Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Renewal by nature

Arugula is easy to grow from seed.

By Cynthia Brian

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever” –Mahatma Gandhi

I popped the crunchy pods of my just-picked sugar snap peas into my mouth as I uttered a prayer of gratitude for the food I grow to nourish my family and the gardens I cultivate to nourish my soul. The past few weeks have brought the fragility of life into focus amidst the mounting death toll from the pandemic and the anxiety aroused by the political rampages.

We need to return to our roots to savor the sweetness of life. For me, Mother Nature has always provided renewal and refreshment in her simplicity and order. When I’m feeling stressed, I go outside to walk, listen, see, smell, touch and taste ... to reconnect with my senses and revive my spirit.

I picked a few stems of jonquil which are now sitting in a vase on my desk as I write this column filling my nostrils with their elegant perfume. My step increases its bounce as I taste the tangy citrus of my newly ripe Navel oranges. Back in my vegetable garden, arugula, sorrel, Swiss Chard, assorted greens, and beets await my culinary menus. Orange and yellow calendula flowers season my salads and the unusual hued flowers of osteospermum el-

My journal indicates that this week in January the roses are to be pruned. My bushes are still filled with buds and blooms that enhance the landscape and my heart. I will complete this task when it is colder next month. Beauty is required as a tonic for joyfulness.

Winter is a time to regroup, to rest, to repair, to rethink. Deciduous trees are now bare, an indication that work in the garden is winding down, at least for a month or so.

We can use this period to dream and decide what projects and plantings we may want to engage in throughout the year. What’s on your list of things that you’ve always desired in your backyard but never had the time, money, or inclination to accomplish? A sampling of suggestions to fill your vision boards could include:

- Planting a pollinator garden or a cutting garden;
- Making a meditation meadow;
- Rebuilding a patio or deck;
- Erecting a retaining wall;
- Growing vegetables, herbs, and fruits;
- Retrofitting regions for relaxation and reading;
- Adding a trellis, gate, arbor, or gazebo;
- Creating compost piles or buying compost bins;
- Improving a perennials plot;
- Hanging hammocks for summer enjoyment;
- Switching to succulents;
- Increasing native populations;
- Including a play structure;
- Paving a path with gravel or crushed granite;
- Installing a pond, fountain, waterfall, or other water feature;

A unique color for Osteospermum blooming in January.

... continued on Page D11
Happy New Year! 2021 is here and all indications point to a robust market. The new year seems to be starting off like we ended 2020, with Lamorinda properties being in high demand. Give us a call so we can get a jumpstart on preparing your home for sale or help you find your dream home.

Located in Orinda’s coveted Country Club neighborhood, this updated home on a private, park-like setting offering lush gardens and picturesque outdoor areas under a canopy of mature oaks and shade trees.

### Lamorinda home sales recorded

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Last reported</th>
<th>Lowest amount</th>
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<td>ORINDA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$965,000</td>
<td>$2,382,500</td>
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Home sales are compiled by CalREsource, 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 CalREsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

**LAFAYETTE**

- 1119 Garden Lane, $1,470,000, 3 Bdrms, 1569 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 12-02-20
- 1179 Glen Road, $1,977,000, 4 Bdrms, 2072 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-30-20, Previous Sale: $970,000, 07-09-10
- 3258 Judith Lane, $1,690,000, 3 Bdrms, 1688 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 12-02-20, Previous Sale: $975,000, 04-16-10
- 1052 Los Arabis Lane, $2,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2679 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-03-20
- 3885 Los Arabis Drive, $2,410,000, 5 Bdrms, 3387 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-30-20, Previous Sale: $1,500,000, 03-10-06
- 3208 Lucas Circle, $1,495,000, 3 Bdrms, 1612 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-03-20, Previous Sale: $619,500, 10-14-11
- 1171 Pleasant Hill Circle, $1,805,000, 3 Bdrms, 2092 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-03-20, Previous Sale: $160,000, 04-01-90
- 517 Silverado Drive, $1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 1927 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-02-20
- 1697 Springbrook Road, $1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 12-02-20, Previous Sale: $325,000, 02-22-99
- 8 Warwick Court, $1,942,500, 5 Bdrms, 2664 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-04-20, Previous Sale: $2,000,000, 06-04-19

