

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 04 Issue 23 Wednesday, January 19, 2011

**2010
IN REVIEW**
The Real Estate Year in Review ...read on page OH7

Modern and Connected

Orinda's Award Winning Homes

By Andrea A. Firth

Contemporary or modern architecture makes up a small percentage of the residential building projects in Orinda according to the City's Planning Director, Emmanuel Ursu. The angles, massing, and large amounts of glass found in modern designs can present challenges, says Ursu, but he notes that Orinda's sizeable lots and plentiful vegetation can accommodate bigger setbacks and enable privacy to facilitate a contemporary design. Interestingly, modern architectural design was employed in two of the residential building projects that received the Mayor's

Award for Architectural Excellence in 2010: the Gasparinis' home remodel, known as the Hundred Foot House, and the Remicks' new home which was recognized for Environmental Sustainability. In both projects the homeowners chose a modern design to enhance the connection between the home and the outdoor environs.

Hundred Foot House

After 15 years of apartment dwelling in San Francisco, Jon and Michele Gasparini were eager to find a safe and quiet community in which to raise their family. The great schools,

beautiful topography, and close proximity to the city made Orinda an ideal choice to relocate their family that includes three children, ages eight, five, and three years, and a hound called Greta.

After purchasing a run-down rancher on a heavily wooded lot, the Gasparinis found that their plan for a modest remodeling project was to be a labor of both love and patience. They uncovered structural issues that imposed significant additional requirements, resources, and time. "We purchased our home in 2003 but did

not move in until 2009," says Jon who, with help of his father, chipped away at the project working alongside his contractors to build the majority of the home over a four-year span.

Perched 20 feet above the street just below the canopy of the oak and redwood trees that surround the house, the Gasparinis' home feels like a tree house—very private yet simultaneously open and bright. "We were drawn to the heavily wooded surroundings and wanted to appreciate the outdoors from every room in the house," says Jon.

The original 1,500 square foot L-shaped home was expanded to 2,400 square feet by adding small amounts of new space at the tips. The modified T-shaped structure has four bedrooms and three full baths. Unlike the flat roofs found on many modern structures, the roof of each segment of the house extends upward from the center like the wings of a butterfly. The entranceway, kitchen, and family room are situated in the original 16-foot wide footprint surrounded by walls of glass. The adjacent, perpendicular segment that houses the bedrooms and bathrooms is more solid and private with smaller, two-foot wide windows that punctuate the walls at even intervals. By excavating part of the hillside, the retaining wall that the original house was built alongside was pushed back to yield a 16-foot wide, flat courtyard that runs the length of the public living space. Three extra-wide, double doors line the back wall of the home and open freely into the courtyard creating an indoor/outdoor living room in the warmer months.

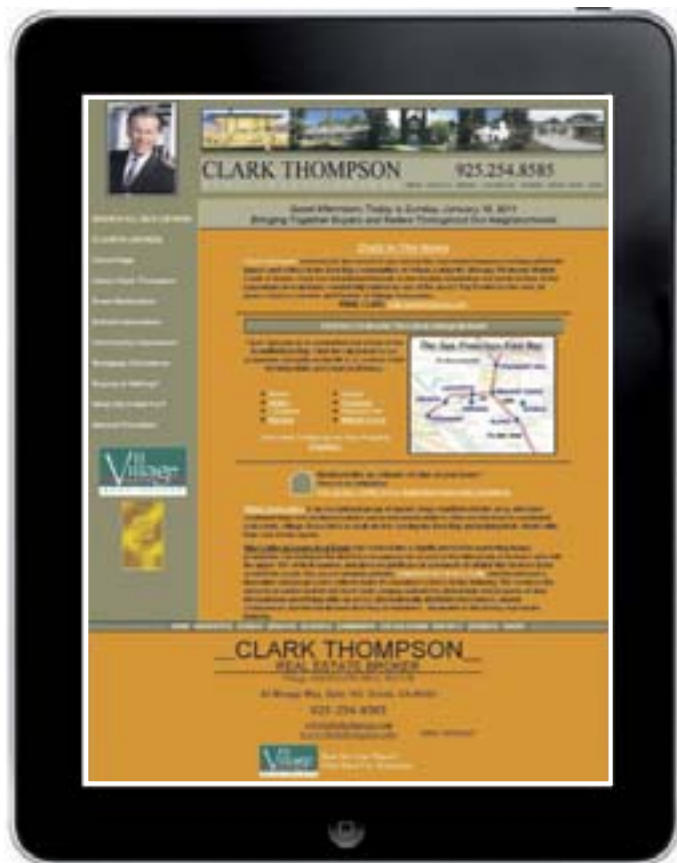


The "butterfly-shaped" roof on the Gasparinis home.

