

# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 18 Issue 5 Wednesday, April 24, 2024



Handyman half-bath makeover ... read on Page OH4

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Social Climbers

By Cynthia Brian



Purple wisteria covers a sturdy pergola.

*“Nature teaches us that even the most delicate vines can reach great heights with the right support.” Oprah Winfrey*

Getting out of my car, the perfume emanating from my garden smells more like being inside the cosmetic department at a store. Flowing over my front gate and arbor, the jasmine is thick in its wondrous white wardrobe. Bees are buzzing as the intoxicating fragrance fills the air. A robust climber, the blooms from this gregarious vine are one of the most sought-after scents to make expensive perfumes and flavored teas. But jasmine has a dark side: it can be invasive. It grows so vigorously that it can strangle trees, shrubs, and flower beds. Whenever a stem touches the ground, a new vine will root. Jasmine thrives in sunlight and the blossoms prefer to face the sun. Keep it pruned and under control, or you may find that it will take

Photos Cynthia Brian

over your landscape.

Climbers, vines, or plants that climb have specialized structures that allow them to ascend and cling to surfaces for support. I love many of them and you may also.

#### What are a few of the most popular climbing plants besides jasmine?

- Clematis
- Wisteria
- Passionflower
- Trumpet Vine
- Grapevine
- Climbing Roses
- Nasturtium

Clematis is renowned for its beautiful blooms, long-flowering with a plethora of colors, shapes, and climate exposure. There are over 300 species and hundreds of hybrids.

Wisteria vines produce romantic cascades



Clematis climbs and twines on any structure, going dormant in winter.

of fragrant pendulous blossoms in lavender, pink, and white that resemble bunches of grapes. Their vigorous vining capabilities require a very sturdy structure.

Passionflower is delicate and exotic-looking, climbing with tendrils on trellises, encompassing more than 400 species. Heady-perfumed flowers appear on new growth as pollinators flock to the garden.

Trumpet vine, native to Eastern North America, boasts trumpet-shaped flowers that attract hummingbirds in glorious shades of red, pink, scarlet, purple, and yellow.

Grapevines are perennial plants producing delicious fruit for eating, wine, jams, and juices. They are a climbing vine requiring a support system to allow the fruit to hang.

... continued on Page OH8



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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	21	\$300,000	\$6,050,000
MORAGA	13	\$448,500	\$3,195,000
ORINDA	14	\$1,250,000	\$4,970,000

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

- 831 Avalon Avenue, \$2,365,000, 3 Bdrms, 2059 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 03-06-24
- 3631 Bickerstaff Road, \$1,025,000, 2 Bdrms, 946 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 03-19-24
- 922 Brown Avenue, \$1,175,000, 2 Bdrms, 1526 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 03-22-24
- 935 Carol Lane, \$2,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 2166 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 02-28-24, Previous Sale: \$2,800,000, 11-01-22
- 17 Cerro Encantado, \$3,350,000, 5 Bdrms, 4140 SqFt, 2020 YrBlt, 03-20-24, Previous Sale: \$37,500, 05-15-04
- 3607 Chestnut Street, \$1,805,000, 2542 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 03-11-24, Previous Sale: \$935,000, 03-06-08
- 411 Donegal Way, \$1,041,000, 3 Bdrms, 1548 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 03-18-24
- 1211 El Curtola Boulevard, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 1725 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 03-13-24, Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 06-08-22
- 1650 Glen Oak Court, \$1,800,000, 6 Bdrms, 2890 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 03-20-24, Previous Sale: \$829,000, 09-08-04
- 3666 Happy Valley Road, \$6,050,000, 5 Bdrms, 5179 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 03-22-24, Previous Sale: \$4,100,000, 03-26-15
- 3808 Happy Valley Road, \$3,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 5596 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 02-29-24, Previous Sale: \$383,000, 08-01-87
- 829 Las Trampas Road, \$1,225,000, 4 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 02-28-24, Previous Sale: \$315,000, 08-01-89
- 786 Los Palos Mnrx, \$2,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 3196 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 03-08-24
- 312 Maverick Court, \$2,975,000, 4 Bdrms, 3513 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 03-05-24, Previous Sale: \$1,775,000, 08-05-15
- 3328 Mildred Lane, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2169 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 03-05-24, Previous Sale: \$550,000, 12-06-00
- 858 Mountain View Drive, \$2,800,000, 7 Bdrms, 4280 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 02-27-24, Previous Sale: \$1,780,000, 03-25-16
- 3279 Mt Diablo Court #10, \$925,000, 3 Bdrms, 1731 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 03-07-24, Previous Sale: \$795,000, 08-13-18
- 15 Shreve Lane, \$300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 03-19-24
- 637 Sky Hy Circle, \$3,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 3064 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 03-07-24, Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 05-25-00
- 3302 Springhill Road #A, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2315 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 3-20-24, Previous Sale: \$730,000, 07-19-13
- 1025 Willow Drive, \$2,375,000, 4 Bdrms, 2135 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 03-18-24, Previous Sale: \$1,082,000, 09-24-19