**MORAGA**

- 126 Brookfield Drive, $1,660,000, 4 Bdrms, 2013 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-02-20, Previous Sale: $1,070,000, 07-13-06
- 93 Danefield Place, $1,660,000, 3 Bdrms, 2354 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 11-30-20, Previous Sale: $1,200,000, 07-03-14
- 7 El Paraiso Court, $1,925,000, 6 Bdrms, 2982 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-04-20, Previous Sale: $649,500, 05-05-98
- 31 Fieldbrook Place, $1,810,000, 4 Bdrms, 2152 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-02-20, Previous Sale: $1,545,000, 10-23-18
- 78 Jean Court, $2,110,000, 4 Bdrms, 3022 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-03-20
- 1 Kendall Circle, $1,215,000, 4 Bdrms, 1965 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 12-04-20, Previous Sale: $1,227,500, 12-15-16

**ORINDA**

- 3 Briones Vvw, $1,453,000, 2 Bdrms, 1477 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-02-20, Previous Sale: $1,230,000, 04-12-16
- 16 Brookwood Road, $965,000, 3 Bdrms, 1799 SqFt, 1925 YrBlt, 12-01-20, Previous Sale: $519,000, 04-23-04
- 53 Don Gabriel Way, $1,625,000, 3 Bdrms, 2410 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-03-20
- 18 Mira Loma Road, $1,940,000, 3 Bdrms, 2637 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 11-30-20, Previous Sale: $1,360,000, 03-25-14
- 58 Windy Creek Way, $2,382,500, 4 Bdrms, 4149 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 12-04-20, Previous Sale: $23,750,000, 03-06-15
In this crazy market,
Experience matters now more than ever.

IN 2020 WE...

· Helped 35+ families make their moves
· Closed $70+ Million in sales

IF YOU ARE THINKING OF SELLING OR BUYING IN 2021, WE’RE HERE AND READY TO HELP!

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The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett, Licensed Real Estate Broker and CRP, GMS-T

The year 2020 was once again extremely strong for sellers of residential real estate in Lamorinda. Sales volume was solid with a minimal increase in supply matched by continued strong demand and average prices going up in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Despite the pandemic that slowed sales in the second quarter of the year, the first three months and the last six months were extremely busy.

Protocols changed for how houses were shown and there were no Open Houses for either the public or for brokers after mid-March.

Homes stayed on the market for a similar limited time like in 2019 and the majority of homes sold at or above their asking price.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2020, 344 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 288 in 2019 and 300 in 2018. For the 344 reported closings, sales prices ranged from $749,000 to $5.85 million and the average time on market was 19 days, a decrease from the 27 days in 2019.

The average sale price was $1,916,042—a significant increase from $1,789,012 in 2019, $1,736,519 in 2018 and $1,623,636 in 2017. Prices have almost doubled in the last decade.

The average sales price was 101.7% of the final list price. There were four Lafayette foreclosures sold on the MLS.

In Moraga there were 175 single-family closings in 2020. There were 129 single-family closings in 2019 and 132 in 2018, which was down from the 164 in 2017. Prices ranged from $900,000 to $3.365 million. Only three homes closed in the MLS at less than $1 million. The average sale price was $1,590,853, well above $1,486,327 in 2019 and $1,485,713 in 2018. In 2012, it was $991,469 and in 2011 it was $894,768.

The average number of days on market in 2020 was 20. The average home sold for 102.0% of its last list price. There were no REO properties that closed on the MLS and no short sales.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 302—an increase from the 261 a year ago. There were 280 in 2018, 242 in 2017, and 229 in 2016. The reported sales ranged in price from $785,000 to $8.36 million with an average price of $1,889,942. In 2019 it was $1,629,030. In 2018 it was $1,729,306. The average was $1,021,751 in 2011. The average market time was 24 days, down from 36 days a year ago.