Photo Tim Griffith x

...continued on page OH4

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

LAFAYETTE	Last reported: 10
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$450,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,200,000
MORAGA	Last reported: 5
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$165,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,030,000
ORINDA	Last reported: 9
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$599,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,620,000

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

- 3103 Del Oceano Drive, \$530,000, 4 Bdrms, 1757 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-20-10;
Previous Sale: \$820,000, 02-10-06
- 3224 Elvia Street, \$768,000, 3 Bdrms, 1716 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-15-10;
Previous Sale: \$535,000, 05-03-10
- 956 Happy Valley Court, \$795,000, 4 Bdrms, 2478 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 12-15-10
- 612 Huntleigh Drive, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1914 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-14-10
- 3351 Kincheloe Court, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2278 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-17-10
- 3494 Moraga Boulevard, \$820,000, 2 Bdrms, 1430 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 12-16-10;
Previous Sale: \$906,000, 05-06-05
- 1071 Oak Hill Road, \$775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2723 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-22-10;
Previous Sale: \$756,000, 10-01-02
- 3170 Plymouth Road, \$817,000, 3 Bdrms, 1537 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-17-10;
Previous Sale: \$915,000, 03-29-05
- 1480 Shulgin Road, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 5229 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 12-17-10;
Previous Sale: \$1,700,000, 09-20-02
- 1689 Springbrook Road, \$450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 12-20-10;
Previous Sale: \$675,000, 08-03-07

MORAGA

- 106 Alta Mesa Court, \$515,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-15-10;
Previous Sale: \$865,000, 05-19-06
- 2079 Ascot Drive #139, \$165,000, 1 Bdrms, 713 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-22-10;
Previous Sale: \$108,500, 07-29-99
- 794 Augusta Drive, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-13-10;
Previous Sale: \$590,000, 02-26-99
- 117 Miramonte Drive, \$429,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-17-10;
Previous Sale: \$467,500, 10-24-03
- 24 La Salle Drive, \$860,000, 4 Bdrms, 2119 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-15-10;
Previous Sale: \$575,000, 06-15-01

