



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on Page D8

Design tips to shoo away winter blues



Photo provided

By Amanda Eck

The chilly air and overcast skies can dampen our spirits, but using a few tried and true design tips can help enhance our homes and chase away the winter blues. Bringing in pops of color and shimmering light are just a few ideas that pack a punch. Here are my five go-to's to brighten these often dreary days:

1) Pillows/Throws: Switching up accent

pillows on sofas and beds are great ways to add a pop of color during the darker winter months. They are also a budget friendly way to update your space. Some of my favorite sources for pillows are: Etsy, Little Design Co. (<https://www.shoplittledesignco.com>), Arianna Belle (<https://ariannabelle.com>) and for a great local resource Linen & Cloth (<https://linenandcloth.com>). Along with new pillows try adding a colorful throw blanket at

the end of your bed or on the arm of your favorite chair.

2) Layer Art: While I love a great gallery style wall, there is something about leaning and layering art that brings depth and interest. Leaning your wall decor provides a great deal of flexibility in your design since you can easily change or move it. It also minimizes damage to your walls, which is great if you are renting. Great places to layer your art are on entry tables, fireplace mantles, and bedside nightstands. And don't be afraid to mix art pieces with a framed mirror. Which brings me to the next tip:

3) Mirrors: Mirrors are great for brightening up a room and making the space feel larger. Before you hang a mirror take into account what is across from it. I reached out to our local Feng Shui expert, Michele Duffy, and she had this to say: "Mirrors are the heavy lifters in Feng Shui and are affectionately called the 'aspirin' of Feng Shui. Sparkly clean mirrors are recommended opposite windows to bring more light into a space, placed in a dining room to reflect and amplify the abundance of happy meals with friends and family, or to create more spaciousness in a tight space like a foyer."

4) Natural elements: I know I have said it before, but there is nothing better than a bouquet of fresh flowers to help brighten up a space. I also love to go out into my yard and cut branches from my trees or shrubs to bring in some green on those dreary cloudy days. And don't underestimate the lure of a bowl of fresh fruit. Placing a bowl of green apples on your coffee table not only adds a pop of color but it encourages a healthy snack when watching television.

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	10	\$600,000	\$1,600,000
MORAGA	7	\$962,500	\$2,200,000
ORINDA	8	\$360,000	\$2,087,500

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

1000 Dewing Avenue #413, \$1,340,000, 2 Bdrms, 1554 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 12-20-19

871 Las Trampas Road, \$1,249,500, 3 Bdrms, 2201 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-16-19,

Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 04-30-19

3161 Lucas Drive, \$1,448,000, 3 Bdrms, 2443 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 12-26-19

700 Old Jonas Hill Road, \$1,720,000, 3 Bdrms, 3224 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-27-19

1070 Sierra Vista Way, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 1519 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-17-19,

Previous Sale: \$202,000, 09-01-87

1624 Silver Dell Road, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2578 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-27-19

741 Solana Drive, \$1,600,000, 3 Bdrms, 2290 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-16-19,

Previous Sale: \$1,100,000, 07-23-15

3419 St Marys Road, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1697 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-23-19,

Previous Sale: \$790,000, 12-03-15

1252 Sunset Loop, \$1,560,000, 4 Bdrms, 3052 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-23-19,

Previous Sale: \$545,000, 03-17-00

16 Warwick Court, \$1,431,000, 3 Bdrms, 1820 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-17-19

MORAGA

1191 Rimer Drive, \$1,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-20-19

1804 Saint Andrews Drive, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1819 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 12-24-19,

Previous Sale: \$680,000, 04-02-10

222 Sonora Road, \$2,020,000, 3 Bdrms, 4685 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 12-18-19

228 Sonora Road, \$2,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 4685 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 12-17-19

81 Sullivan Drive, \$1,235,000, 3 Bdrms, 2121 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-16-19

157 Via Joaquin, \$962,500, 3 Bdrms, 2018 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 12-27-19,

Previous Sale: \$700,000, 06-16-14

124 Walford Drive, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 2110 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-18-19,

Previous Sale: \$1,085,000, 10-16-19

... continued on Page D8



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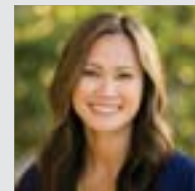
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Design tips to shoo away winter blues



Photos provided

As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity." With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art. Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.