The average sales price was an average of 101.7% of the final list price for the reported sales, the same as Moraga. There were no REO (bank owned) sales in Orinda in 2020.

There were no reported sales in Canyon in the MLS in 2019 or 2020.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2020, Lafayette homes sold for $703.44, up from 2019 when it was $671.90 and 2018’s $687.13.

In 2020, Moraga homes sold for $644.18 per square foot, versus $610.00 per square foot in 2019, continuing an increase from the $589.93 in 2018. In Orinda last year it was $672.53 and in 2019 it was $624.28 per square foot for the average home.

... continued on Page D8
I'm fortunate to have helped these buyers and sellers in 2020. Many of these opportunities were “off market.” It’s more important than ever to work with an agent that is local - 2021 is already heating up and I can help!

** Buyers **
- 257 Overhill Road, Orinda
- 100 Estates Drive, Orinda
- 20 Ellen Ct, Orinda
- 100 Sandhill Road, Orinda
- 50 Don Gabriel Way, Orinda
- 3613 Shukla Ct, Walnut Creek
- 76 Scenic Drive, Orinda
- 57 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda
- 10 Wild Lilac Way, Orinda

** Sellers **
- 257 Overhill Road, Orinda
- 100 Sandhill Road, Orinda
- 106 Brookline Street, Moraga
- 101 Hillcrest Drive, Orinda
- 12 Kimberly Drive, Moraga
- 18 Charles Hill Cir, Orinda
- 213 Overhill Road, Orinda
- 76 Scenic Drive, Orinda
- 14 Silverwood Ct, Orinda
- 1091 Pereira Road, Martinez
- Rheem Blvd, Orinda

Cheers to a happy, healthy, and healthy new year.

Amy Rose Smith
Village Associates
925.212.3897
amy@amyrosesmith.com
www.amyrosesmith.com
CalBRE: #01855959
Set on a serene cul-de-sac sits this exquisite custom Bella Vista home with highly upgraded finishes throughout including a state-of-the-art Net Zero power island and climate control system (grid independent), 240-volt electric vehicle hook up in garage, and a gracious chef’s kitchen open to family room with Dual Wolf Fuel Range, 84” Sub Zero Refrigerator and separate freezer, 84” Sub Zero wine column, and Miele dishwasher.

Top this off with a beautifully landscaped backyard with the most glorious views & the ultimate privacy.

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$1,595,000
4 Bed  |  2.5 Bath  |  1,886 Sq Ft  |  0.70 Acre

Lisa Brydon & Kristi Ives
925.285.8336
bi@brydonivesteam.com
brydonivesteam.com
DRE 01408025 | 01367466

**BREATHTAKING BELLA VISTA BEAUTY!**
HERE'S TO NEW BEGINNINGS

I was honored to help so many wonderful clients buy and sell in 2020 and grateful to donate more than $14,000 to charity from closed transactions through my Local Giving Project: www.holcenberg.com/giving-back.

HOMES SOLD IN 2020

261 Claudia Court, Moraga
346 Birchwood Drive, Moraga
359 Donald Drive, Moraga
115 Devin Drive, Moraga
2 Patrick Lane, Orinda
236 Calte La Montana, Moraga
3 Corte Bombero, Orinda
1069 Via Alta, Lafayette
72 Corte Yolanda, Moraga
3303 Whitehaven Drive, Walnut Creek
338 Birchwood Drive, Moraga
149 Saddle Oaks Court, Walnut Creek
390 Hermosa Court, Lafayette
3736 Campolindo Drive, Moraga
126 Brockfield Drive, Moraga
212 Sheila Court, Moraga

Wishing a wonderful 2021 for all and looking forward to surpassing donations this year.

