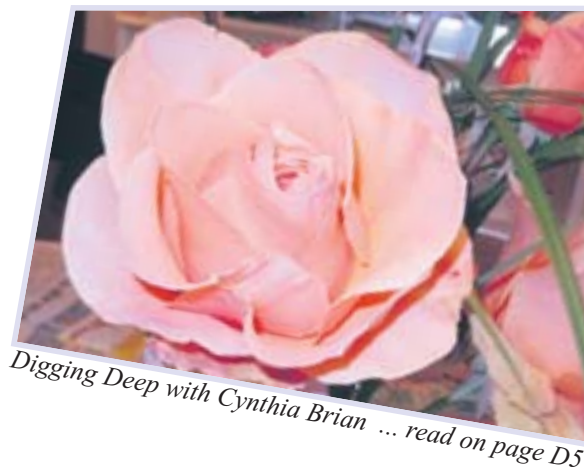


# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 9 Wednesday, July 6, 2011



*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on page D5*

## Ikebana—The Art of Floral Sculpture

By Andrea A. Firth      Photos Doug Kohen

It's 1:00 on Monday afternoon at the Orinda Community Center, and a large group of women and a few men cart bags and boxes filled with purple agapanthus, pink hydrangea, orange birds of paradise, indigo iris, carrot-colored day lilies, deep green lettuce leaves, and red and yellow peppers into the main auditorium.

The buzz of conversation punctuated by laughter permeates the room as the thirty students get settled. The students quiet down, and the class looks forward for guidance from their teacher, Soho Sakai, an expert in the art of Sogetsu Ikebana, the disciplined art form of Japanese flower arrangement that combines nature, humanity, and creativity with lines, shape, form, and color.

Today's Ikebana class is inspired by the super nova, an energetic, fleeting, luminous, colorful stellar explosion.

The theme for this 10-week session of Ikebana is natural forces, explains Lafayette resident Marilyn Kaplan, "Lava flows, water flows, avalanches, wind storms, we have done it all. And today we are doing super novas." After taking Sakai's Ikebana class for five years and mastering the four books to gain a diploma in the art, Kaplan has become a member of the "teacher's group." About twenty of Sakai's long-term followers have

achieved this deep knowledge of the flower art form, and they collaborate and help to implement a new theme for each of the three sessions that run through the fall, winter, and spring.

Sakai has taught creative flower arrangement at the Community Center for twenty years. She is recognized as a world class expert in Ikebana, but for her students she is revered as an inspiration, a counselor, and a friend. "She's a superstar," whispers one student.

For Sakai, Ikebana is a way of living and thinking. It brings peace. "The mere act of looking at flowers makes it impossible to harbor violent thoughts," says Sakai. She strives to promote cross-cultural understanding through the beauty of flowers, and her class is representative of this effort. While some of the students are of Asian ancestry, the majority is not.

"I have taken this class for 17 years, and that longevity is not unusual among Soho's students," says Orinda resident Mary Tischenko. Her arrangement consists of three pieces: a tall black vase with spiral arms, a multi-armed branch covered in neon orange spray paint, and a yellow and orange-tipped, spiked blossom. Placed just so, the simplicity of Tischenko's design effortlessly evokes the magnitude of a starry burst.

...continued on page D3



*Soho Sakai with Elinor Cullen.*



*Mary Tischenko's super nova.*

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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	18	\$400,000	\$1,635,000
MORAGA	8	\$229,000	\$1,200,000
ORINDA	8	\$220,000	\$2,700,000

