OTR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 26 Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2018



Piping problems

By B. B. Kaye



Top right, a new copper pipe is installed to replace the aged pipes.

Photo Andy Scheck

lumbing runs largely unseen through our homes, serving to bring us comfort and cleanliness. "Plumb' is from the Latin "plumbum" for lead, because in the early days of plumbing that's the material that was used for piping. Lead was cheap, easy to form, easy to solder, long-lasting – and extremely poisonous.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "low levels of exposure have been linked to damage to the central and peripheral nervous system, learning disabilities, shorter stature, impaired hearing, and impaired formation and function of blood cells." As the dangers of using lead – severe brain and nervous system damage, especially but not only in children – reared their ugly heads into public awareness, better materials were developed to safely carry the precious water we use.

Brass, copper, stainless steel, galvanized steel, "black" steel, iron, baked clay, cementitious compounds and, more recently, different types of plastic can all be found within many, and often the same, houses.

... continued on page D4

THE Beaubelle

MORAGA

Enjoy sweeping views of the surrounding hillsides from this single level threebedroom, two-bathroom duet home in the exclusive Ascot Highlands neighborhood. The charming and spacious approximately 1,380-square-foot floor plan features light-filled, stylishly updated and freshly painted rooms that connect with inviting outdoor entertaining



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	1	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000
MORAGA	2	\$682,500	\$1,400,000
ORINDA	4	\$900,000	\$1,890,000

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

1693 Pleasant Hill Road, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2192 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 1-25-18

MORAGA

2 Baltusrol Street, \$682,500, 2 Bdrms, 1552 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 1-17-18 1157 Larch Avenue, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 1829 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 1-17-18; Previous Sale: \$975,000, 09-27-17

25 Mayfield Place, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2462 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 1-25-18; Previous Sale: \$710,000, 02-03-03

ORINDA

21 Bigleaf Road, \$1,890,000, 4 Bdrms, 3912 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 1-26-18; Previous Sale: \$619,000, 11-22-13

128 Glorietta Boulevard, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 2076 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 1-23-18 170 Glorietta Boulevard, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 2451 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 1-22-18 108 Lucille Way, \$1,229,000, 4 Bdrms, 2758 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 1-19-18;

Previous Sale: \$431,000, 09-06-96



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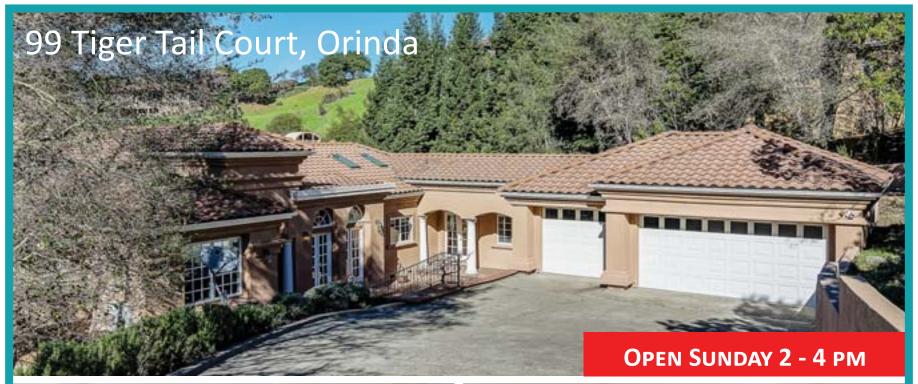
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Piping problems

... continued from page D1



 $Leap frog\ Plumbing\ technician\ Austin\ Barber\ inspects\ the\ newly\ installed\ copper\ pipes\ under\ a\ house.$

Photos Andy Scheck

All of these materials have different lifespans, different strengths and weaknesses, different handling rules, different health questions, different uses, and different costs.

Knowing whether or not a pipe repair or replacement is needed, and how much is a reasonable cost, is not always easy, especially for a young family with the stresses of a house purchase and a new baby all at the same time.

Lafayette residents Steven and Becky Barnstetter had to replace their home's sewer line four years ago. As with many loans, the bank required repairs to protect their investment, but there was an unpleasant surprise on top of that expectation: "In order to get the loan we had to spend about \$56,000 to lift the house, but a city

inspector said the sewer also needed to be replaced," Steven Barnstetter said. "We had it inspected, but it didn't have separations or holes." The pipe had been checked with a borescope (a camera that is sent through the interior of a pipe).