... continued on Page OH9

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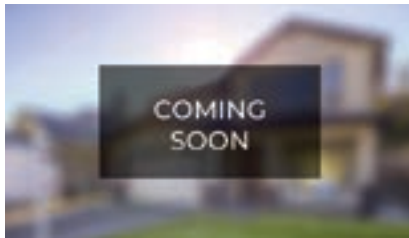
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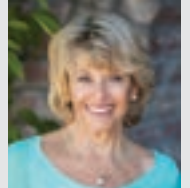
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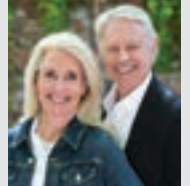
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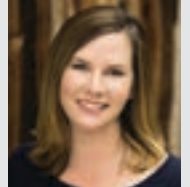
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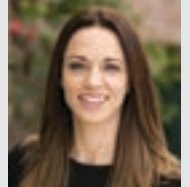
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WENDY MEANS





# Half Bath Makeover

By Jim Hurley



Photos Jim Hurley

In 1966, The Mamas and The Papas released their first album, "If You Can Believe Your Ears". In addition to a couple hit songs, the album created a stir with its cover art, a picture of the four musicians together in a bathtub next to a toilet. In 1966, the toilet was considered in poor taste, and the cover art was modified in subsequent releases to conceal it.

Does your home have a half bath, possibly in poor taste? Maybe it just needs a little cosmetic update? Remodeling even a small half bath triggers a multitude of design considerations. I am frequently asked: "How much would it cost to re-do that bathroom?" The answer is: Do you have a budget or a design in mind? You may either budget to meet your design or design to meet your budget.

A client recently asked me to replace the cracked toilet in his half bath. Unfortunately, the sink cabinet included a countertop that extended in one continuous length across the back wall of the room and over the toilet tank. New toilets are taller and don't fit under that shelf. My client is now considering an update to the whole bathroom. He is in the essential design phase. A complete design helps prevent unnecessary costs like buying components that don't fit, or painting walls that you later tear down.

There is an expression for situations where work begins before the design phase is completed: "Ready, Fire, Aim". The following are suggested design decisions for your project. They will help you plan (aim) before

you start construction (fire).

My client's remodel started with needing a new commode. Here is a good example of an opportunity to spend a little or a lot. The price range varies for even a basic toilet. If you are coveting that heated Toto Washlet Bidet seat, it will double the price of the toilet (verses a regular seat) and you will need to add a GFCI outlet near the toilet. Does your half bath require the bidet? If it is a frequent stop for you and the family, maybe so. If it is for company only, maybe not.

If you want to replace a sink cabinet with a pedestal sink, you will probably want to rework the supply valves and even possibly the drain to position them directly behind the narrow pedestal column; add the labor expense to your budget accordingly. If you are simply replacing a cabinet and sink counter, there are many cabinets that come with the countertop and sink combined. One very desirable sink feature to look for is an overflow hole. This is a single hole or slot near the top of the sink which allows water to drain from a plugged sink before it runs over the top and floods the bathroom floor. It is important to verify this, since not all sinks come with this overflow feature.

If you are thinking of installing or removing a recessed medicine cabinet, there is framing, patching, and painting required. Backlighting mirrors are becoming more popular but will require electrical work to install (Ka-Ching!).