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

- 3219 Andreasen Drive, \$655,000, 3 Bdrms, 1500 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-3-11
- 8 Brookwood Court, \$560,000, 4 Bdrms, 2049 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-9-11
- 3320 Deer Hill Road, \$535,000, 4 Bdrms, 1608 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-10-11
- 1832 Del Rey Street, \$650,000, 4 Bdrms, 1720 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-3-11; Previous Sale: \$295,000, 03-12-92
- 1050 Dolores Drive, \$805,000, 3 Bdrms, 1835 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-9-11; Previous Sale: \$453,000, 10-20-98
- 1330 El Curtola Boulevard, \$400,000, 3 Bdrms, 1084 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 5-31-11
- 1134 Garden Lane, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1585 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 6-2-11; Previous Sale: \$725,000, 10-18-02
- 3392 Las Huertas Road, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 2090 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-3-11; Previous Sale: \$805,000, 11-02-01
- 3193 Lucas Circle, \$870,000, 3 Bdrms, 2120 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 6-3-11; Previous Sale: \$825,000, 03-15-01
- 553 Merriewood Drive, \$1,030,000, 3 Bdrms, 2397 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 6-1-11
- 688 Michael Lane, \$1,635,000, 4 Bdrms, 3838 SqFt, 2007 YrBlt, 5-31-11
- 3145 Padre Street, \$755,000, 4 Bdrms, 2920 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 5-31-11; Previous Sale: \$839,000, 12-15-03
- 1230 Quandt Road, \$670,000, 3 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-1-11; Previous Sale: \$489,500, 04-19-02
- 3188 Rohrer Drive, \$1,075,000, 4 Bdrms, 3060 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-9-11; Previous Sale: \$440,000, 11-21-01
- 1048 Silverhill Drive, \$1,312,000, 4 Bdrms, 3889 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-8-11; Previous Sale: \$1,072,500, 11-27-02
- 1311 Summit Road, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 3278 SqFt, 1993 YrBlt, 6-3-11; Previous Sale: \$1,530,000, 06-30-05
- 1214 Vacation Drive, \$635,000, 3 Bdrms, 1596 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-9-11; Previous Sale: \$850,000, 10-25-06
- 3311 Walnut Lane, \$955,000, 3 Bdrms, 1917 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-8-11; Previous Sale: \$279,500, 01-31-89

### MORAGA

- 273 Birchwood Drive, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2524 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 6-10-11; Previous Sale: \$1,211,000, 07-18-08
- 55 Carr Drive, \$980,000, 4 Bdrms, 2592 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-7-11

... Moraga and Orinda continued on page 4



# Ikebana

...continued from page D1



Sakai encourages her students to use interesting materials that they find in nature for their Ikebana creations. One woman had her husband stop the car along the highway so she could retrieve a tumbleweed from the side of the road. "I used a whole can of white spray paint on that," she exclaimed. She then interspersed white lilies and babies breath within the painted tumbleweed to create an arrangement emotive of a bright firework.

Gordon Ward, one of the male minority in the class, is a formally trained potter. He started taking the class five or six years ago with his mother, Anne, who has been a Sakai follower for over 15 years. Both Wards are longtime

Lafayette residents and enthusiasts of Japanese architecture and gardens. "I came to the class and quickly got hooked on Ikebana," says Gordon, who now creates ceramic vases and containers that are used by his classmates and Ikebana artists around the country.

During the last hour of the three-hour lesson, the critique portion of the afternoon, the class moves around the room as a group to observe each student's arrangement, and Sakai provides insight into what works and what does not. "This is very touching. It makes me cry," says Sakai in response to a student's work. "Are you a good cook?" she asks another who has created an arrangement with lettuce leaves and vegetables. Sakai freely moves branches and is not shy about pulling out her clippers to trim flowers to create better proportion and visual lines for the arrangements. For Sakai, less is more. She achieves the right balance of flower, form, and space with a few quick adjustments, and her students are left guided and inspired.

"Such a mentor, we just love her," says a student as she breaks down her arrangement and packs up for the day, ready to do it all over again next week.