The inspector had come to check on legitimate repairs that the Barnstetters had permits for, and that's when he spotted a waste pipe extension that the original homeowner had jerry-rigged for an additional bathroom without permits. Both Barnstetters recall the man saying he was a city of Lafayette inspector. "He told us that the city of Lafayette would come and pour concrete down it if we didn't get it fixed, so we'd never be able to use it!" said Becky. Alarmed, she ran to apply for permits.

... continued on page D6





Finola Fellner 925 890 7807 REAL ESTATE







ORINDA LISTING
36 LAS VEGAS, ORINDA
Offered at \$3,150,000
Approx 4,000 sq ft, 5 bed/4.5 bath
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includes two family rooms, study with
fireplace, great room, chef's kitchen, dining
room and large sliders that opens to the
gardens with spacious loggia with built-in
BBQ, sprawling lawns and terraced gardens.



PENDING

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Offered at \$1,998,000
Approx 3,300 sq ft, 4 bed/4 bath
Fabulous true Mid-Century custom home
featuring an open floor plan, floor to ceiling
windows, multiple indoor/outdoor living
spaces, 2 master suites and unique
architectural design/details. Ideally set in a
quiet neighborhood with easy access to BART,
town, schools, hiking trails and shops.



COMING SOON IN
ORINDAWOODS
533 THE GLADE, ORINDA
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plan and great proximity to BART and town.

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Piping problems

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New copper piping on top and old pipes below.

Photos Andy Scheck

Aziz Aineb, construction inspector in the Engineering Department for the city of Lafayette, knew of no inspector by the name written on the document left with the Barnstetters. "I've been here 14 years, and I don't recall anyone by that name," he said. "We usually don't tell people anything about the sewer. There is only one inspector for the city, and that is me. We don't get involved with Sanitary District decisions."

Chris Carpenter of Central Contra Costa Sanitary District said it's unusual for them to mandate replacement. "The very few times we take that opportunity is if it's an old clay pipe, and it's usually because we've inspected it with a borescope and there is obvious damage, like roots intruding. Within foundational areas, Contra Costa County may take jurisdiction over plumbing. That's a third agency. Regional maps appear to show that property within the city of Lafayette, but it's near the border and sometimes it's hard to know who holds jurisdiction."

Conrad Fromm of the Contra Costa County Building Inspections Department said, "That's not our jurisdiction, more than two feet outside the house. It belongs to the Contra Costa Sanitary District. We do contract inspectors out to Lafayette and other towns. The only thing I can think of for an inspector saying that, is that it was undersized for the extra usage that was added. I hate to say it, I can't speak to this particular case because it was so long ago, but inspectors are supposed to have customer service skills. Sometimes, they don't give very good explanations because they assume the service that will do the work will understand. If this were today, I could refer it to a supervisor to question the inspector about it."

The replacement cost an additional \$16,000. It extended around the house and under the driveway, but stopped short of going beneath the street to connect with



The new copper pipe is connected to the water main outside the house.

the main line. "The workers who did it said they could see little wrong with it aside from a small portion close to the house, so it was hard for us to know if it really was needed, or if we were being forced into it for someone else's profit," said Steven Barnstetter.

Regardless of the reasons for replacement, there may have been improprieties in the way the Barnstetters were treated, and the experience left them shaken.

Steven wishes that explanations had been more forthcoming. "Courtesy should not be hard to come by. Someone should answer the phone and make it easy for people with the right information. How hard can it be? The one person who came out to check for the city was quite rude. Horrible. 'You have to do this', he said. He didn't smile, he wasn't on time, and he was very peremptory and dismissive."

Maurice Williams of LeapFrog Plumbing said, "The rules change from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Often we don't know what changes are made to rules until we pull a permit. Even though homeowners are responsible for maintenance, about three feet outside the house the district owns the line, and they can dictate replacement before we even start a job. Before a home is finalized, they have the authority to mandate replacement. It could be a preemptive decision."