... continued from Page D1

5) Candles: Smells play an important part of our psychological makeup. Scent can affect our memory, our emotions, and even how productive we are. I am a professed candle-holic; ask my family, there is always a candle or two lit when I am at home. When my kids' friends come over they always comment on how good our house smells. One of my son's friends even begged his mom to buy him a candle so his house could smell like the Eck's house. I like to change up the scents with the seasons. I am currently burning a winter scent called Fir & Grapefruit. And if having lit candles make you nervous due to small children or for health reasons, try using a diffuser with essential oils. Or put some cinnamon sticks and orange peel in a pot of water and boil it on the stove; that was my mother's go-to when we were little. She also loved to put on a pot of fresh coffee right before company came over.

I hope these little tips give you some inspiration to drive away the winter blues in your own home. Until next time friends!

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... continued from Page D2

ORINDA

- 46 Brookwood Road, \$384,000, 2 Bdrms, 1164 SqFt, 1935 YrBlt, 12-23-19,
Previous Sale: \$379,000, 06-19-02
- 655 Cross Ridge Court, \$1,920,000, 3 Bdrms, 2731 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-17-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,950,000, 02-14-19
- 36 Dias Dorados, \$1,230,000, 4 Bdrms, 2064 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-16-19,
Previous Sale: \$923,000, 08-25-17
- 36 Heather Lane, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 2923 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-20-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,030,000, 10-28-19
- 1 La Vuelta, \$2,087,500, 3 Bdrms, 2442 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 12-18-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,087,500, 08-04-12
- 6 Linda Vista, \$360,000, 1 Bdrms, 1219 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 12-20-19,
Previous Sale: \$685,000, 09-16-13
- 146 Manzanita Drive, \$1,640,000, 4 Bdrms, 2601 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 12-18-19,
Previous Sale: \$995,000, 12-17-13
- 2 Monte Veda Drive, \$1,110,000, 4 Bdrms, 2302 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-27-19,
Previous Sale: \$630,000, 03-28-01
- 28 Warford Terrace, \$1,605,000, 2 Bdrms, 2421 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-23-19

11 Critical Home Inspection Traps to be Aware of Weeks Before Listing Your LAMORINDA Home for Sale

LAMORINDA - According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale.

Whether you own an old home or a brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That's why it's critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the building inspector flags these issues for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or, worse, turn

prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you're looking for, and knowing what you're looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones.

To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled "11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection" has been compiled which explains the issues involved.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1- 844-941-0941 and enter 2503. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Home organization tips from a pro



Photos provided

By Jenn Freedman

With the new year comes resolutions and fresh starts, and for many of us, the craving to get organized. But where do you start? And how do you get organized and stay organized?

Organizational guru and longtime Moraga resident Jennifer Raftis, Certified Professional Organizer and founder/owner of Efficiency Matters, says, “Getting organized is a marathon, not a sprint.”

Raftis uses the S.P.A.C.E. method for her clients, which she describes as a “no-fail” method. Developed by organizational expert Julie Morgenstern, author of “Organizing from the Inside Out,” the S.P.A.C.E. method, which stands for sort your items, purge items you don’t use or need, assign a “home,” containerize, and evaluate your new system periodically, works for organizing any space—a room, a kitchen drawer, a filing cabinet, a closet, or even the garage.

Raftis recommends starting in a visible area like a room (not a drawer) because you will be able to see the results. Before starting, label four boxes or containers as

follows: recycle, stays, remove (to another location), donate/consign. You will use these same boxes for each space that you want to organize.

When sorting, Raftis says to sort twice. Put all like items together (magazines, toys, phone chargers, sunglasses, pens, newspapers, books, etc.), then go through each pile and put items into one of the boxes (recycle, stays, remove, donate/consign). You may want to start removing the items that don’t belong in the room, but don’t do it yet. “Stay focused on your sorting,” she says.

Then decide what to keep and what to purge. “Ask yourself, does this item serve me today?” If you have a hard time letting things go, Raftis says to consider the reasons. “Was it a gift? If you gave someone a gift that they weren’t using or loving, would you want them to keep it out of obligation? Was it expensive?” Raftis says if you are not using it, you have already spent the money and keeping it won’t bring the money back. This also applies to the age-old dilemma of thinking you might need the item someday. In this instance, Raftis uses the 20/20/20 rule. “If

you can replace it in 20 minutes under \$20 within 20 miles, let it go,” she says.

For the items you are keeping, Raftis suggests figuring out where each item should “live” – ideally close to the place you will use it. Keep it simple, put a label on it, and ensure everyone in your household is aware of the new home. The more complex you make your systems, the harder it will be for anyone to follow.

