I'm looking at a teapot and new cup to match, along with some fresh pillows on the sofa I see from my desk. Not a lot of money, but simple and refreshing, and hopeful for the New Year.

Let me know how it goes and what you find this first quarter.

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15 Hilldale Court, Orinda

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Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia Brian

Houseplant Happiness

By Cynthia Brian

"I couldn't wait for success — so I went ahead without it." ~ Jonathan Winters



Pots of cymbidium orchids and azaleas can live outside on the porch or be brought indoors.

Photos Cynthia Brian

As those of you who have been reading this column know, I am not usually a fan of winter because I adore basking in the sunlight of gardening bliss. But this January I am singing in the rain because raindrops keep falling on my head. El Nino translated means our natural surroundings are finally receiving a well deserved soaking.

Since it is wet and cold outside, we will bring the healthy spirit of the outdoors

in with beautiful houseplants. Many plants that we relish as indoor specimens grow wild in the tropics or warmer climates south of the equator. To start the year out with wellness as a resolution, we can provide physical and psychological benefits to our families by introducing the bold shapes, exotic foliage, and cool colors of houseplants. Inside plants absorb more than 87 percent of volatile organic compounds, including formaldehyde, benzene, and xylene from the air we breathe. VOCs come from newer, more energy-efficient buildings as well as household cleaners, carpeting off-gasses, drapes, furniture, and personal care products including hair spray and nail polish. The Environmental Protection Agency reveals that indoor pollution can be five to ten times greater than the outdoors.

Houseplants to the rescue!

Contrary to what many people believe, houseplants are extremely easy to grow, maintain, and enjoy with just a little TLC – food, water, sunlight and singing, if you so desire. Different plants require various amounts of each. Choose the right plant for your chosen location, then allow the healthy plant to take care of itself.

Some of the best plants to absorb airborne toxins include spathiphyllum, also known as the peace lily, orchids, pothos, Chinese evergreen, philodendron and dieffenbachia. All houseplants will clean the air and provide beauty.

... continued on page D14



The bright shiny anthuriums come in an array of colors, thrive indoors, and bloom for months.

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

ORINDA

16 Brookbank Road, \$4,050,000, 6 Bdrms, 5874 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-3-15; Previous Sale: \$345,000, 10-03-85

94 Brookwood Road, \$480,000, 3 Bdrms, 740 SqFt, 1925 YrBlt, 12-8-15

630 Greystone Terrace, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2097 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-2-15; Previous Sale: \$30,000, 08-13-73

37 Hillcrest Drive, \$2,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1290 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-20-15; Previous Sale: \$755,500, 06-10-14

38 Hillcrest Drive, \$1,282,000, 3 Bdrms, 1869 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-3-15

9 La Sombra Court, \$2,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1689 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-1-15; Previous Sale: \$1,155,000, 03-24-15

56 Longridge Road, \$800,000, 3 Bdrms, 1753 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-11-15; Previous Sale: \$730,000, 08-20-04

10 Orchard Court, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 2195 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 11-25-15

136 Ravenhill Road, \$830,000, 2 Bdrms, 2216 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 11-25-15; Previous Sale: \$334,500, 09-28-93

12 Tara Road, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2388 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 12-2-15







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Houseplant Happiness

Scientific studies indicate that houseplants keep us healthy in multiple other ways including reduction in headaches, colds, sore throats and stress levels. Gardeners know that being in nature is good for our bodies, minds and spirits. Bringing the outdoors in during the dreary months is a health booster, improving creativity, cognitive skills, memory and problem solving. When you have the heat on, the plants also act as natural humidifiers relieving dried skin, chapped lips and discomfort.

My favorite indoor plants include the fiddle leaf fig for rooms with tall ceilings. In its native habitat of Africa the fiddle leaf will grow to 40 feet, but indoors it may reach 10 to 15 feet, living for three decades or more. For longevity of blooms, you cannot beat orchids or bromeliads. They need almost zero care yet flower for months on end. Another

Lic.: #611120

constant bloomer with bright shiny green leaves is the peace lily. It tolerates all levels of light and abuse and brings tranquility to any room. Pothos has to be one of the easiest houseplants to grow. You can snip off a piece, stick it in soil, water, and let it do its thing. At this time of year, Christmas cactus are in full bloom. After the blossoms are spent, put them outside on a porch or patio until they bloom the following season. Azaleas in bloom can be put on patios, porches, and brought inside as accents for short periods of time. If you are looking for plants that only need an occasional spritzing, buy tillandsias, or air plants. They live on air, literally. Palms, anthuriums, ZZplants, and many more are all available at your local garden center.