For people faced with a similar situation, "At first, get two other opinions. Get someone who is on your side at the beginning to explain pros and cons," said Steven Barnstetter.

Make sure to take careful notes as situations evolve. If interactions are less than professional, the agencies involved have people who are concerned about your experience with the agents representing them.



MELANIE SNOW PRESENTS: HOMES IN ORINDA



14 ST. STEPHENS DRIVE, ORINDA New Price: \$1,695,000 2966 sq. ft. + in-law unit, .66 acres



1 MONTEREY TERRACE, ORINDA Coming Soon in February 3483 sq. ft., 2.66 acres



62 VAN RIPPER LANE, ORINDA Recently Sold Sleepy Hollow Charmer





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MW~ Maureen Wilbur ~

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Feng Shui

Restful and romantic Feng Shui

By Michele Duffy



The headboard and luxurious bedding with little red accents amps up the romance and a carpet softens the luxury and compliments the de rigueur pairs of bedside tables and reading lights in this newly redesigned Orinda master bedroom.

Photos provided

hile love should fill every day and every moment of our lives – not just on the annual special occasions – these times can pointedly serve as a useful reminder to refresh and recharge certain areas of our lives and homes for the better. The feng shui of the master bedroom is a logical and fun place to get focused after Valentine's Day, so here are several key tips to make the spot where we spend restful and romantic time a cozy place you will love every day.

First, whether you are in a relationship or not, loving yourself is the first relationship of importance and allowing yourself to have a master bedroom of your dreams creates a good starting point. So if you are tired of the bedding, want to freshen up the space with new color, or if the art doesn't promote a restful or romantic vibe, then consider how much time you spend there, and give yourself the gift of an upgrade. Remember, if you are interested in attracting someone into your life, you must make room for them energetically as well, so no single nightstands or lonely art work. Instead, try to balance out the setting by flanking the master bed with a pair of bedside tables with 100-watt lighting that allows for reading in bed,

and add uplifting romantic art images. Remember to discard your old mattress you shared with your ex if you are serious about meeting someone new.

If you are already in a relationship, all of the above still applies and the remaking of your bedroom with your partner can be another way to collaborate intimately, to stoke the fires of passion and deepen your connection from within your own home.

Second, stand back and stop for a minute and contemplate whether you love the color on your master bedroom walls and in the master bedroom bath. Is your bedding bland and boring or do the colors inspire rest and romance? Are the color of the drapes or window blinds neutral, allowing for as much natural light to pour in while still allowing the privacy that window treatments are designed to offer? Master bedrooms should not have active yang or active wall colors like red, bright yellow or orange. The master bedroom walls should encourage relaxation and rest and so the colors you choose should be zen-like, yin and on the lighter side with respect to the hue. If you want a darker wall for drama try painting the wall behind the bed that you don't actually see

while you are in bed. Third, from a feng shui perspective, the master bed is the single most important piece of furniture in the entire house. Why? Think about how much time we all spend in our beds, sleeping there eight or nine hours a night at least. Does your bed have a proper bed frame with a soft upholstered or wooden headboard? Feng Shui frowns on metal beds especially the ones with metal bars or slats which are uncomfortable to lean against and where your head can get stuck. They energetically resemble being behind bars while you are in your bed, which is not what you are going for in the sacred spot that crowns romance and rest. Is your mattress begging for retirement? If you are budget minded and need both a new sofa and a new bed, guess which comes first?

... continued on page D10



Surround yourself with Romantic art, which can be photos of you and your partner or whatever feels juicy to you, like this print.



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Feng Shui

Restful and romantic Feng Shui

... continued from page D8

The bed! Getting a solid night's sleep is a gift you can give one another that will keep giving for years to come. There's really no reason to sleep on an uncomfortable mattress. Do you love your bedding and comforter or quilt, or have you just been putting up with it? Fresh new options and ideas bound, so focus on the bed for excellent returns. Placing your intention first on the bed will deliver long lasting positive results and getting it right is not a luxury, it is a necessity. The same is true of the bed frame. If you don't have one, it should be a priority to lift the bed off the floor into a frame with a headboard at least. You will feel more secure and get a more restful sleep. Try not to store anything under your bed either.