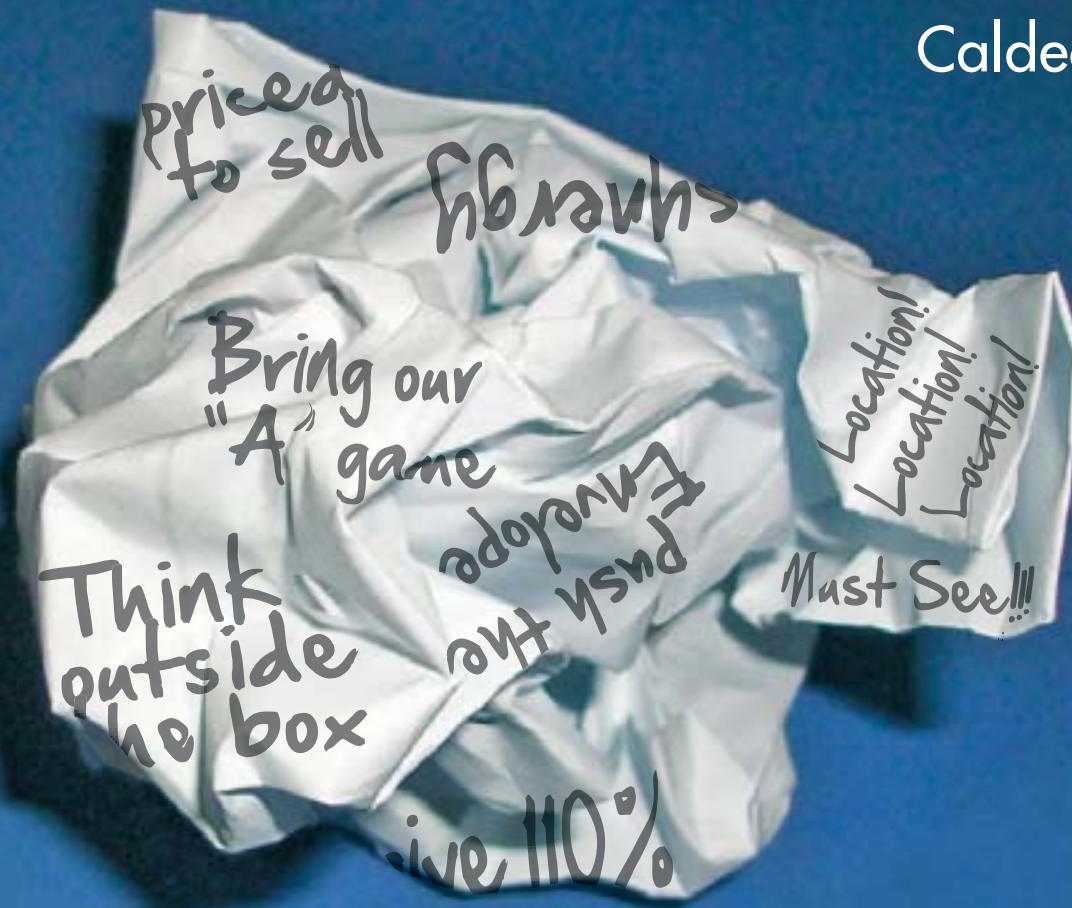
ORINDA

- 22 Bel Air Drive, \$1,115,000, 4 Bdrms, 2170 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-22-10;
Previous Sale: \$785,000, 11-09-00
- 14 Berkeley Avenue, \$599,000, 2 Bdrms, 1360 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-21-10;
Previous Sale: \$579,000, 05-14-09
- 650 Kite Hill Road, \$1,177,500, 4 Bdrms, 2854 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-16-10;
Previous Sale: \$600,000, 03-10-92
- 53 Knickerbocker Lane, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3340 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-14-10;
Previous Sale: \$1,565,000, 11-01-05
- 9 Las Vegas Road, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2257 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 12-16-10;
Previous Sale: \$1,015,000, 04-08-04
- 24 Marston Road, \$730,000, 2 Bdrms, 1520 SqFt, 1943 YrBlt, 12-15-10;
Previous Sale: \$969,000, 09-01-05
- 105 Meadow Lane, \$1,370,000, 4 Bdrms, 2741 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-14-10;
Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 08-13-04
- 35 Parklane Drive, \$720,000, 2 Bdrms, 1526 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-17-10;
Previous Sale: \$475,000, 04-15-99
- 4 Patrick Lane, \$1,620,000, 5 Bdrms, 3604 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 12-16-10;
Previous Sale: \$1,925,000, 06-18-08

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

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Modern and Connected

Orinda's Award Winning Homes

...continued from OH1

Both Jon and Michele have design degrees, and they were integrally involved in the design and planning of their home. "We wouldn't consider ourselves staunch modernists," says Jon regarding their choice of architectural style. "It was important that we build a home that feels honest and consistent with the era and location we live in. The combination of steel, glass, and wood is elegant and graceful without the need for unnecessary decorative embellishments."

The Gasparinis worked with architects Luke Ogrydziak and Zoë Prillinger whose San-Francisco-based studio focuses on progressive design. The architects named the project the Hundred Foot House in large part because the house is about 100 feet in length but also to emphasize the idea of measure which is prevalent throughout the design. "Our architecture tends to be abstract," says Ogrydziak. An abstract four-foot module repeats throughout the open floor plan, which leads to consistency and repetition in the design, explains Ogrydziak. "Luke and Zoë really honed in on our aesthetic from the beginning," says Jon. "They were able to expand on ideas and concepts in ways we would have never thought of."

One of the great features of the home is the location, says Jon. "It feels as though we're living alone in the woods, but it's really only a short walk to downtown Orinda. As a family we often walk into town for ice cream or a movie. Where else does this lifestyle exist anymore?"



Remick's living room opens to the outdoors.

Photo Mariko Reed



View from the backyard of Remick's sustainable home.

Photo Mariko Reed

Sustainable Indoor/Outdoor Living

"We wanted the house to have a really compact footprint, so we could take best advantage of the flat outdoor spaces," says Joe Remick as he looks out at the adjacent deck and outdoor living space complete with a refrigerator, sink, and grill. Sun pours in through a wall of large, accordion glass doors and transom windows, which makes the interior dining room comfortably warm even though the temperature outside is well below 40°F. "We open the doors up whenever we can. We really enjoy the connection between the indoor and outdoor living spaces," says Joe.

