

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 5 Wednesday, May 11, 2011



Funky Custom Mailboxes ...read on page F8

Craftsmen and Their Homes

By Sophie Braccini



Overhanging eaves feature prominently in Jon Eiler's Craftsman home.

Jon Eiler's inspiration for his Lafayette home came from early twentieth-century houses designed by Charles and Henry Greene (Greene & Greene) of Pasadena. The Greenes' large homes, designed in the Craftsman style, are sometimes referred to as the 'Ultimate

Bungalows' and make extensive use of natural material, from the outside structure that is magnified, like an exoskeleton, to the many details of the interior fixtures, panels and furniture – the Craftsman style is said to be the first true American style.

Greene & Greene were early 20th

century architects who studied woodworking, metalworking, and toolmaking before joining the School of Architecture at M.I.T. Their style, which developed in Pasadena where they settled, was influenced by Japanese design in the creation of clear and simple lines, while their

craftsmanship and love for natural elements led them to use exotic hardwoods, outside and inside the homes they designed, as well as stones, metal, and stained glass.

When Lafayette carpenter Eiler bought a 2000-square-foot ranch home in Lafayette, he knew that this was the style that would inspire his remodeling. "The exterior of Jon's home is probably one of the closest to the Greene & Greene style I have seen in the area," comments- museum-curator turned real-estate-agent Tran Turner.

... continued on Page F4



Red windows contrast beautifully with the dark green-grey outside walls on the Hathaway home

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Stunning craftsman style 4 bedroom, 3½ bath (plus home office) 3,417 square foot home on professionally landscaped .74 acre lot. Custom built in 2005 this home has an impressive list of high end finishes throughout. Three car garage, huge mud room and more!

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851 Avalon Court



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3242 Glenside Drive



Traditional old world charm found in this beautifully remodeled home using "green" materials throughout. This 3,012 square foot 4 bedroom 2½ bath Lafayette Trail neighborhood home offers a flat 1/3 acre lot with stone patios, enchanting gardens, newly remodeled pool, and more!

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| LAFAYETTE | Last reported: 10 |
| LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$364,500 |
| HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,810,000 |
| MORAGA | Last reported: 9 |
| LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$215,000 |
| HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,350,000 |
| ORINDA | Last reported: 8 |
| LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$650,000 |
| HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,390,000 |

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

- 1001 Almanor Lane, \$488,500, 3 Bdrms, 1196 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 4-8-11; Previous Sale: \$700,000, 12-14-05
- 3081 Camino Diablo, \$364,500, 2 Bdrms, 1253 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 4-19-11; Previous Sale: \$360,000, 07-02-01
- 957 Foye Drive, \$609,000, 3 Bdrms, 1631 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 4-15-11; Previous Sale: \$467,000, 10-27-99
- 630 Francis Drive, \$510,000, 3 Bdrms, 2180 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 4-8-11; Previous Sale: \$851,000, 07-14-05
- 3733 Highland Road, \$400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2336 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 4-15-11
- 1014 Regio Court, \$960,000, 3 Bdrms, 2255 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 4-19-11; Previous Sale: \$254,000, 03-20-87
- 3380 Reliez Highland Road, \$937,500, 4 Bdrms, 2277 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 4-13-11
- 910 Reliez Station Road, \$1,625,000, 5 Bdrms, 4118 SqFt, 1916 YrBlt, 4-14-11; Previous Sale: \$198,500, 07-26-83
- 642 Sky Highway Circle, \$1,055,000, 4 Bdrms, 3175 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 4-15-11
- 3395 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,810,000, 5 Bdrms, 4627 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 4-19-11; Previous Sale: \$1,225,000, 04-16-02

MORAGA

- 2079 Ascot Drive #240, \$225,000, 2 Bdrms, 1193 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 4-7-11; Previous Sale: \$155,000, 10-16-92
- 2091 Ascot Drive #127, \$215,000, 2 Bdrms, 1144 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 4-19-11
- 90 Courter Lane, \$1,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 3446 SqFt, 2000 YrBlt, 4-13-11; Previous Sale: \$1,435,000, 08-18-04
- 153 Danefield Place, \$890,000, 4 Bdrms, 3175 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 4-15-11
- 469 Fernwood Drive, \$1,020,000, 4 Bdrms, 2366 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 4-12-11; Previous Sale: \$710,000, 05-20-99
- 20 Greenfield Drive, \$820,000, 5 Bdrms, 3175 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 4-11-11
- 31 Hetfield Place, \$975,000, 5 Bdrms, 2110 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 4-15-11; Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 02-23-06

