

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 1 Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Staging—First Impressions Count

By Andrea A. Firth

Staging is akin to putting on pearls with a little black dress, says Niko-lene Isely who owns Staging by Design based in Moraga. “The idea is to make the house, not the contents, the star,” says Isely. Barbara Winters, the owner of Staging & Design in Lafayette, employs a similar analogy to explain the concept of staging. “If you put on a little lipstick, you always look better,” says Winters. “Staging is like putting a little lipstick on a house.”

Stagers in Lamorinda share a com-

mon goal—maximizing the sale. “Staging a home really does put more money in the seller’s pocket. It leads to a quicker sale and a higher price,” says realtor Sue Layng, a founding member of Village Associates Real Estate in Orinda. “We have a wealth of talented and caring stagers in this area,” adds Layng, noting that almost every property her firm sells is staged at some level.

Stagers in Lamorinda provide a wide range of services to ready homes for sale. The cost to stage a home, typically

based on time (the stager’s fee) and materials (furniture rental fees), can range from several hundred to several thousand dollars depending on the services used and the length of time on the market. Stagers will consult on home décor design and color and manage contractors to paint, repair, and update. Empty homes can be furnished with rented furniture, art, and accessories, or stagers will work with existing home furnishings, rearrange the old, and mix in new pieces. Most stagers will do as much or as little

of the legwork to get the home prepared as a client wants.

“You want people to remember the house,” says Winters, but she acknowledges that this can be challenging in an area that has a number of generic, and often dated, ranch homes. “Sometimes the challenge is adding some character to the house, and that’s when being eclectic can help.”

Winters, a self-described collector, maintains a 6,500-foot warehouse in Lafayette filled with a huge assortment of furniture, bedding, art, and accessories to support her staging and furniture rental businesses. “I like to add a bit of humor and levity to my staging designs,” says Winters who aims for variety and is comfortable mixing contemporary and Chinese pieces and throwing in an animal print for contrast and pop. “I’ll do whatever is fitting for the house and put a twist on it to give it that wow factor,” she adds.

Jenifer Brunk and Gray Hynes were two of the first stagers to work in the Lamorinda area. The two college friends, both longtime Orinda residents, purchased their staging business, Improve to Move, 18 years ago. “Early on we spent a lot of time explaining the staging concept to realtors and buyers, but it’s a well accepted practice now, it’s expected,” says Brunk. “We don’t have a specific style,” says Brunk, “We stage a home to showcase what’s special about that house,” Although the approaches employed by stagers may vary, it all comes back to the sale.

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Barbara Winters (on R) with Leslie Price who manages outside rentals.



Jenifer Brunk (L) and Gray Hynes in a home they recently staged.

Photo Doug Kohen



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:
LAFAYETTE	7
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$585,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,080,000
MORAGA	8
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$200,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$995,000
ORINDA	5
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$625,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,100,000

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

- 898 Dewing Avenue, \$619,000, 4 Bdrms, 1551 SqFt, 1932 YrBlt, 2-18-11;
 Previous Sale: \$199,000, 10-02-96
- 1057 Dolores Drive, \$645,000, 3 Bdrms, 1531 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 2-8-11
- 1176 Glen Road, \$1,080,000, 4 Bdrms, 2578 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 2-23-11;
 Previous Sale: \$1,360,000, 08-08-06
- 1 Nephi Court, \$770,000, 4 Bdrms, 3751 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 2-24-11;
 Previous Sale: \$550,000, 10-02-92
- 3096 Hedaro Court, \$625,000, 4 Bdrms, 1709 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 2-15-11
- 1067 Oak Hill Road, \$610,000, 3 Bdrms, 1492 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 2-23-11;
 Previous Sale: \$825,000, 10-14-05
- 3151 Withers Avenue, \$585,000, 4 Bdrms, 2455 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 2-14-11;
 Previous Sale: \$929,000, 01-13-05

MORAGA

- 2135 Ascot Drive #5, \$415,000, 3 Bdrms, 1800 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 2-16-11;
 Previous Sale: \$53,500, 06-20-75
- 2045 Ascot Drive #B, \$200,000, 2 Bdrms, 928 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 2-18-11;
 Previous Sale: \$345,000, 07-26-04
- 3744 Campolindo Drive, \$705,000, 4 Bdrms, 2074 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 2-17-11;
 Previous Sale: \$113,000, 03-08-78
- 116 Corliss Drive, \$995,000, 4 Bdrms, 2288 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 2-23-11;
 Previous Sale: \$925,000, 12-03-03
- 283 Deerfield Drive, \$655,000, 3 Bdrms, 2498 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 2-23-11;
 Previous Sale: \$60,000, 07-01-71
- 1090 Larch Avenue, \$925,000, 3 Bdrms, 2633 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 2-10-11;
 Previous Sale: \$192,000, 04-21-86
- 169 Shuey Drive, \$714,000, 4 Bdrms, 1956 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 2-18-11
- 133 Westchester Street, \$620,000, 3 Bdrms, 2264 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 2-18-11;
 Previous Sale: \$542,000, 10-12-00

ORINDA

- 212 Crescent Drive, \$950,000, 2 Bdrms, 1849 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 2-10-11;
 Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-03-08
- 403 Dalewood Drive, \$901,000, 4 Bdrms, 6502 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 2-18-11;
 Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 04-06-05
- 21 Lavina Court, \$625,000, 3 Bdrms, 1391 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 2-23-11
- 70 Lost Valley Drive, \$670,000, 4 Bdrms, 2342 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 2-24-11;
 Previous Sale: \$850,000, 06-09-05
- 429 Ridge Gate Road, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 2684 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 2-16-11;
 Previous Sale: \$1,530,000, 01-23-08

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

MORAGA

- 14 Miramonte Drive, 94556, Federal National Mortgage, 02-15-11, \$357,779,
 1152 sf, 2 bd



Patricia Battersby
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pb@patriciabattersby.com
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\$895,000

Coming soon!