The Real Estate Year in Review

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In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 31 closings in 2020. This is up from 17 closings in 2019 in the MLS. This can be attributed to the higher number of new construction closings reported to the MLS. Sales prices ranged in 2020 from $594,000 to $2.36 million. Moraga had 71 closed units, up from 67 in 2019 and down from 85 in 2018. Sales ranged from $329,000 to $1.375 million. This includes “attached” homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had five closings while in 2019 there were six and 2018 there were nine and eight in 2017. They sold from $635,000 to $1.495 million.

It should always be noted that there are also a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These may include some foreclosures that were sold at the courthouse as well as some sales between private individuals.

As of Jan. 11, there were 45 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of $928,000 to $5.495 million. It should be pointed out that there are no REOs and no short sales. Prices have continued to rise over the last few years and more owners now have equity in their homes and have not had to go the short-sale process or face foreclosure.

A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined shows 49 homes on the market. Last January there were 53 homes on the market. Seasonally the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer, however this cur- rent number may point to another year with a combination of qualified buyers vying for a continued limited supply. The current asking prices range from $989,000 to $25 million in the three communities combined.

In Lamorinda in 2020, 55 homes sold for over $3 million! Interest rates have remained historically low and there is no pressure for them to rise in the short term for mortgages. Corporate relocations have slowed down due to their employees being able to work remotely and schools not being open. Many of these relocations will likely come to pass once offices and schools reopen. We have not seen many outbound relocations for people working for companies who have announced that their corporate headquarters will be moving out of the state.

The minimal amount of single-family new construction has helped keep supply and demand within a better balance than a lot of other neighboring communities.

The East Bay communities like Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, as well as Piedmont and several neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley, continue to benefit from their proximity to San Francisco where prices remain very high. Comparably speaking, the East Bay is still relatively more affordable.

The trend that began in 2011 continues today where in many situations in the three communities, the seller receives multiple offers and homes sell for above the list price. This, when coupled with a relatively low supply and a willingness by sellers to be realistic in their pricing should continue to fuel a strong market in 2021.
Thinking About Selling?

Chris Swim and Tracy Keaton are the premier real estate team serving the Lamorinda communities. Knowledgeable and experienced leaders, this award-winning team brings more than 70 combined years of exceptional concierge service. They approach each real estate transaction as if it was their own, utilizing a skillset of proven marketing strategies, a broad network of resources, and an acute attention to detail that gets the job done. Recognized by their clients and peers for their unparalleled integrity, dedication, and reliability, they put their client’s best interests in the forefront.

If you are thinking about selling . . .

You need to call Chris Swim and Tracy Keaton

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Chris Swim
DRE 00943989
925.766.1447
chris@chriswim.com
chriswim.com

Tracy Keaton
DRE 01051349
925.766.1137
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Cynthia Brian’s Mid-January Gardening Guide

- **RECORD** your landscaping escapades by writing in a garden journal online or in print. Your journals will track trends and seasons for the forthcoming years.
- **CLEAN** your garden tools in a bucket of vinegar and water for 20 minutes. Remove your tools and dip a sponge in a bowl of baking soda. Scrub off the rust.
- **SPROUT** onions and chives in your kitchen by cutting the greens, then putting the roots in a glass of water. Within a week you’ll have fresh greens for your salads and soups. (Change the water daily.)
- **START** yams or sweet potatoes by rooting in a glass jar with water. This is a simple, fun growing opportunity for kids! When lush leaves emerge, it’s time to plant outside to produce more yams or potatoes.
- **REPLENISH** bird feeders with nutritious seeds keeping our avian visitors nearby while supplementing their dietary requirements during the cold season.
- **READ** seed and bulb catalogs or magazines that feature gardens.
- **HARVEST** sugar snap peas, arugula, Swiss Chard, greens, and Brussels sprouts.
- **REDUCE** watering on houseplants as they rest for a winter’s nap.
- **RESOLVE** to spend a minimum of 30 minutes per day outside. Studies indicated that every person needs at least 15 minutes of outdoor sunlight daily for necessary Vitamin D replenishment.
- **REFRAIN** from heavy pruning of your rose bushes until buds and blooms are finished.
- **PLANT** a container of aloe to use on burns and bites.
- **RECONNECT** and be renewed by nature.