ORINDA

- 241 Courtney Lane, \$657,000, 4 Bdrms, 2214 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 4-15-11; Previous Sale: \$950,000, 09-08-05
- 44 Estabueno Drive, \$825,000, 4 Bdrms, 1901 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 4-18-11; Previous Sale: \$939,000, 04-30-07
- 2 Katrina Court, \$925,000, 3 Bdrms, 1630 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 4-14-11; Previous Sale: \$650,000, 10-18-02
- 285 La Espiral, \$1,390,000, 3 Bdrms, 1761 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 4-19-11; Previous Sale: \$619,000, 04-05-10
- 1027 Larch Avenue, \$780,000, 3 Bdrms, 1802 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 4-8-11; Previous Sale: \$450,000, 05-05-99
- 59 Meadow View Road, \$1,260,000, 4 Bdrms, 3768 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 4-5-11
- 5 Risa Court, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1245 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 4-12-11
- 64 Sullivan Drive, \$895,000, 3 Bdrms, 2618 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 4-8-11; Previous Sale: \$499,000, 04-11-96
- 89 Tarry Lane, \$803,500, 3 Bdrms, 1711 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 4-15-11
- 623 Watchwood Road, \$679,000, 3 Bdrms, 2541 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 4-5-11; Previous Sale: \$500,000, 01-15-92

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

none



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Craftsmen and Their Homes

...continued from Page F1

The exposed rafter tails and beams that extend past the overhanging eave, the stone base, the craftsman entry door, the cedar shingles that cover the exterior walls, the green Pella windows, are all elements reminiscent of the Pasadena-based Gamble house. In the interior, the details in the wood work show Eiler's love of his art. "Jon (Eiler) is totally hands-on," says Turner, "he knows how to use fine wood and runs with his own design."

Taking cues from the Blacker house, Greene & Greene's masterpiece where the brothers created the custom inside elements with wood inlay, and where the interlocking joinery on the main staircase was left exposed, Eiler has constructed a similar staircase in his house adding a decorative element of three waves along the rail that he carried upstairs in the wood paneling. The house is a work of art in the making, but although its home to Eiler, it is not totally complete yet. If the kitchen already has a beautiful counter made of soapstone, the cabinets need a final touch. The house can nonetheless be an inspiration for those who appreciate that architecture.

A second Craftsman house in Lafayette, up Oak Hill Road, is the home of another wood artist, Steve Kauffman. It took him 14 years to remodel the home where he is raising his family with his wife Susan, and he has not missed any details. For example, he designed the mahogany windows himself, inspired by a Julia Morgan design; he made extensive use of teak, mahogany and redwood for the built-in elements and custom furniture of the home. "The Kauffman home is not only a Greene & Greene - inspired home, it is also a 'green' home," said Turner. "I used reclaimed material as often as possible as I remodeled," agreed Kauffman, "we used also green material such as cork for the floors of the children's bedroom, or sustainably harvested American teak floor, and the house is powered by inconspicuous solar panels that face south on the detached garage roof." ...continued on next page



Steve Kauffman's fireplace, created in a combination of wood, tile, and copper



The Kauffman home boasts charming interior details.



Sabine Hathaway in her living room with tile fireplace



The Hathaways' entryway is brightened by skylights

Interesting inside elements include a beautiful staircase that looks like a Japanese Tansu chest, built by Kauffman. "Greene & Greene were influenced by the Japanese architecture they saw at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago," said Turner, "their work gained an Eastern influence from then on."

Kauffman, who also builds guitars, used spruce, rosewood and ebony to decorate the upstairs master suite. He owns an extensive library on the art of the two brothers and has built numerous commissioned Greene & Greene furniture.

The last home does not belong to a craftsman, but to a Moraga family who fell in love with the style. "I worked in downtown Palo Alto and loved the bungalows there," says home owner Sabine Hathaway, "then I visited the Thorsen house in Berkeley (the only Northern California Greene & Greene) and was inspired by it."

Hathaway's remodel was one year in the making; the homeowners worked with architect Kenny Goodman and completely redesigned the interior and exterior of the house. They extended the entrance and created a porch with a stone base, very characteristic of the bungalow architecture. They chose red windows that contrast beautifully with the dark green-grey outside walls. The entrance opens to a dining room to the left and a sitting room where the chimney has been removed and the windows enlarged to add natural brightness.

The space has been designed to accommodate the antics that Hathaway suggests she got from her German family, and incorporates many metal and alabaster light features that go very well with the chosen style. In the entrance the two deep skylights are covered with exquisite stained glass panels. Slate is used extensively around the house and wall paintings roll out different shades of light grey that add to the luminosity of the house.

"We've been back in the house for four years now," says Hathaway, "the neighbors love it and it is a perfect space for our family."



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Lafayette Artist Delivers Funky Custom Mailboxes

By Cathy Tyson



Ken Hughes

Photo Cathy Tyson

It all started a number of years ago when teenagers came through a quiet Lafayette neighborhood and smashed mailboxes. Structural engineer and homeowner Ken Hughes looked for an artistic solution and voila, the mailbox dog was born.

Fashioned entirely of scrap materials, Hughes thought it was funny – a snarling dog to ward off future vandals or perhaps a menacing mailman; now the rebar pooch is facing a custom-made and equally charming mystery-creature mailbox across the street. “I always try to have a sense of humor working on the mailboxes,” said Hughes.