3764 Via Granada, Moraga

Completely remodeled and expanded Campolindo rancher. This home features 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths and a full-equipped media room that could be used as an au pair /in-law suite. The chef's kitchen has marble counter tops, 6-burner Dacor range and much more. The family room has a built-in media center. Master bedroom suite with walk-in closet and luxurious bath. Spacious, level yard with lawn, patio, sports court, dog run, fruit trees and hot tub.

\$1,098,000



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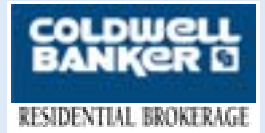
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Coming Soon!

725 Crossbrook Drive Moraga

Traditional Moraga 4 bedroom and 2 bath ranch home on private .69 acre lot with fabulous views and pool. Great floor plan with formal living, dining, plus separate family room with fresh paint and new carpet.



Open Sunday March 27th 1-4pm



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Staging—First Impressions Count

...continued from page F 1

“We want the buyer to be able to picture themselves in the home,” says Hynes. She and Brunk keep a small inventory of linens and accessories and rent furniture through a large supplier in San Francisco. “They constantly turnover their inventory and keep up with the styles and trends. It’s a fabulous resource,” says Brunk.

Less is more for stagers who universally find that clutter is distracting and personal items don’t sell a home. But in today’s market, sellers are often still living in the staged home, so the stager is faced with striking a workable compromise. “There is a delicate balance to be achieved, because selling and moving is often emotional for the homeowner,” says Layng, “Good stagers are sensitive to the homeowner’s needs and have away of making him or her feel good about the staging process.”

With the widespread use of online real estate marketing, stagers are now also faced with staging for both the live and virtual tour. “People are buying houses using the internet, so you want to be sure that the house looks great in photographs, too,” says Isely. And, the details count when it comes to staging. A newly painted mailbox, clean windows, a new doormat – all give the impression that a house is well maintained. “All those little things do matter,” says Isely, “It’s all about making a great first impression.”



Furniture and accessories housed at Barbara Winters' warehouse in Lafayette.

Photos Doug Kohen



Staged rooms are clutter-free and incorporate attractive accents.

Nikolene Isely
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nikoleneisely@gmail.com,
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Jenifer Brunk and Gray Hynes
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New Listing

6 Oak Flat Road

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Offered at \$599,000



ORINDA



New Listing

97 Coral Drive

Fabulous 4bd + office on sought-after Ivy Dr. neighborhood. Beaut updated chef's kitchen opens to fam rm. Hardwood flrs, skylights, dual pns. Walk to top schools.

Offered at \$989,000



ORINDA



New Price

5 Kenmore Court

Updated 4bd/3ba home with in-law suite, 2500 sf on 1.19 acre, great views, 3-car gar + carport. Addl. ofc/ playhouse, horse stall, orchard & gardens. Just move in!

Offered at \$995,000



ORINDA



New Listing

29 La Vuelta

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ORINDA



New Listing

457 Dalewood Drive

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Offered at \$1,400,000



ORINDA



New Price

484 Dalewood Drive

Huge price reduction! Orig owner, cared for w/lots of TLC. Quality bld, x-lg rms, open & airy, lots of storage, sep library, 5th bd on one wing. Fantastic yd w/pool & spa, changing rms.

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ORINDA



New Price

136 Manzanita Court

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MORAGA



New Listing

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MORAGA



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LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3419 Shangri La Road

Totally charming 3100 sf 5bd w/updated eat-in kitchen (granite/gas cooktop), huge fam rm plus bonus rm., 3-car gar. Lg 1.07 ac lot w/pool & use of riding arena. Great Reliez Valley location.

Offered at \$1,175,000



LAFAYETTE



New Listing

4090 Coralee Lane

Beautiful .61 acre setting. Close in 5bd + office with 4 baths. Remodeled kitchen, open floor plan.

Offered at \$1,250,000



LAFAYETTE



New Listing

819 Las Trampas

Custom bld 3548 sf 4bd/4.5ba hm on oak studded 1 ac lot in Las Trampas trail neighborhood. Pool & extensive landscape/hardscape. Fabulous flrpln w/grand spaces.

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LAFAYETTE



New Listing

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LAFAYETTE



New Listing

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WALNUT CREEK



New Price

987 Monet Circle

4bd/2.5ba built in 2000. High ceilings, loads of light. Convenient location close to shopping, commute, trails, etc. Elegant, functional home.

Offered at \$695,000



WALNUT CREEK



New Price

314 Warwick Drive

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