Energetically place your bed securely in the "commanding position" which is diagonal from the

Surround yourself with nature inspired art which can also resemble romance like photos or prints of flowers that represent love.



Candles create a romantic atmosphere perfect for the master bedroom.

bedroom door and facing the door but not directly in line with the door. Place your bed against a solid wall as well, and not in front of windows.

If your master bedroom layout doesn't allow for bed placement in the commanding position due to a bath door, closets or windows, don't fret, simply place the bed in the best available spot and apply other Feng Shui tips to create a restful retreat.

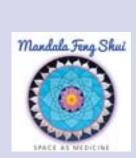
Finally, surround yourself with the personalized luxury that your budget allows including sumptuous bedding, inspirational images that inspire romance or remind you of the bond with your partner, like photos of you together and also peaceful nature inspired images.

Add lavender essential oil diffusers or soy candles so fragrance wafts in the air, and add carpets, rugs and pillows so softness and rejuvenation are paramount. Any clutter should automatically find a home elsewhere or be donated or discarded, and as you settle into your fresh new re-dux space are you feeling more connected to nourishing yourself and the second most important relationship you have with your partner?

Please let me know how my tips inspired you to create a zen-like master bedroom that soundly harmonizes our very basic human need need for love, sleep, and romance.

WEALTH & PROSPERITY XUN Wood Southeast Purple	FAME & REPUTATION Li Fire South Red Summer	RELATIONSHIPS Kun Earth Southwest Pink
FAMILY ZHEN	HEALTH TAI JI	JOY & COMPLETION DUI
Wood East Green Spring	Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	Metal West White Autumn
KNOWLEDGE & SELFCULTIVATION GEN Earth Northeast Blue	CAREER & OPPORTUNITIES KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

The Bagua Map: Front Door





Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2018 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



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Wonderful townhome in Miramonte Gardens, 3 bedroom, 1.5 bathrooms, 1248± square feet with large living room that opens to kitchen, inside laundry room and fresh carpet. Charming rear patio with gate that opens to walkway to Miramonte High School. 2 covered parking spaces just steps from front door. Call for more information.

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Views of Moraga Valley

1170 Alta Mesa Drive



Open House - Sat. & Sun. Feb. 24th and 25th!This beautiful one-story townhome has views of Moraga Valley. Private deck, updated kitchen with granite counters and fresh paint throughout. Come see this unique home that is ready to call your own.

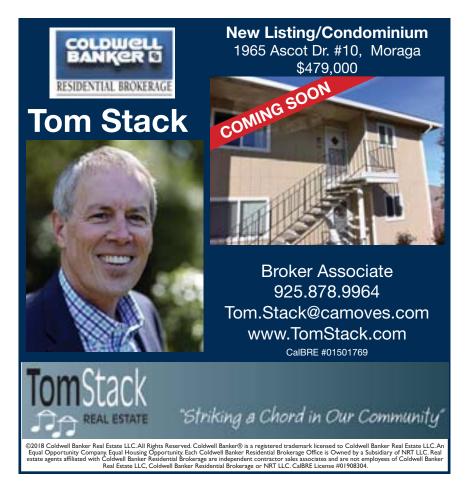
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ALAIN PINEL









Springtime is swarm season for honeybees

Help the honeybee by reporting swarms to the Mt. Diablo Beekeepers Association

Submitted by Janet Kaidantzis

warming is when thousands of honeybees fly together in search of a new home. Swarming is a natural part of the honeybee lifecycle in spring and summer. Swarms fill the sky with a buzzing, swirling cloud of honeybees. Look up! A swarm is an amazing sight.

The swarm of bees will find a place to land—in a tree or on a fence or some other temporary gathering place. They form a cluster that looks like a big ball of bees. They will stay there for a few hours or a few days until they find a permanent home. Swarms are not dangerous if left alone. If you see a swarm that has landed near the ground, call a beekeeper. A beekeeper will rescue the swarm and find it a good home.

Report swarms to the Mount Diablo Beekeepers Association. MDBA volunteers remove swarms, which are prized by beekeepers for their healthy genetics. Help save a swarm, and you will help the honeybee and the environment.

How to find a swarm collector:

Go to www.diablobees.org Click on "Report a Swarm" at the top of the page.

