Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Houseplant housemates

"Having plants in your house is a natural way to continuously clear yourself!" ~ Doreen Virtue

By Cynthia Brian

"Forty-five! That's the number of houseplants that filled my tiny dorm room on the seventh floor of Hedrick Hall during my freshman year at UCLA. Every shelf, box, windowsill, wall hook, desk, and floor space were filled with a container sprouting something green. I had gone from being surrounded by nature on the farm to living in a high rise in the concrete jungle. My body, mind, and spirit craved a garden. I created an indoor oasis of easy-care houseplants that helped me breathe better in those days when Los Angeles was clogged with smog.

Eighteen! That's the number of potted plants that currently grace my indoor space. The number doubles if you count containers on my porch and balcony. Most of my family of plants have been with me for decades. I have a fiddleleaf fig that began as a small specimen in a one-gallon pot that now towers to 15 feet in my hall. A precious peace lily that was gifted to me when "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul" hit the New York Times bestseller list currently inhabits a nine-square-foot corner of my family room. An original four-inch size variegated bromeliad birthed pups and is a focal flora in my living room. My lucky bamboo growing in water peppered with pebbles soars three feet or more.

With winter keeping us from digging outside, indoor plants offer a way to garden in inclement weather while adding beauty to your interior décor. Even better than the attractiveness that plants bring to our designs, they are air-filtering workhorses as well. Air quality has become a big buzzword during the COVID pandemic. Through the process of photosynthesis, plants convert the carbon dioxide we exhale and also remove gases from the air through a process called absorption. Back in 1989, a NASA report concluded that household plants could provide a "promising economical solution to indoor air pollution." A 2020 study published in the Journal of Environmental Management indicated that it would take a green wall to improve the health index of an interior environment. No matter which is truer, one thing is certain, being in nature as well as being surrounded by houseplants lowers our blood pressure, reduces stress, and improves mental health.

Numerous specimens make excellent houseplants. A few of my favorites include orchids, bromeliads, aloe, peace lily, snake plant, spider plant, pothos, dracaena, croton, fiddleleaf fig, dieffenbachia, anthurium, parlor palm, arrowhead plant, and lucky bamboo. All of these are very easy to maintain, offer gorgeous greenery, and can live for years with minimal proper care.

To grow healthy, happy plants that will provide endless enjoyment and attractiveness, these elements are necessary.

1. Provide the correct amount of light. Before you purchase any houseplant, look around your home for your light conditions. Some plants need bright light in a south window, others prefer the low light of a north-facing window. Some like it hot, some like it cool. Do your homework.

2. Water cautiously. Many houseplants drown from over-watering. The lucky bamboo is one rare specimen that thrives in water. Make sure that you have adequate drainage in all containers.

... continued on Page D10
LAFAYETTE - Off Market
New Construction in Happy Valley - PENDING
4BD | 4.5BA | Office | Guest House | .90 AC | 3CAR

We are excited to report that this year is looking like it will be another strong one for the Lamorinda real estate market.

Our new construction listing has just gone pending. Main house approximately 5,300 sq. ft., separate guest house approximately 763 sq. ft. with a spectacular view; just under an acre, mostly flat.

We look forward to helping you with your real estate needs this year. Please call or email us for a confidential interview.

Glenn Beaubelle
Kellie Beaubelle
925.254.1212
TheBeaubelleGroup.com
Glenn@TheBeaubelleGroup.com

### Lamorinda home sales recorded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Last reported</th>
<th>Lowest amount</th>
<th>Highest amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFAYETTE</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td>$4,795,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORAGA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$620,000</td>
<td>$2,550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORINDA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$488,000</td>
<td>$4,400,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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**
- 3557 Boyer Circle, $1,365,000, 4 Bdrms, 2488 SqFt, 1932 YrBlt, 11-29-21
- 55 Cricket Hill Road, $3,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-03-21
- 124 Del Centro Court, $1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 1874 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-01-21
- 1042 El Curtola Boulevard, $1,550,000, 3 Bdrms, 2285 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-01-21
- 3214 Gold Court, $2,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 3329 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-03-21
  - Previous Sale: $465,000, 03-01-88
- 1026 Hoedel Court, $4,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 3913 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 11-30-21
  - Previous Sale: $900,000, 07-27-17
- 1102 Orchard Road, $2,280,000, 4 Bdrms, 2852 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-09-21
  - Previous Sale: $1,010,000, 05-14-04
- 1129 Palomares Court, $1,420,000, 4 Bdrms, 1647 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 11-30-21
  - Previous Sale: $634,000, 07-11-03
- 3977 South Peardale Drive, $3,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 3580 SqFt, 2012 YrBlt, 12-03-21
  - Previous Sale: $2,617,000, 08-05-19
- 1570 Rancho Del Hambre, $3,190,000, 4 Bdrms, 4865 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 11-29-21
  - Previous Sale: $1,075,000, 07-01-92
- 833 Topper Lane, $3,215,000, 4 Bdrms, 2648 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 12-01-21