Joe and his wife Cathy are both architects. Joe manages his own architectural firm; project North, doing mainly residential projects and specializing in sustainable architecture. Cathy also does residential architecture along with freelance graphic design. Together they designed their new home and created the master plan for landscaping the ¾ acre lot that is half flat and half hillside.

...continued on page OH6



Patricia Battersby
 925-330-6663
 pb@patriciabattersby.com
 DRE# 00854469

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Modern and Connected

Orinda's Award Winning Homes

...continued from OHI

From their professional training and by nature, the Remicks are great economizers of space and time. Following the footprint of the original home, they built a 2,800 square foot, two-story, modern-style home that includes four bedrooms, four bathrooms and a detached 220 square foot guest cottage/office to meet all the space needs of their home-based businesses, their school-age daughter, and their two rescued black and tan coonhounds. Remarkably the house was completed in seven months. "We were able to build the house in seven months by fabricating portions of the house offsite while the foundation was being constructed," explains Joe.

Many of the sustainable elements in the home are reflected in the materials employed. The exterior walls of the house are covered in a combination of cedar siding and a lime-based plaster. All of the wood used in the interior and on the exterior of the house was sourced from Forest Stewardship Council-certified outlets to ensure the wood products came from responsibly harvested and verified sources. The lime-based plaster on the exterior walls does not require a high-energy manufacturing process like the more commonly used cement. In addition, the Remicks used 0% VOC paint, which contains no volatile organic compounds.

"A lot of the sustainability is tied to the systems in the house," says Joe. The pipe runs are short and close together to minimize wasted energy. Lighting is controlled by a home automation system, and all of the lights

are dimmable and preset to a maximum 90% of the total light capacity. "The difference between 90% and 100% of the light capacity is indiscernible to the eye," says Joe, "and the 10% reduction saves energy and greatly extends the life of the light bulbs." There are two solar panels on the roof, which meet about ¾ of their hot water needs, and 16 solar photovoltaic panels, a 3.2 kilowatt system, that provide the energy for about half of the home's electrical needs. The flat roof of the guest cottage has succulents and small grasses growing on it that provide insulation and absorb excess rainwater.

And when the weather warms again, the Remicks have plenty of fun things to keep them busy outside. The backyard has a hot tub, an in-ground trampoline, and a bocce ball court. Along with several raised vegetable boxes, the Remicks have also planted one hundred Sangiovese grapevines, about enough to make a barrel estimates Joe, who shares wine-making equipment with a neighbor. The concept for the Remick's new home is really about the connection to the site and the land.

Ogrydziak/Prillinger Architects
www.oparch.net
(415) 474-6724

project NORTH
Owner, Joseph Remick
www.projectNORTH.com
(415) 465-1001

Clarification, issue date 01/05/11

Village Associates Celebrates Ten Years in Lamorinda: According to Village Associates founder Ignacio Vega: "Village Associates Real Estate enjoys a 23% share of the Lamorinda market and has the highest dollar volume in the county for a standalone single office based on statistics compiled by Brokermetrics."

The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett

2010 was quite a year for residential real estate in Lamorinda, just as it continued to be throughout the country. However, where most other areas saw a more limited amount of sales, Lamorinda's volume was up significantly, especially in Lafayette and Moraga.

Homes stayed on the market for a little less time than a year ago and prices remained relatively stable as supply remained reasonably low throughout the year.

Also, the Lamorinda communities continued to see a few more short sales and REOs (bank owned properties.) These properties continue to negatively influence other nearby communities on a much grander scale.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings January 1 through December 31, 2010, 250 single-family homes closed in Lafayette versus 198 in 2009. There were four sales where the sales prices were not reported to the MLS. For the 246 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$400,000 to \$3,000,000 and the average time on market was 53 days, down from 63 in 2009. The average sale price was \$1,097,749 versus \$1,045,217 a year ago. The average sales price was 94.8% of the final list price.

In Moraga there were 102 single-family closings, up significantly from the 59 in 2009. Prices ranged from \$525,000 to \$2,465,000. The average sale price was \$927,948, down slightly from 2009's 961,872. The number of days on market in 2010 was 44 and the average home sold for 96.8% of its last list price.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 179 versus 162 in 2009. There were four properties where sale prices were not reported to the MLS. The reported sales ranged in price of \$410,000 to \$2,950,000 and an average price of \$1,060,798. A year ago it was \$1,029,915. The average market time was 62 days, down a fraction from a year ago when it was 68 days. The average sales price was 95.6% of the final list price.

