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## McCrady Gallery Hosts Exhibit of Local Artists

By *Andrea A. Firth*



Allison McCrady Photo provided

Who says it's dead at Orinda's Theater Square? A steady flow of locals filled the Allison McCrady Gallery last Saturday night to view an exhibit of local artists' works. McCrady used her own gallery and a currently empty space across from Shelby's to display the artwork of ten artists from Orinda and Lafayette. "There are some really great artists here," states McCrady. "Many of these pieces are as good as what you find in some of the art havens like San Francisco, Carmel, and Napa. And, the prices are very reasonable," she adds. McCrady was motivated to host the exhibit and evening event to both showcase her artist pals and to help to breathe some life into Theater Square-which she did.

Chefs Dianna Davis-Condon and Carl Drosky, the owners of Savory Affairs, a local gourmet meal and catering business, were on hand to pour the art patrons a glass of wine, white or red, and serve up dinner in a glass-a miniature version their signature dinner in a box. This night it was a bite-sized portion of braised short ribs with a merlot reduction, creamy mashed potatoes, and roasted asparagus.

McCrady, who is best known for her vibrant vineyard landscapes, met the other artists through art classes, art exhibits, and around town. The works of plein air artists Susan Kendall of Orinda and Pam Wright of Lafayette were displayed

alongside one another reminiscent of the way that their paintings were created. Kendall and Wright regularly take road trips to small towns like Crockett and set up their easels side by side to paint the local landscape.

The two artists are protégés of the Orinda-based mother-daughter art teacher team of Pam and Anne Marie Glover. Mary Spain, another plein air painter who has lived in Orinda for 25 years, displayed her scenes of the local hills, Saint Mary's, and the Mount Diablo area.

Orindans Zarmine Aghazarian, Carmel Dewies Blore, and Bonnie Fitch were also part of the local exhibit. Aghazarian, who began painting as her second career after retiring from the banking world, displayed abstracts in acrylic including one design inspired by the Valentines theme of the evening. Blore's detailed and realistic seascapes of the Carmel coastline were interesting subject matter for an artist of the same name. Fitch rounded out the Orinda art crew with oils of a farm landscape, a rooster, and a still life.

The exhibit also included the work of Lafayette residents Joe Loria, abstracts in muted lavenders and green, and Bob Wahrhaftig, paintings of women's faces. There was a bit of bling in the art mix provided by the jewelry designs of Amy Klimas. McCrady's large canvas paintings were also on display with a stormy-looking seascape providing a visual highlight of the night.

The McCrady Gallery will continue to display the work of these local artists along with Allison McCrady's artwork for others to view and purchase.

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