Are you changing the floors? You will want to pick out your new flooring to complement your cabinets and wall color. Hardwood flooring in a bathroom can be damaged by water; if you like the look of wood, the new laminates do an excellent job of imitating wood and are more water resistant. Also look at imitation wood-grained ceramic tiles - they are 100% waterproof.

Plan to buy new a faucet. You can try to re-use the existing faucet and drain from your old sink in your new countertop, but older fixtures don't always disconnect cleanly. Now this is very sad to write, but despite how popular they are, the color-coated fixtures of gold, black, bronze, antique brass, or white lose their luster in

about five years. Unless money is no object, you'll regret getting them when you pay to have them replaced. If you want a finish that lasts, get chrome or brushed nickel fixtures.

Peripheral expenses to anticipate are lights, mirrors, towel bars, toilet paper holders, a fan, and cabinet knobs. Prices can range dramatically depending on the quality and style. I recently installed a TP holder with a cell phone shelf attached on top - convenient for multitasking during your contemplative time.

The materials and labor for your bathroom update can be basic or expensive, depending on your tastes. Control of the budget requires planning, defining the scope of your project, and sticking to that scope.

Careful planning helps avoid the Ready, Fire, Aim syndrome: rework delays and budget overruns. After reading this article, you may be asking yourself if you have the DIY bug this badly. That's a good time to consult with a professional to help with the design.



Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.







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*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## Social Climbers



**Fragrant jasmine covers a gate and arbor.**

Photo Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page OH1

My Rieber grapevines (*Vitis Vinifera*) which I grew from canes my dad gave me from our ranch years ago have used my crabapple tree as a trellis. Fall is fun when the tree is filled with bunches of blue-black grapes hanging from the branches.

Climbing Roses can drape over a wall, sprawl along a fence, train up an obelisk, or swirl up a tree. In my yard, my two favorite climbers are the thornless, white Lady Banksia rose, which cohabitates with my plum and chestnut trees, and the delightfully fragrant Lady of Shallot in shades of apricot and pink that covers a fence.

Nasturtium is a delicious edible plant with a zesty, peppery flavor. Flowers with bold colors of yellow, red, and orange trail and climb.

### **Popular Climbers NOT to plant:**

- Honeysuckle
- Morning Glory
- Ivy

As beautiful as honeysuckle and morning glory are, they can also be incredibly invasive - displacing native species, producing dense mats of foliage, and covering trees, fences, or any item in their path. In some settings, they increase the erosion of the soil while reducing biodiversity. I remember my first visit to Bermuda thirty years ago, where I was mesmerized by the giant and glorious sky-blue flowers that covered everything everywhere. When I asked about the “magnificent morning glory”, my comment was met with disdain. “This is a nuisance plant,” I was told. Just as bindweed is a troublemaker in our gardens, controlling morning glory is a challenge. The “easy-to-grow” or “no-fail” honeysuckle called “Hall’s Prolific” is marketed to new gardeners, but these are invasive species. ... continued on Page OH10

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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page OH2

### MORAGA

- 1992 Ascot Drive #B, \$655,000, 2 Bdrms, 1063 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 03-19-24,  
Previous Sale: \$600,000, 03-17-22
- 2091 Ascot Drive #229, \$645,000, 2 Bdrms, 1189 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 03-19-24,  
Previous Sale: \$312,500, 07-13-14
- 2059 Ascot Drive #109, \$448,500, 1 Bdrms, 713 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 03-20-24,  
Previous Sale: \$390,000, 02-14-19
- 664 Augusta Drive, \$1,605,000, 2 Bdrms, 1552 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 03-01-24
- 391 Birchwood Drive, \$1,670,000, 4 Bdrms, 2025 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 03-01-24
- 184 Corliss Drive, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2337 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 03-12-24,  
Previous Sale: \$589,000, 07-26-99
- 52 Corte Maria, \$2,800,000, 5 Bdrms, 3442 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 03-07-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,725,000, 07-24-08
- 798 Crossbrook Drive, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 2471 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 03-21-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,900,000, 11-08-22
- 30 Hetfield Place, \$1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 1603 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 03-04-24
- 1307 Larch Avenue, \$2,795,000, 4 Bdrms, 3625 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 02-28-24
- 38 Merrill Circle, \$3,195,000, 3 Bdrms, 4225 SqFt, 1991 YrBlt, 03-14-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,989,000, 05-06-05
- 146 Miramonte Drive, \$980,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 03-12-24,  
Previous Sale: \$530,000, 12-06-13
- 151 Paseo Del Rio, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 2415 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 03-06-24,  
Previous Sale: \$160,000, 05-01-79