Click on the map or download the "Swarm Removal List" to find a volunteer in your area.

Call the volunteer and be ready to answer some questions about what you see.

The MDBA requests a \$50 donation for collecting a swarm. These funds support programs to educate the public about honeybees and the vital role they play in our environment.



A honeybee swarm lands temporary on a branch until a new home is found.

Page:

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

And the winner is...

By Cynthia Brian

"People are always in good company when they are doing what they really enjoy." ~Samuel Butler

925-377-0977



Award winners in the garden world, Black-Eyed Susan and 2018 Coreopsis and Daisies Photos Cynthia Brian



The bright fluorescent pink of Chinese Fringe.



Cut a branch from a gorgeous magnolia to highlight the end of winter.

'n the first three months of the year, we get to be bystanders at numerous red carpet events. Hello awards Leseason! The Golden Globes, People's Choice, Screen Actors Guild Awards, the Grammy's, and the Oscars are all highlights. Add the Olympics to this year's lineup and we have a full roster of gold, silver and bronze. Over the years I've been privileged to enjoy my share of walking the red carpet in the entertainment industry, and in the plant world, we have our winners, too.

The Perennial Plant Association awarded Allium Millenium the plant of the year. It boasts glossy green leaves with a profusion of large, rosy-purple clusters of flowers that bloom in mid-summer. As butterfly magnets, alliums are beautiful as well as being deer and rabbit resistant. The Perennial Plant of the Year program showcases outstanding perennials that grow in a variety of climates, are disease free, and are low maintenance. A few of the past winners over the years have included lavender, which deer and rabbits won't eat as well as dianthus, phlox, black-eyed Susan (rudbeckia), echinacea, salvia, catmint, sage and coreopsis.

The National Garden Bureau also designates award winners annually. For 2018, the winning bulb is the tulip, the vegetable is the beet, the perennial is the coreopsis, and the star of containers and hanging baskets is the Calibrachoa.

With the unusually warm weather we've experienced this February, gardens have exploded into blooms more than a month earlier than in previous years. With the slightest breeze, the sky rains white petals from pear and plum trees while hillsides and paths are lined with dancing daffodils.

The vivid, paint-box colors of tulips are filling our souls with joy. Part of the lily family and relatives of alliums, tulips comprises 150 species with over 3,000 varieties. Although we plant them in fall after four to six weeks of cooling for spring sprouting, they can be forced to bloom in winter. People often ask me why tulip bulbs need to be refrigerated before planting. The answer is that in their native habitats where winters are colder, they would go dormant allowing for the bulbs to sprout roots while the development of the embryonic leaves and flowers inside the bulb occur. I lived in Holland for 18 months where "tulpen" were the pride of every household, even tough tulips originated in Asia. Did you know that the Netherlands

produce most of the world's annual tulip crop exceeding four billion bulbs annually? Tulip mania (tulpenmanie) reached its crescendo in 1637 when the bubble collapsed, and overnight, many rich traders became paupers. One bulb could buy a house on the Amsterdam canal. Folly! According to the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center, the United States is the biggest importer of Dutch bulbs to the tune of \$1.3 million in wholesale prices annually. The colors of the tulip have significant meaning: red equals love, purple represents loyalty, and white whispers, "I'm sorry!"

The winning edible of the year is the beet and I am so thrilled as this is probably my favorite of all of the root vegetables. I planted my seeds directly in the soil last spring and am still harvesting. When I thin, I eat the seedlings. Beets like acidic soil and they withstand cooler temperatures before harvest. Colors are typically red, purple, yellow, or red with white ring stripes. They are consumed in salads, soups, and pickled. Rich in fiber, potassium, calcium, folic acid, and phosphorus, high in fiber, vitamin A and C, beets have more iron than most other vegetables.

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Page: D14 LAMORINDA WEEKLY OUR HOMES www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977 Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2018

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

And the winner is...

... continued from page D13

The red color comes from the antioxidant betalain, an excellent source of color pigment for natural dyes and coloring agents.