Once you know what you are keeping (quantities, sizes, and homes,) find or buy containers to store it. Raftis recommends using matching containers and labeling, as this creates an organized and calm aesthetic.

“Your life is always changing, and you will need to evaluate your organizing systems from time-to-time,” Raftis says. “In a few weeks, assess the system. Is it too complicated? Is it in the right location? As the new organized systems in your home start working, I have witnessed a change in confidence and energy with my clients, because they are now in control of their homes.”

To learn more about Raftis’ work or to contact her, visit efficiencymattersllc.com.



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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Love grows in a garden



Sink your nose into the musky scent of Angel Face roses.

Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

“The beauty of the season will grow wherever seeds of love are planted.” ~ Euripides

February derives from the Latin word februa, which means “to cleanse.” The Romans fêted Februalia, a month-long purification and atonement festival, annually occurring during the wettest and dreariest of days of the year. In California, February opens the floodgates of rain with weather that is overcast and cold.

Thankfully, not everything is dreary and gray. We attribute love to February with the celebration of Valentine’s Day and what better place to savor the “amour” than in the garden?

Take a walk in a garden where natural aromatherapy originated. Feel the spongy softness of cool moss as you step off the stone path. Admire the cymbidium orchids beginning to bloom. Sink your nose into a patch of narcissi or heavenly gardenias, inhaling the intoxicating perfumes. Cut a few stems of Angel Face roses with their heady musky scent to give to your partner or friend.

If you are stressed at work, a visit to the intensely fragrant flowers of jasmine will instantly settle your nerves. Is indigestion

bothering you after meals? Munch on peppermint leaves with your lunch. Do your children need to focus more on homework? Make a sachet of grapefruit peels, eucalyptus leaves, and rosemary sprigs to promote concentration. Are you having trouble sleeping at night? Pick a stem of fresh lavender, roll the leaves and flowers between your palms, and breathe in the vapors. All of these delightful therapies are available in the February landscape.

One of the season’s wondrous luscious gifts is the orange. Its folk name is “love fruit” because the orange is sweet and sensuous. The orange warms your heart, restores your sense of humor, bringing out your brighter personality. When you need a boost of confidence before an interview, presentation or audition, smell the peels from any citrus, especially orange or lemon. If you are feeling depressed or sad, inhaling the peels works as a mood-elevator to restore a sunny disposition. Despite the dismal weather, every time I hike up my hill to pick a radiant navel, I am renewed and refreshed with the sweet and tangy juices. Oranges offer a concentrated Vitamin C shower that pollinates a dampened spirit. Oranges and tangerines are

my elixirs. I cook with them, use the leaves, rinds and piths in teas as well as the flowers in salads. I create love sachets and toss the peels in my bathwater when my muscles are aching after a hard day’s work.

Since we have more time to dream indoors about gardening in February than actually going outside, this is a perfect month to do like the Romans: clear the clutter, cleanse your body, mind and soul, and tidy your garden in anticipation of spring. Peruse garden books and catalogs. Make a list of what you want to sow for your family’s enjoyment. When you start growing fresh healthy food, you’ll be showing your heart some love while saving trips to the grocery store. February is Heart Health Month, so experience increased vitamins, flavor and color while munching from your private Garden of Eden.

Life and love began in a garden. Love is not only in the air. Love is growing in your backyard. Discover the benefits of your personalized, organic Love Potion No. 9 and be blessed with the beauty and seeds of this season.

May cupid’s arrow remain in your heart all year and fill your days and nights with passion. Happy Valentine’s Day!



Yellow and white narcissi make a fragrant pocket posy bouquet.

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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

LOVE your heart by eating healthy fresh greens, berries, and fruits combined with exercising, and thinking positively.

PULL weeds as they sprout. It's easier to eradicate the weeds in soft, damp soil when they are four to six inches high.

PRUNE fuchsias, roses, and any still dormant shrubs or trees. Do not prune spring-flowering specimens such as tulips, forsythia, lilac or magnolia.

HOUSEPLANTS need a refresher this month. Repot with fresh potting soil, prune any dead leaves, give a jolt of fertilizer, and a spritz of H₂O.

CLEAN and sharpen tools to be ready for March madness.

FLOAT pink camellias in a bowl on Valentine's Day.

PLANT bare root roses. Expect blooms by summer.

IDENTIFY mushrooms as edible before picking and consuming. Mushrooms growing in your lawn are most likely poisonous.

ADD moss to areas around steppingstones for a romantic, ethereal sensation.