A mainstay of the neighborhood for twenty-seven years, seems like everybody loves Hughes. He creates these fantastic mailbox designs in his spare time in the garage. “Space is a challenge,” he said, “I have various types of welding equipment and wood working tools. Most of it I pick up second hand or from contractors I deal with.” Because he works with steel fabricators on projects, he’ll ask if he can go through their scrap pile. Reflecting on skills that come in handy at work and with his hobby he says, “My appreciation of good design detail helps me be sensitive to what an architect wants.”

...continued on Page F10





Thinking About Buying?

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- 1) Buy foreclosures in select neighborhoods and cities in Contra Costa County, for strong rental income returns, with future appreciation.
- 2) Buy a home in Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda, in a rare buyer's market.
- 3) Sell in the under \$1,000,000 range in Lamorinda, where sales are now improving, and move up to your dream house in a higher price range where the best negotiating opportunities exist.
- 4) Downsize, and sell in Lamorinda, where the market has not dropped as much, then buy a great one-story home at a bargain price in a nice neighborhood where homes have dropped more. Keep a low property tax by transferring it to the new house within Contra Costa County.

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Lafayette Artist Delivers Funky Custom Mailboxes

...continued from Page F8



About five years ago, Hughes made a lizard mailbox for long-time family friends, the Lenzis, who had re-landscaped their front yard. "We just feel honored. He's amazing; we are so proud of our mailbox," said Marty Lenzi.

Some designs just come to him, others are a team effort with the homeowners – it's not surprising that the surfer-guy mailbox belongs to surf aficionados. "The coyotes and coco-pele, (musicians), are a southwest theme for my friend that loves New Mexico and Indian country. The dragon is for someone who loves dragons," said Hughes.

Throughout the home he shares with wife Joanne there is evidence of the fun and function in his designs. "Buns of Steel" is a clever bookend, with one end looking around the edge to see his counterpart sitting down on the job and reading a book.

A custom-designed fence with laser-cut leaves and dainty frogs graces the front of the ranch-style home. A side gate incorporates wood and metal along with a recurring leaf motif that uses a uniquely positioned golf club shaft as part of the closing mechanism.

Hughes gives credit to the former architect and current art mentor Joe Bologna as the source of his original inspiration. His clever "Bash me Buddy" piece, made out of rebar, motivated Hughes to harness his creative genius. Bologna is now a full time artist and, "the proud owner of a large scrap pile of metal," from which he plucks pieces he turns into sculptures. Although he prefers steel, he also works with clay. Hughes has a large hilarious ceramic head of Bologna by Bologna in his home, with a statueque nose and partial halo of nails for hair.

If you look closely at the sculpture garden gate at the Lafayette Art Gallery – across the street from Chow - you'll see a collaborative piece by the two men. Bologna did the sign portion above the pathway, and Hughes did the gate itself. Look closely and you'll see four 'Buns of Steel' men trying to break in.



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Once-in-a-lifetime oppoty to own 20+ acres in the heart of Orinda! Rare gated estate prop, knoll setting, pano views, 5500+ sf, 6+bd/4.5ba plantation-style home. **Offered at \$1,999,000**



50 York Place
Premium lot on cul-de-sac, over 5 acre level yard. Formal living room, dining room, eat-in kitchen, family room opens to sunny patio, & tons of storage. Great location close to elementary school. **Offered at \$899,000**



151 Cypress Pt. Way
Special well-maintained 3bd/2.5ba MCC home, lovingly updated, court location off of main street. Lawn, patios, lovely gardens, total privacy, nr all amenities. **Call Agent for Price**



55 Carr Drive
Beautifully remodeled 5bd/3b with hardwood floors, dual pane windows and level lawn on a great street. Top schools. **Offered at \$975,000**



60 Wandel Drive
Wonderful trad 4bd/2ba home offers open floor plan w/finest quality - custom bilt-ins, crown moldings, vaulted ceilings, plantation shutters. End of cul-de-sac w/privacy, yet walking distance to town. **Offered at \$995,000**



297 Corliss Drive
Spacious former model home - 3200+ sf w/updated eat-in kitchen & expanded mstr bath. Hdwd flrs, lg bonus/in-law suite& much more. Lvl pretty yd w/lawn, pool & patio. **Offered at \$1,025,000**



1689 Springbrook Road
Beaut updated sgl lvl 3bd/2ba on 53 prem lot w/lawn & play area. Hdwd flrs, crown molding, dual panes, chef's kitchen, stylish bath, top Laf schools & more! **Offered at \$659,000**



3419 Shangri La
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 loc w/Lafayette/Acalanes High schls. **Offered at \$1,095,000**



819 Las Trampas Road
Custom bilt 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. **Offered at \$1,399,000**



3460 La Caminita
Incredible 4200 sf custom designed "Napa-style" newer 5bd/4ba home on 3 acres. 18' ceilings, maple flrs, geothermal system thruout. Privacy, views, Laf schls, close in. Apprvd plans for guest hse or barn. **Offered at \$1,998,000**



393 Monticello Court
Charming remodeled ranch on cul-de-sac, located in Tice Valley. Photos: www.393monticelloct.com. **Offered at \$919,000**

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