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- 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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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from page D2

### MORAGA ... continued

- 1171 Cedarwood Drive, \$1,005,000, 5 Bdrms, 3146 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 6-10-11;  
Previous Sale: \$1,074,000, 04-25-03
- 792 Country Club Drive, \$435,000, 2 Bdrms, 1262 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-10-11
- 2133 Donald Drive #8, \$229,000, 2 Bdrms, 1224 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 6-2-11;  
Previous Sale: \$333,000, 08-29-03
- 3 Roberts Court, \$814,500, 3 Bdrms, 2162 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 6-1-11;  
Previous Sale: \$545,000, 12-17-99
- 1844 St. Andrews Drive, \$715,000, 3 Bdrms, 1819 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 6-8-11;  
Previous Sale: \$555,000, 02-14-03
- 50 York Place, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 2282 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-7-11

### ORINDA

- 95 Acacia Drive, \$825,000, 3 Bdrms, 2056 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 6-10-11
- 73 Brookwood Road #49, \$220,000, 1 Bdrms, 673 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 6-8-11;  
Previous Sale: \$129,500, 10-29-92
- 557 Dalewood Drive, \$1,595,000, 4 Bdrms, 3938 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 5-31-11;  
Previous Sale: \$875,000, 04-24-90
- 95 Evergreen Drive, \$810,000, 5 Bdrms, 2296 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-7-11
- 1 Gardiner Court, \$1,935,000, 5 Bdrms, 5159 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 6-10-11
- 55 Lombardy Lane, \$1,345,000, 4 Bdrms, 2964 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 6-7-11;  
Previous Sale: \$826,000, 12-16-99
- 89 Oak Road, \$820,000, 2 Bdrms, 2040 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 6-1-11;  
Previous Sale: \$726,000, 03-13-09
- 25 Vista Del Mar, \$2,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 4255 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 6-10-11;  
Previous Sale: \$1,360,000, 11-10-04

## Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

### LAFAYETTE

- 587 Francis Drive, 94549, US Bank, 06-02-11, \$540,000, 1548 sf, 3 bd
- 3275 Vals Lane, 94549, RWW Properties, 05-27-11, \$1,000,000, 2656 sf, 3 bd
- 1 West Creek Court, 94549, GMAC Mortgage, 06-06-11, \$504,000, 1926 sf, 3 bd

### MORAGA

- 24 Brandt Drive, 94556, RWW Properties, 05-31-11, \$898,000, 2843 sf, 5 bd

### Lamorinda Realtor Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, July 12, 8:30 - 9:30am

Speaker: Karen Mendonca, Mayor of Moraga: "The Economical Climate of Moraga"

Free to attend, for full meeting details see LamorindaREGroup.com.

Location: Lafayette Lower Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette

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## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

# Life is a Bed of Roses

By Cynthia Brian

*“Won’t you come into my garden? I would like my roses to see you.” Richard Sheridan*

Poets, philosophers, and politicians praise the potency of the most popular plant in the world as a symbol of beauty, love, politics, and war. These ravishing blooms have been used as celebratory confetti and confections, as legal tender, perfume, cosmetics, decorations, and medicine. Long before man walked the earth, the genus *Rosa* flourished in Oregon and Montana according to fossil evidence dating back 35 million years. The colorful cultivation of the rose began in China 5000 years ago. Boasting 150 species throughout the Northern Hemisphere and thousands of cultivars and hybrids, 35 rose species are native to the United States, including repeat bloomers.

I adore roses. As Clement of Alexander pronounced, “If I give you a rose, you will not doubt of God,” I believe that roses are heaven sent and

heaven scent. These most coveted of flowers add the most magnificence to my garden with the least amount of maintenance. Many new gardeners fear roses, mistakenly thinking that roses are difficult to grow.

It takes no special skill or garden acumen to have roses traipse on trellises, climb arbors, billow in borders, spill over pergolas, decorate doorways, and magically transform a dining table. Whether roses are trained and coddled in a formal bed, or grow in wild profusion, cottage style, the rose is the queen of any garden plan. Shrub roses and old garden roses are especially popular as gardeners realize that roses are not very demanding, most requiring a minimum of disease control. Roses provide abundance in floral displays, sweet scents, and are winter hardy. They add color, texture, form, and depth to any perennial patch.