The beauty, resilience, and popularity of coreopsis was a natural fit for the National Garden Bureau to add this glorious flower to its red carpet lineup. In the language of flowers, coreopsis means "always cheerful," and these delightful natives of the Americas live up to this designation. Equally, at home in naturalized prairie settings or manicured landscapes, coreopsis provides a lovely sunny presence wherever they make their home. Although typically seen in colors of yellow and gold, many species also contain red, bronze and burgundy colors and have been commonly used as dyes in native fabrics. Before the introduction of coffee to America, Native Americans boiled the flowers into a warming tea.

The newest star in the garden lineup is calibrachoa, with its 28 different varieties. A relative of the petunia, (although now recognized as it's own genus) calibrachoa hit the marketplace arriving from Brazil via Japan via Europe in the 1980s but were considered difficult to cultivate. They are beautiful plants that do well in containers and hanging baskets and this specialized treatment has turned out to be their niche market. They aren't really mini petunias, yet they are drought tolerant. Plant in well-drained acidic soil and provide six hours of direct sunlight per day. You will be rewarded with brilliant colors, fascinating streaks and stripes, eye-catching stars, and patterns that resemble the strokes of a brush. Your patio will be a floral artwork with calibrachoa in the honored lineup.

With all of these award winners, my supreme favorite still lies with the exquisite lotus flowers that I enjoyed in Southeast Asia. The deep, rich colors, their versatile expressions, I am deeply, madly in love with lotus. Alas, I can't grow it here in my backyard pond.

Speaking of winners, gigantic congratulations to Sal and Susan Captain of Captain Vineyards for being honored as the Moraga Business Persons of the Year! I am personally thrilled to see two stewards of the earth, farmers, gardeners, wine makers, and all around great individuals inducted into this hall of fame. Bravo!

Savor a respite in your landscape for the next few weeks before I offer you a plethora of chores that need attention. Enjoy your own company.

Keep doing what you love and you'll be a winner too. Roll out the red carpet for your favorite plants and get ready for a row-dy and rousing spring.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



The National Garden Bureau's Award Winner calibrachoa callie burgundy in a hanging basket.



Oranges in the forefront and flowering quince in the back of the garden.





925-377-0977

Congratulations to Sal and Susan Captain honored as Moraga's Business Persons of the Year.



Cynthia Brian walks the Red Carpet as one of the stars of the film "Tapping the Source"

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, is a New York Times best selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are1* 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www. StarStyleRadio.com.

Her new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, is available at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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Elegant Orinda Hills 4715 sqft home with beautiful valley views from all rooms. An open design concept with great separation of space.

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10 Winding Lane

A setting like no other. A tasteful estate situated up a winding lane of 8.6 acres. 3 main structures of apx. 23,422 sq.ft.

\$16,500,000



117 Goodfellow Drive

Mid-Century modern 3 Bed/2 Bath custom home on 1+acres captures fabulous views of Mt Diablo & Rheem Valley.

\$899,000



714 Camino Ricardo

Beautifully renovated 3Bed/ 2Bath / 1546 sq. ft. Lovely private 1/3 acre. Close-in cul-de-sac near Orinda border.

\$1,079,000



20 Tia Place

Updated 3 bed, 2 bath Camino Woods single-level home. Ideal indoor/outdoor entertaining spaces.

\$1,195,000



23 Indian Wells Street

Moraga Country Club Bruzzone built Wimbledon Expanded. 4 Bedrooms/ 3 Bathrooms/ 3122 SqFt. Top-Rated Schools!

\$1,400,000



561 Francis Drive

Wonderful single-story home with open floor plan in a charming neighborhood! Updated kitchen, hardwood floors, .37ac level yard.

\$839,000



1000 Dewing Ave., #409

Premium 4th Floor NE corner unit with deck. 2 Bed /2 Bath/ 1152 sq. ft. & 2 Parking Spaces.

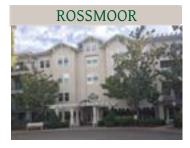
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542 Adams Street

Charming Hillside Neighborhood Bungalow! 2 Bed/ 1 Bath / 1081 sq. ft.,1 car garage home on a flat .06 lot.

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1840 Tice Creek Drive, #2432

Bright & cheerful 4th floor Chatsworth Model with western views of Mt. Diablo. Spacious floor plan.

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