**MORAGA**
- 126 Ascot Court #C, $434,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-07-21
  - Previous Sale: $280,000, 06-18-15
- 90 Greenfield Drive, $1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 1786 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-06-21
  - Previous Sale: $900,000, 03-03-15
- 1 Hastings Court, $2,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3620 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 11-29-21
  - Previous Sale: $1,750,000, 01-31-13
- 50 Merrill Circle, $2,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 4219 SqFt, 1992 YrBlt, 11-29-21
  - Previous Sale: $2,200,000, 09-18-15
- 40 Merrill Circle, $2,025,000, 3 Bdrms, 2946 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 12-03-21
  - Previous Sale: $1,250,000, 08-06-16
- 1133 Rimer Drive, $1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 2220 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-29-21
  - Previous Sale: $349,000, 08-01-88
- 1032 Sanders Drive, $912,500, 3 Bdrms, 1454 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 11-30-21
  - Previous Sale: $840,000, 04-16-02
- 65 Sullivan Drive, $1,819,000, 4 Bdrms, 2308 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-03-21
- 63 Vista Encinos, $2,345,000, 4 Bdrms, 3233 SqFt, 2020 YrBlt, 12-06-21

**ORINDA**
- 8 Avis Court, $2,101,500, 4 Bdrms, 2399 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-29-21
- 73 Brookwood Road #13, $700,000, 2 Bdrms, 1020 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-06-21
  - Previous Sale: $330,000, 08-12-03
- 125 Canon Drive, $1,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1933 YrBlt, 11-30-21
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118 Bates Court, Orinda
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3256 Sweet Drive, Lafayette
Sold for $1,715,000 | Sold for $1,207 per square foot

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The Real Estate Year in Review

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

Last year was another extremely strong year for sellers of residential real estate in Lamorinda. Sales volume was solid with a minimal increase in supply matched by continued strong demand and desirable interest rates; the result was average prices went up in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. The ongoing pandemic did not slow the market at all.

Homes stayed on the market for a similar limited time like in 2019 and 2020 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, 2021, 417 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 344 in 2020 and 288 in 2019. For the 417 reported closings, sales prices ranged from $840,000 to $11.5 million and the average time on market was 16 days, a decrease from the 19 days in 2020.

The average sales price was $2,124,266 – a significant increase from $1,916,042 in 2020 – and from the $1,789,012 in 2019, the $1,736,519 in 2018 and the $1,625,636 in 2017. The average price has doubled in the last decade.

The average sales price was 107.5% of the final list price, which in 2021 was $1,975,464. Again, it is only an average, but the average sales price in dollars was just about $150,000 above the average asking price. In 2020 it was 101.7% of the final list price. This comes from a combination of properties being listed well below their actual value and in some cases “bidding wars” that pushed up prices. There were two Lafayette foreclosures sold on the MLS.

Only seven homes closed below $1 million.

In Moraga there were 184 single family closings in 2021, with 175 single family closings in 2020 and 129 single family closings in 2019. Prices ranged from $1.06 million to $3.9 million. The average sales price was $1,926,353. In 2020 it was $1,590,853, $1,486,327 in 2019 and $1,485,713 in 2018. It was $1,388,287 in 2017 and $1,272,179 in 2016. As in Lafayette, the average home price has doubled in the last decade.

The average number of days on market in 2021 was 14. In 2020 it was 20. The average home sold for 109% of its asking price. The average list price was $1,777,012 so the average home sold for about $150,000 above asking. A year ago, it sold for 102% of its last list price. There was one REO property that closed on the MLS and no short sales.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 373 versus 302 a year ago – an increase from the 261 in 2019. The reported sales ranged in price from $925,000 to $8 million with an average price of $2,187,385. In 2020 it was $1,889,942. In 2019 it was $1,629,030 and in 2018 it was $1,729,306. In 2017 it was $1,614,279 and 2016 it was $1,577,727. Again, the average sales price has more than doubled in the last 10 years. The average market time was 17 days – down from 24 days a year ago.

The average sales price was an average of 108% of the final list price. A year ago it was 101.7% of the final list price for the reported sales. There were no REO (bank owned) sales in Orinda in 2021.

There were three reported sales in Canyon in the MLS in 2021 and the average sales price was $1,082,667.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2021, Lafayette homes sold for $823.60, well above the $703.44 in 2020 and up from 2019 when it was $671.90.