*The prolific pink petals of a Bonica Shrub rose are perfect for borders and a cottage garden.*  
Photos Cynthia Brian

To grow healthy, beautiful roses, you need to follow only three steps:

1. Choose the correct plant for your area.
2. Plant the rose in a sunny spot that shines at least six hours of bright light per day.
3. Water appropriately.

Before you run out to buy roses, let me provide a primer on growing roses and the choices you’ll encounter. Depending on where you anticipate planting, factors to consider include flower color, size of the rose bush, growing habits, and disease resistance. For example, you may want a formal rose garden off your living room as I have with specific colors that reflect your interior design. Or you may be creating a cutting garden and want bountiful blooms in a rainbow of colors. The most important thing to remember with growing roses is to provide ample sunshine away from large trees and shrubs competing for sun, nutrients, and water. As in real estate, roses are about location, location, location. Everything else can be augmented or changed.

### Choices

Rose choices with personalized characteristics include

- Hybrid Tea
- Floribunda
- Grandiflora
- Tree
- Climber
- Miniature
- Shrub and Landscape

**Hybrid teas** are tall, long stemmed, and popular for floral bouquets. They are the most popular cutting rose and are used by florists featuring a single specimen.



*The classic long stem red rose in a Hybrid Tea is Mr. Lincoln.*

**Floribundas** are versatile roses with clusters of three to fifteen blossoms instead of a single stem.

**Grandifloras** are repeat bloomers growing to six feet and are a cross between a hybrid and floribunda.

**Tree roses** are elegant, stately specimens grafted to a long stem from hardy wood stock that is then grafted to the top of a stem on a rose bush.

**Climbers** produce long canes with numerous flowers that can be trained over archways, along fences, pergolas, trellises, or other sturdy structures.

**Miniatures** are the smallest rose plant ranging from six inches to two feet, extremely hardy with continuous blooming flowers. They are great for containers, borders, and anywhere space is an issue.

**Shrub and landscape roses** are the newest favorite of almost every gardener because they require a minimum of care, including little pruning, spread low to the ground like a carpet, are naturally disease resistant, flower consistently throughout the season, and come in all colors, shapes, and sizes.

...continued on page D6

## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

# Life is a Bed of Roses

...continued from page D5

### Grades

The American Nurseryman Association sets the grades on roses as 1, 1 ½, and 2. The highest quality for the biggest and best canes that will bloom the first year is #1. Although the other grades cost less, they may take two or more years to bloom. A patented rose is registered by the breeder and simply means that no one else may duplicate or propagate it without permission, including taking cuttings.

After choosing the sunny location for optimal growth, these are the simple planting instructions:

- Soak roots in a bucket of water for a minimum of one hour when planting bare root. Thoroughly water a container rose for two days before planting.
- Prepare the soil by tilling compost and other organic matter. Roses thrive in acidic soil. Adding your coffee grinds will enhance the growing. Gypsum and

soil sulfur reduce the alkalinity.

- Dig the hole twice the size of the root ball and plant to the same depth.
- Plant roses three feet apart and away from other large bushes to allow for air circulation. Air movement discourages disease.
- Make sure the graft (the raised bump on the stem) is planted at least two inches above the dirt here in our warmer climates of Lamorinda. If you are planting another garden in a colder region, the graft goes two inches below the ground.
- Layer three inches of rich mulch at the base of the plant. It keeps down weeds, provides nutrients, and can be added any time during the growing season. Good mulches include wood chips, shavings, shredded bark, pine needles, cottonseed, chipped oak leaves, and peat nuggets.

- Water adequately from the bottom. Roses do not like to be sprayed. Keep moist, but not soaked.