On an average price per square foot basis in 2010, Lafayette homes sold for \$432 per square foot; Moraga homes for \$385 per square foot and in Orinda it was \$408. In 2009, Lafayette homes sold at \$434 per square foot, Moraga homes sold for \$408 and Orinda was at \$426.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had nine closings, up from six closings in 2009. They ranged in 2010 from \$302,500 to \$427,000; Moraga had 65 (up from 50 a year ago) ranging from \$147,000 to \$740,000 and Orinda had three just as in 2009. They sold from \$241,900 to \$692,000.

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

As of December 31, there were 57 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$147,000 to \$4,200,000. It should be pointed out that there 12 "Potential Short Sales" that are currently pending. In each case, the anticipated closing date is several months into the future as the sellers await approval of their particular lender or lenders.

A comparison of year-end inventory versus a year ago shows an increase from the 110 that were available on January 1 of 2010 to the 133 currently available. There are currently 19 short sale homes available and also 19 listed bank REOs. Typically the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer. There are 55 properties on the market in Lafayette with asking prices of \$425,000 to \$10,750,000. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 39 homes and condos listed between \$149,900 and \$1,995,000. In Orinda there are 40 on the market priced from a condominium at \$298,000 to a single family home at \$4,250,000.

As has been the recent story, the most active price range is in the more "affordable" price range. However, the high end did improve significantly as 42 sold above \$2,000,000 during the year compared with 23 that closed in Lamorinda in 2009, 30 in 2008 and 50 in 2007.

Prices are not as high as they were at the peak a few years ago, but in 2010, there were several situations in the three communities where the seller received multiple offers and homes sold for above the list price. This points to both a strengthening of the market and a willingness by sellers to be realistic in their pricing.

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—Moraga Sellers/Clayton Buyers

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wendy@holcenberg.com
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ORINDA



New Price

484 Dalewood Drive

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Offered at \$1,850,000

ORINDA



179 Crestview Drive

Incredible estate hm on 20 ac pvt knoll. Beaut flt custom w/Fu Tung Chen designed gourmet kit, pvt master suite, fab in-law apt. 360 degree views, ideal for vineyard.

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ORINDA



121 Lombardy Lane

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ORINDA



4 Sycamore Road

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Offered at \$4,250,000

MORAGA



1365B Camino Peral

Comfortable 2bd/2ba, 1281 sf w/fireplace, washer/dryer, deck & 2 dedicated parking spaces. Near shopping, park, library and trails. Best schools!

Offered at \$299,000

MORAGA



New Listing

2092-2094 Donald Drive

Charming ranch-style duplex each with 2bd/1ba & 1-car garage. All dual panes, hdwd in LR, DR & kitchen, pvt backyard in wooded setting. Top schools.

Offered at \$699,000

MORAGA



98 Brookfield Drive

Lovely 5bd/3ba on level desirable Moraga cul de sac. Updated kitchen & baths, hdwd floors, lawn patio & pool. Very close to award-winning K-8 schools.

Offered at \$999,000

MORAGA



New Price

160 Valley Hill Drive

Fabulously remodeled 4bd/4ba ranch home on over 5 acres just minutes from town. 3-stall barn, pastures and pool. Shown by appointment only...call today!

Offered at \$1,295,000

MORAGA



471 Millfield Place

Big, beautiful traditional home. Updated & expanded w/many decorator & custom features. Andersen windows & doors, den, island kitchen, lavish mstr retreat, level yard.

Offered at \$1,575,000

LAFAYETTE



1176 Glen Road

Happy Valley Glen. Charming 4bd home w/two office spaces. Many new updates, beaut hdwd floors, French doors to yard & pool. Close to town, Bart, great Lafayette schools.

Offered at \$1,195,000

LAFAYETTE



3919 So. Peardale Drive

Fabulous sgl lvl updated hm. Tons of natural light, hdwd floors, vaulted ceilings, LR w/custom fireplace & sep alcove. Marvelous great rm, kit w/wine bar, sep pantry.

Offered at \$1,335,000

LAFAYETTE



3819 Palo Alto Drive

Wonderful Happy Valley 4bd/4ba home. Beautifully maintained & appointed. Newer kitchen w/lg eating area & fam rm. Ideal in-law set up. Walk to school.

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LAFAYETTE



20 Monticello Court

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90 Monte Cresta

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WALNUT CREEK



314 Warwick Drive

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Offered at \$739,000

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