Close up of jonquil. One stem will perfume a room.

Yam growing in a glass jar can be planted in the garden.

Cynthia Brian

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia 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. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD.

Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures.
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www.GoddessGardener.com

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Renewal by nature

... continued from Page D1

Increasing your library of garden guides;
Removing a junk pile;
Stacking wood for a fireplace or firepit;
Enlarging bird habitats;
Replacing irrigation systems;
Reseeding lawns in spring;
Building a rain garden;
Starting a small vineyard;
Buying patio furniture and chaise lounges;
Planning a rock wall;
Assembling an animal enclosure;
Painting the fence; and
Shooting photos of your plants and the wildlife that visit.

Ideas are endless as we daily take time to pause, brainstorm, and learn something new. Foster enthusiasm for the new year by paying attention to the enrichment of the natural world.

Reawaken your senses and restore your passion. Design your future farm.

Breathe!
Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

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Even in trying times, we don’t forget our Enjoy More philosophy. Our team strives to find creative ways to bring joy into residents’ lives every day. Because to us, home means community and feeling like your best self.

As the New Year starts, we look forward to sharing brighter days together.

Merrill Gardens
1010 Second St, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 272-0074 • merrillgardens.com
Lic #079200597

*Limitations may apply. Call for details.

Independent Living • Assisted Living • Memory Care
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<th>MORAGA</th>
<th>LAFAYETTE</th>
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<td>Exceptional 5 bed/ 4.5 bath 4248 sqft</td>
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<td>home on .54 acres w/ updated kitchen &amp;</td>
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<td>panoramic views of Orinda. Minutes from</td>
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<tr>
<td>42 Oak Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spacious 4 bed + bonus room/ 3 bath</td>
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<tr>
<td>2860 sqft home on .28 acres. Close to</td>
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<tr>
<td>town, BART &amp; Hwy 24. Excellent schools!</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,595,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Via San Inigo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beautiful 4 bed/ 3 bath home w/ great</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>commute, flat yard space, solar panels,</td>
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<tr>
<td>electric car charger &amp; views!</td>
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<tr>
<td>$6,000/ Monthly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Gloria Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>One level 3 bed/ 2 bath rancher on</td>
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<tr>
<td>cul-de-sac. Includes bonus family room,</td>
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<tr>
<td>attic playroom &amp; English style gardens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,295,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>67 Brookwood Road # 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rarely available 2 bed/ 1 bath first floor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>condo in charming Orinda Oaks, close to</td>
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<tr>
<td>BART, shops, theater &amp; restaurants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$550,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>217 Village Gate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rare two level 3 bed/ 2.5 bath</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orindawoods view property w/ 2 patio</td>
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<tr>
<td>decks, 2 car garage, &amp; large living areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,435,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>892 Las Trampas Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newer two story Craftsman style home w/</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 bed/ 4 bath. On lush .66 acres w/ views.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close to Hwy 24 &amp; downtown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2,550,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000 Dewing Avenue #307</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single level 3 bed/ 2 bath 1568 sqft</td>
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<tr>
<td>condo close to vibrant downtown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lafayette w/ private patio &amp; in-closet</td>
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<tr>
<td>laundry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,185,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1647 Taylor Blvd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remarkable custom single story 4 bed/</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5 bath on level .63 acre lot. Minutes</td>
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<td>to downtown, Hwy 24 &amp; BART.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,795,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Hidden Valley Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Custom 4 bed/ 3 bath 3679 sqft home on</td>
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<td>.48 acres minutes from commute, BART,</td>
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<tr>
<td>shopping, &amp; top rated schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2,750,000</td>
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