### ORINDA

- 20 Camino Sobrante, \$1,515,000, 4 Bdrms, 1834 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 03-18-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,205,000, 05-02-18
- 341 Camino Sobrante, \$2,675,000, 4 Bdrms, 2789 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 03-13-24,  
Previous Sale: \$2,700,000, 03-18-21
- 41 Charles Hill Road, \$2,249,000, 4 Bdrms, 3428 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 03-20-24
- 89 Dairy Creek Lane, \$4,970,000, 3 Bdrms, 5713 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 02-28-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 09-10-15
- 14 Easton Court, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 1562 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 03-12-24
- 49 Evergreen Drive, \$1,980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1665 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 03-18-24
- 717 Ironbark Court, \$2,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 2515 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 03-15-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,058,500, 09-28-09
- 141 La Cuesta Road, \$2,225,000, 4 Bdrms, 2477 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 02-26-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,625,000, 06-18-19
- 301 La Espiral, \$2,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 2036 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 03-21-24,  
Previous Sale: \$545,000, 11-01-89
- 5 Los Dedos Road, \$2,252,000, 3 Bdrms, 2309 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 03-15-24
- 710 Miner Road, \$2,000,000, 2 Bdrms, 2393 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 03-22-24,  
Previous Sale: \$1,225,000, 08-07-12
- 114 Ravenhill Road, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2320 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 02-29-24,  
Previous Sale: \$774,000, 05-14-03
- 120 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2179 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 03-11-24,  
Previous Sale: \$305,000, 09-05-00
- 46 Tarry Lane, \$4,150,000, 5 Bdrms, 5072 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 03-11-24,  
Previous Sale: \$635,000, 03-01-92



Photos Cynthia Brian

Although not a climber, what is spring without the perfume of lilacs?



Edible yellow nasturtiums spill over fences.



*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## Social Climbers



This crabapple tree boasts grapevines and bower vines climbing its branches.

... continued from Page OH8

The non-invasive honeysuckle, from the genus *Diervilla*, is native to North America and an essential part of our ecosystem, providing food for native insects. If you want honeysuckle, plant *Diervilla*. As a self-adherent aerial plant, ivy is an aggressive climber that can wreak havoc on structures, buildings, walls, and trees. Highly flammable, ivy harbors rodents and is extremely difficult to eradicate. These three specimens are what I call the “anti-social climbers”. Delete them from your most-wanted list.

Why do you want to include climbing plants in your garden design? The reasons are numerous and desirable.

**Vertical Interest:** Climbing plants allow for more dynamic and layered landscapes as we look up.

Climbers can cover arbors, trellises, fences, pergolas, and walls, adding depth and texture.

**Space Optimization:** Climbing plants are space-savers, especially for small gardens or urban settings where space is limited. Because they grow vertically, they make efficient use of space while making a big impact.



The Moraga Garden Club planted a small yet pretty garden at the Moraga Library.

**Privacy and Screening:** This may be one of the best reasons for growing climbers. By growing up, they provide a natural privacy barrier, offering seclusion with the added benefit of beauty and, most often, fragrance.

**Aesthetic Appeal:** With their beautiful cascading flowers, foliage, or fruit, climbers create a lush and romantic atmosphere.

**Wildlife Habitat:** Biodiversity is established in the garden as most climbers attract birds, butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. They offer food, shelter, and nesting sites for various creatures which contribute to a healthy ecosystem.

**Versatility:** Vines, creepers, scramblers, and climbers can be trained to grow in diverse directions and on several structures to customize landscapes.