In 2021, Moraga homes sold for $775.04 per square foot versus $644.18 in 2020. In 2019, Moraga homes sold for $610.00 per square foot.

In Orinda last year homes sold for $797.26 per square foot, versus $672.53 in 2020 and $624.28 per square foot for the average home in 2019.

... continued on Page D14
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>38 years of experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No individual agent has SOLD more homes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarkthompson.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile: 925-998-7898</td>
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<td><strong>Partial List of Homes Sold</strong></td>
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2021 Total Sales Transactions In 2021 Of Contra Costa County Agents In 2021

Information taken from the MLS as of January 1, 2022 will not be verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Properties represent a compilation of listings from various brokerage firms and may or may not have been listed or sold by the office/agent presenting the information.
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**Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian**

**Houseplant housemates**

![Leek growing in water.](image1)  
Photos Cynthia Brian

![Orchids add beauty and elegance to any room and will re-bloom.](image2)

![Lucky Bamboo will grow in water or soil and thrives in low to medium light.](image3)

... continued from Page D1

Put gravel or small pebbles at the bottom of the pot. Poke a chopstick or pencil into the soil. If it comes out soggy, do not water. If it is dry, offer hydration to your plant friend. Plants may dry out more quickly in winter when forced air heaters are operating. Most plants may require water once a week or less.

3. Fertilize according to directions. Stop feeding plants in the winter. Start again in the spring. Leafy green plants will need nitrogen, plants that flower want phosphorus.

4. Eradicate bugs. Placing a clove of garlic in the soil is a great way to keep your friend bug-free. To kill bugs, place a clove of garlic in the soil. Mealybugs, aphids, and scale can be removed with a spray solution of water, alcohol, and dish detergent. The solution can also be rubbed on the leaves. Make sure to let the soil dry out if fungus gnats appear.

5. Maintain humidity. Cacti enjoy dry conditions; however, most plants prefer 50% humidity. In winter, our homes tend to be drier. If containers can be lifted, add a saucer of pebbles filled with water to increase the humidity, or spray with a fine mist. Another idea is to take your plant into your bathroom or shower.

6. Trim spent blossoms and dead leaves. When flowers are finished blooming, or leaves die, remove them as soon as possible to allow for new growth.

7. Other things. Always read the instructions on care before making a purchase. Turn all houseplants a quarter turn at least once every two weeks to maintain their shape as most will reach for the sunlight. If you receive plants as gifts, make sure to remove wrapping to allow for good drainage. Living Christmas trees need to be moved outdoors. Depending on the size, you may be able to use the tree for next year’s holidays. Or you may need to transplant your tree into a larger container to keep on your patio. If you are going to plant it in the ground, determine the placement carefully as these trees will grow into very large evergreens with expansive roots.

One final interest of mine that is an educational and exciting experiment for children is rooting vegetables in a glass of water on a windowsill. Avocados, fennel, scallion, green onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and leeks grow quickly. Refresh the water daily. I currently am growing leeks and continue to use the green tops in my cooking.

With a little effort, your interiors will be healthier and more stunning with the introduction of living greens. Bring nature indoors with you while enjoying cleaner air living happily with your organic artistic housemates.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.
This fiddle-leaf fig, also known as ficus lyrata, has been growing for 35 years.

Pothos can be grown from a cutting, enjoys low light, and is the easiest plant to grow.

Sansevieria, the snake plant, rarely needs water.

Spider plants are the easiest to grow in any condition.

This fifteen-year-old variegated bromeliad grew pups and continues to bloom.

Photos Cynthia Brian
The Real Estate Year in Review

... continued from Page D4

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 36 closings, up from 31 closings in 2020. Sales prices ranged in 2021 from $628,000 to $1,835,000. Moraga had 118 closed units, up from 71 in 2020. Sales ranged from $350,000 to $1.5 million. This includes “attached” homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had 13 closings, up from five in 2020. Eight of these were in the complexes on Brookwood Road and the others in Orindawoods. They sold from $420,000 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 are usually sales between private individuals.

As of Jan. 8, there were only 25 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of $1.049 million to $12.8 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 18 homes on the market. Last January there were 49 homes on the market. Seasonally the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer, however this current number may point to another year with a combination of qualified buyers vying for a continued limited supply. The current asking prices range from $1 million to $6.5 million in the three communities combined.

In Lamorinda in 2020, 55 homes sold for over $3 million! In Lafayette alone 56 sold for $3 million or more in 2021.

Mortgage rates have remained historically low. Corporate relocations have slowed down due to their employees being able to continue to work remotely. Many of these relocations will likely come to pass once offices more fully 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 2022.
Cynthia Brian with her garden books.

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 books, including Chicken Soup for the Gardener’s Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings.

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