NAME a rose after your special someone or celebration. Find out prices from a rose breeder or develop your specific rose. The American Rose Society serves as the International Cultivar Registration Authority for Roses following rules set forth by the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants in the registration of new rose varieties. <https://www.rose.org>

MAKE a simple arrangement of mums, baby's breath, alstroemeria, and stock to bring a bit of sunshine into a dreary February day.

HIBERNATE at home. Enjoy the luxury of reading a good book on a rainy day. Check out my best sellers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

CLEAR the clutter, cleanse and purify. When in Rome ...

CELEBRATE Valentine's Day with a pocket of posies picked from your garden. Give the gift of a bare root rose that will yield years of adoration.



Pick pink camellias to float in a bowl.



Eat only identified "as edible" mushrooms growing in your yard.



As an anniversary gift, a Digging Deep reader, Rena, received her personalized rose: Rena's Radiance.



A jar of sunshine on a dreary February day: mums, baby's breath, alstroemeria, and stock.



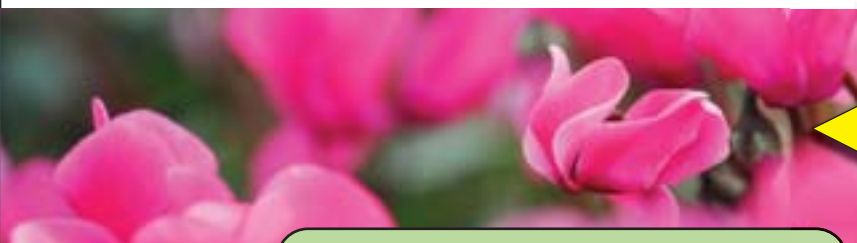
Navel oranges are ripe and ready to rejuvenate you.



Cynthia Brian flanked by a flowering pink bower vine.

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 Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy copies of her best-selling books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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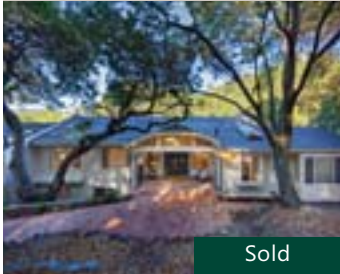
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decks.
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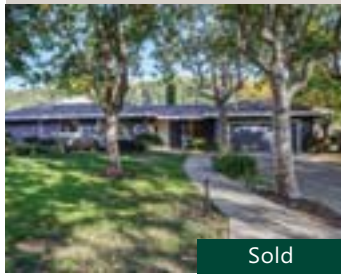
13 Gardiner Court
Custom craftsman home. 6 bed/
4.5 bath with spectacular views,
flat play areas, & stunning
infinity pool.
\$3,595,000

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A new SpringHill Homes mas-
terpiece! 5 bed/ 4 baths +2 half
baths with an open floor plan on a
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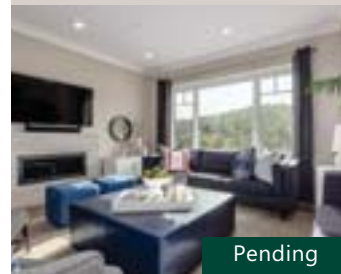
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try Club golf course. Close to
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3 bed/ 3 bath desirable end
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elevator w/ private entry.
\$2,300,000

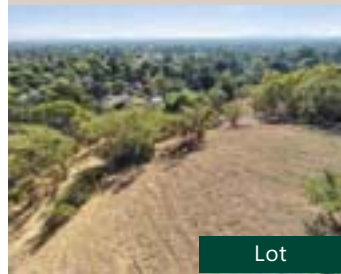
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views of Mt. Diablo. Ideal for
privacy. Investment opprtunity!
\$1,375,000

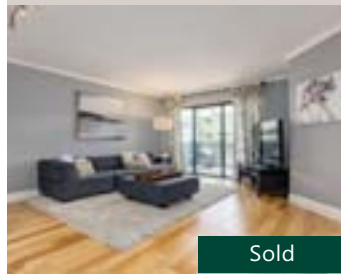
WALNUT CREEK



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1341 Leisure Lane #4
Beautifully updated, sought
after level-in Yosemite model, 2
bed/ 1.5 bath. Perfect for
privacy. Views!
\$499,000

WALNUT CREEK



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1670 San Miguel
Spacious 2 bed/ 2.5 condo w/
remodeled kitchen, hardwood
floors, & oversized master w/
large closet. **\$699,000**

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