If you think you have a brown thumb indoors, here is "the 101" on how to be a pro:





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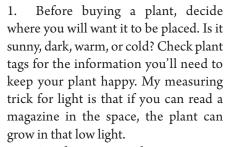
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... continued from page D12



Rich red Christmas cactus thrives indoors.



- Avoid putting any plants on or near radiators, air conditioners, TVs, or drafty areas.
- Water only when the soil is dry an inch below the surface. Stick a pencil in the dirt and if it comes up dry, give your plant a drink. Don't over water. Yellowing and dropping leaves is usually a sign of too much moisture. Don't drown your plants or they will suffocate and die.
- Always have a saucer under every pot and a protective element (a tile, coaster, CD disk, cork) under the saucer to prevent ruining furniture in the event of spills. Don't let plant containers sit in excess water.
- Feed two or three times per year according to the plant tag directions.
- Repot when root bound.
- Enjoy clean air and a prettier interior with your houseplants.

Houseplants are happiest when



This spathiphyllum peace lily is over 25 years old!



Fiddle leaf figs are great for rooms with high ceilings. Leaves are bright, shiny, Photos Cynthia Brian green.

temperatures are between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 10 to 15 degrees lower at night, but thrive in basically the same temperatures that make humans comfortable.

Don't wait to be successful. Just buy a few houseplants and breathe in nature 365 days a year inside your home and office.



Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminders

PRUNE roses, berries and crape myrtles this month. Buy bare-root roses locally or to order the David Austin English roses, go to http://www.DavidAustinRoses.com. Use promo code UHA for 20 percent off your order through Feb. 19.

TREES cleanse the air, filter water, clean the air, provide shade and habitat for wildlife. Learn more about the benefits of trees at http://www.AmericanForests.org.

SUBSTITUTE eggplant for any meat dish. Burpee has developed a new flavorful eggplant called "Meatball" with a density and texture that makes it taste like a hamburger, eggplant steak cutlet, and can be used in any recipe calling for meat.

ASHES from your fireplace can be added to the compost pile when you clean your hearth. Make sure they are cold or pour water into the bucket before pouring into the bin.

PLANT arugula in a pot for winter salads. Seeds grow quickly and the bitter leaves add zing to your dishes.

Welcome the rain and bring health and wellness into your home for the New Year because, baby, it's cold outside!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



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1000 Hawthorn Drive Wonderful 3 bed/2 bath traditional home in the heart of downtown Lafayette. Remodeled kitchen w/large island, marble/Corian countertops. Hardwood floors. Park-like yard.

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3402 Black Hawk Road Wonderful Springhill Valley nghbrhd located in a serene, parklike setting on .59 acres. 3bd/2ba w/hwd flrs, vaulted ceilings in living rm, family rm off kitchen. Walk to schools, trails.

\$1,188,000



5 Burton Vista Court Spectacular 7bd/9+ba, 8986sf Estate w/luxury amenities in grand oversized spaces. Premium 2.25ac parcel w/sport court, sundrenched pool, pavilion w/kitchen, dressing rms & showers. \$6,595,000

PLEASANT HILL



20 Whitfield Court Great 2.58 acre parcel at top of knoll w/views of Mount Diablo & ideal privacy. Truly special setting sites for development zoned R-10 & R-15. Wonderful opportunity for investment.

\$1,750,000

WALNUT CREEK



1501 Canyonwood Court #2 Fabulous Sonoma Wrap w/2bd/2ba + washer/dryer in unit. Cultured marble countertops in kitchen/baths. Elec. chair lift at stairs. Rear veranda enclosed, side veranda open. Views.

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WALNUT CREEK



887 Amberwood Court Beautiful New Construction Single Story Home (one of five) in desirable cul-de-sac neighborhood. 4 Bed/3.5 bath, den, chef 's kitchen w/great room. Corner lot. Ideal location.

\$1.570,000

WALNUT CREEK



31 Hanson Lane Beautiful Single Story New Construction in Walnut Heights nghbrhd. On .43 flat acre. 4 bd/3.5ba, den, chefs kitchen, hdwd flrs. Backs up to Shell Ridge Open Space & elementary school. \$1,700,000





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