My secret to healthy roses is that when planting, then again every March, I dig two or three cupfuls of alfalfa pellets into the dirt around the roses. Roses are heavy feeders. Start fertilizing with an organic rose fertilizer after a month. The more organic matter you use, including coffee grinds, the less supplemental fertilizer you'll need.

### Companions

Many people like to combine other specimens with roses. The best companion plants are those with similar needs of sunshine, acidic soil, and water. Alyssum and lobelia are great choices as bottom breeders while lavender and sages offer pest resistance and attract bees and hummingbirds, adding beauty and perfume with their blue and purple flowers.

### Care

Buy top quality roses for the best pest prevention precaution. If planted, watered, and fed properly, roses are healthy and prolific. If you have a specific problem, contact your local nursery or garden center for organic control options.

Deadhead regularly through the blooming season, cutting below the fifth leaf. Keep your pruning shears clean by wiping with alcohol between bushes. Always wear gloves to protect you from the thorns. Pruning promotes vigorous blooming and bigger plants. For the modern varieties, pruning keeps the roses blooming all season. Old-fashioned roses and climbers that bloom once annually need to be pruned immediately after flowering as next year's flowers bloom on this year's wood. For heavy winter pruning, mid to late January is the ideal time to prune roses in Lamorinda. To keep your roses blooming, don't allow the rose hips to form, which are the small reddish fruits that tell the plant it is "going to seed" and done blooming.

This is a short crash course in creating your own bed of roses. May you see life through rose-colored glasses and stop to smell your roses. Once you enjoy the ravishing beauty, flamboyant colors, delectable fragrance, and simple maintenance of the queen flowers, you may join the mantra of Emma Goldman and myself, "I'd rather have roses on my tables than diamonds around my neck!"



Cynthia's favorite miniature rose, *Sunshine Sprinkles*, with multiple yellow/tangerine blossoms on 12 inch stems.

## CYNTHIA BRIAN'S GARDENING GUIDE FOR JULY

*"I don't know whether nice people tend to grow roses or growing roses makes people nice." Roland A. Browne*

- **HANG** canisters to trap yellow jackets only when entertaining outdoors. Look for holes in the ground where they make their nests and call Vector Control to spray when you find them. If you buy a commercial product at your local hard ware store, read directions carefully.
- **EMPTY** standing water from all containers on your property to deter the breeding of mosquitoes.
- **CONTROL** whiteflies with yellow sticky traps.
- **MULCH** with at least three inches of shredded bark, wood chips, or rich compost to keep weeds down and valuable moisture in.
- **PINCH** herbs before they bolt to keep them producing nutrient rich flavors!
- **DEADHEAD** roses when they are spent. Cut back to a stem with five leaves for continuous flowering through January.
- **JOIN** a garden club if you want to commune with other dirt diggers.
- **DETER** the slugs, snails, and cutworms by sprinkling eggshells around your vegetables. As a bonus, they provide rich organic fertilizer.
- **PHOTOGRAPH** your garden every month so you'll have a visual map of what blooms and ripens. Photos help with planning, planting, and partying.
- **GET** a tetanus shot if you have not had one within the last ten years. Tetanus loiters in the dirt.
- **WEAR** boots and gloves in the garden as well as long pants and long sleeves when mowing lawns or using any pest control, even if it is organic.
- **ELIMINATE** ants by spreading bay leaves from our numerous California Bays and mint leaves at their point of entry. Adding rosemary or sage to the barbecue while grilling will also keep the crawlies away.
- **DEDUCT** \$1.50 from your garbage bill by composting as I've been encouraging for years. Go to <http://www.wasstefiversion.org/certification>, answer a few questions, submit a photo, and keep the change. I am a fan of the Smith & Hawken Biostack. Purchase it at a deep discount from your waste management company. It keeps the critters out and the worms in resulting in rich, loamy compost in three or four months.
- **CLEAR** brush from the perimeter of your home. Weeds and dead limbs pose a fire danger.
- **THIN** fruit trees for a larger and tastier crop.
- **CLEAN** and fill bird feeders to keep a gardener's best friend at home. Babies are hatching this month. Help the mothers feed their young.
- **ADD** pesticide and insecticide free rose petals to salads, sauces, and soups to spark the flavor and color quotient of your outdoor meals. Enjoy a red, white, and blue July, go

into your garden and pontificate like a poet, philosopher, or politician. Your roses are waiting to greet you.

