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Hollie's Homegrown prides itself on offering local artisan products

By Vera Kochan



Hollie's Homegrown offers a wide variety of Lamorinda-made items. Photo Vera Kochan

For years, Hollie's Homegrown was a mainstay at many of the local farmers' markets. Hollie Lucas-Alcalay had been looking for a retail location for quite some time, until she found the perfect spot on one of Lafayette's busiest intersections at the corner of Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard a couple of years ago.

"I wanted to have a brick and mortar," Lucas-Alcalay stated. "I was getting tired of having to pack stuff up every weekend. This way I can close the door at night and just leave. We're really fortunate that we're here and for people to celebrate our local artisans."

As before, Hollie's Homegrown sells her own products made from her Moraga herb garden, only now everything is handmade and assembled on site in her shop's production kitchen. Items such as seasoning salts, raw honey, olive oil, vinegars, risotto mixes, biscotti mixes, focaccia mixes and tea blends are all available, in

addition to her family's Lucas & Lewellen Estate Wines (LLwine.com).

Body products include bath salts, handmade soap, fragrance roll-ons, body scrubs, essential oils and healing salves. "I grow most of the herbs that go into my products," Lucas-Alcalay said. "The rest I get from relationships that I've made through the farmers' markets."

The shop also sells aprons, coasters, wine glasses, appetizer/party crockery, candles, jewelry and even doggie treats. "I sell items from 26 local artisans, and 23 of them are from Lamorinda," Lucas-Alcalay explained. "We're very careful about who we allow to join us in the store. Some are first-time producers, and most of them are women. It's so important to support local businesses, and local business profits go back to the community."

Hollie's Homegrown doesn't have a huge marketing budget, and relies on word of mouth, "but I enjoy giving business advice to first-time craftspeople," Lucas-Alcalay said. To that end, she has begun to offer "classes" in-store with a varying range of participatory activities. Ros All Day involves wine sampling, wine education and food pairing to go with it, and she offers classes in making seasoning salts using her herbs, lessons in herb-infused olive oil and vinegars and instruction in making bath and body products. She also invites other artisans to give classes in things like watercolor art or glass-making.

Hollie's Homegrown's latest event is a monthly California High Tea held every last Sunday of the month. After living in England for two years, Lucas-Alcalay, who's a tea drinker, enjoyed the tradition. Serving sweets and savories made by local bakers and caterers, she calls it "California" as opposed to "English" in order to give a nod to her California/Lamorinda sources.

Hollie's Homegrown is located at 998 Moraga Rd., Lafayette. For more information visit: www.Hollieshomegrown.com or call (925) 385-0732.

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