Other than nasturtiums, all the climbers require heavy-duty, solid support structures to grow and flourish successfully. If you want to keep the climbers “social”, it is necessary to prune, maintain, and be watchful, or else they will land in the “anti-social” profile. With careful management and thought, climbers will add beauty, functionality, privacy, and ecological benefits to your garden. Enhance your outdoor space with spectacular social climbers reaching great heights with the right support.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing!



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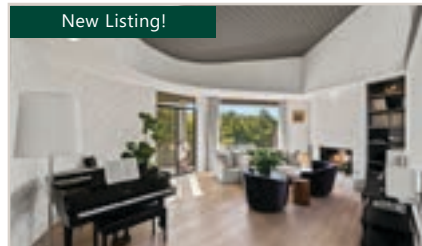
For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3 which was just honored as the 2024 Nonprofit of the Year by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Her newest children's picture book, Books in the Barnyard: Oh Deer!, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available for discounted pre-sales at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com>



Cynthia Brian with her Be the Star You Are!® volunteers, winners of 2024 Nonprofit of the Year.



# LAMORINDA'S LEADING INDEPENDENT REAL ESTATE FIRM



New Listing!

## 523 Miner Road, Orinda

5 Bd | 4 Ba | 3945 Sqft | \$4,150,000  
Experience luxury living in this captivating 1971 modern architecture masterpiece, designed by Carmel Architect Bud Evenson and stylishly remodeled in 2015!



## 41 La Noria, Orinda

5 Bd | 4.5 Ba | 4405 Sqft | \$3,795,000  
Top quality 5 bd/ 4 ba home around the corner from OCC w/ an incredible layout & magical spaces indoor & out!



## 417 Moraga Way, Orinda

4 Bd | 2 Ba | 2007 Sqft | \$1,995,000  
Custom home by Dan Bartlett of DB Design Build features, soaring ceilings, wall of multi-sliders & scenic views!



New Listing!

## 33 Rheem Blvd, Orinda

4 Bd | 3 Ba | 2217 Sqft | \$1,995,000  
A special single-story, 4 bed/3 ba, 2112 sf property with a large circular paver driveway and on .73 acre lot right near the walking trail to Glorietta Elementary!



## 3557 Boyer Circle, Lafayette

4 Bd | 3.5 Ba | 3512 Sqft | \$2,995,000  
Gorgeous, fully renovated Downtown Lafayette Home w/ Mt Diablo Views!



## 3235 Mt. Diablo Blvd #104, Lafayette

2 Bd + Office | 2 Ba | 2148 Sqft | \$1,995,000  
Luxury 2 bd + office/ 2 ba single-level condo on a cul-de-sac features hardwood flooring, beamed ceilings, Anderson windows & so much more!



New Listing!

## 1138 Garden Lane, Lafayette

3 Bd | 2 Ba | 1201 Sqft | \$1,450,000  
This updated home offers single level living in a beautiful and serene natural setting with a great yard and views of the hills!



New Price!

## 160 Greenwood Circle, Walnut Creek

3 Bd | 2 Ba | 1472 Sqft | \$1,245,000  
Charming single-level rancher features 3 bd/ 2 ba, two separate living rooms & spacious backyard w/ level lawn!



## 300 N Civic Drive #411, Walnut Creek

1 Bd | 1 Ba | 825 Sqft | \$345,000  
Convenient location close to vibrant downtown with restaurants and shopping, and easy access to freeway and Bart for commute.



New Listing!

## 42 Vivian Drive, Pleasant Hill

3 Bd | 2 Ba | 1558 Sqft | \$1,378,000  
Charming immaculately remodeled and expanded single level (with no steps) ranch style home in Gregory Gardens!



## 2601 College Ave, #309, Berkeley

2+ Bd | 2 Ba | 1084 Sqft | \$875,000  
Conveniently located between Elmwood & UC Berkeley, this light & bright top-floor unit has Bay views!



## 1409 A Spruce Street, Berkeley

1 Bd | 1 Ba | 645 Sqft | \$549,000  
Some of the most well-loved Berkeley amenities are just minutes away, including UC Berkeley, Chez Panisse, the Rose Garden, Live Oak Park, Peet's Coffee and more!

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