Happy Gardening to You!  
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**350 Old Redwood Highway**  
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**2092-2094 Donald Drive**  
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**818 Augusta Drive**  
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**Offered at \$625,000**



**927 Augusta Drive**  
Best buy in MCC for the square footage! Unbelievable 3400+ sf 4+bd/2.5ba detached home located at end of cul-de-sac. Privacy, views, gracious and spacious!  
**Offered at \$949,000**



**136 David Drive**  
4bd/3.5ba 3763 sf w/oversized rooms, an abundance of windows & qual. craftsmanship throughout. End of cul de sac on 1.86 ac lot w/trees, lvl lawn, decks in sought-after "Bluffs" neighborhood..  
**Offered at \$1,379,000**



**6 Southard Court**  
Hard to find 5bd/4ba sngl lvl hm blt in 1998. Beaut. med. w/high ceilings, tasteful finishes & fantastic flr plan. Prvt yet close to everything. Incredible yard w/ stone patio, salt water pool, lawns, & gardens. A pleasure to view.  
**Offered at \$1,695,000**



**2596 Pebble Beach Loop**  
Light, bright 3bd/2.5bath home on .34 acre lot. Updated kitchen and baths, hardwood floors, dual paned windows. Hill views with cute dipping pool to get cool!  
**Offered at \$549,000**



**3152 Plymouth Road**  
PERFECT LITTLE FIXER. Adorable & affordable 3bd/1ba hm on gorgeous 25 ac lot. Tons of potential incl expansion & landscape improvements. Quiet court loc nr Springhill Elem & Acalanes HS. Won't last!  
**Offered at \$559,000**



**859 Sibert Court**  
Incredible Opportunity! 5bd/3.5ba, approx 2700 sf, 4 acre. Great location at the end of a court near town. Start fresh or restore and reap the rewards!  
**Offered at \$695,000**



**3419 Shangri La**  
Huge price reduction! Totally charming 3100 sf 5bd w/updated kitchen, 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 schools.  
**Offered at \$949,000**



**1730 Toyon Road**  
Charming craftsman-styled 2100 sq. ft. home on secluded 3/4 acre. Newer roof, skylights, furnace - gorgeous huge new decks. Maple floors, Wolfe range, very private, very secluded.  
**Offered at \$975,000**



**900 Camino del Rio**  
WOW - gorgeous architect remodeled traditional home in a favorite Laf location. 4bd/3ba approx. 2500 sf, pvt .50 acre parcel. Great commute location, near the trail, Burton Valley Elementary school.  
**Offered at \$1,195,000**



**1976 Fox Ridge Court**  
Exceptional 1893 sf Summit Ridge end unit, prime end of cul-de-sac loc. Versatile floor plan w/2+bd/3 full baths. Soaring ceilings, skylight, granite kitchen. Pvt decks shaded by oaks. Lafayette schools!  
**Offered at \$539,000**



**393 Monticello Court**  
Beautifully remodeled 4bd/3ba ranch style home on gorgeous flat lot at end of country lane - yet minutes to downtown Walnut Creek! Sought-after Tice Valley location.  
**Offered at \$919,000**

## THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATES:

Ashley Battersby  
Patricia Battersby  
Joan Cleveland  
Joan Eggers  
Linda Ehrlich  
Joan Evans  
Linda S Friedman  
Marianne Greene  
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