

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 12 Wednesday, August 17, 2011



*Thistles on Lamorinda hillside...  
read on page D7*

## Mid-Century Remodel Handled With Care

By Cathy Tyson

With only one prior owner leaving the property mostly untouched, the stars aligned for a group of three architects to collaborate on an artistic remodel of a Lafayette home that respects its original character. Eliza Hart, Stewart Wright and Alex Bergtraun saw potential in an Eichler-esque home in the Hidden Valley neighborhood – although dated, “it had good bones,” said Bergtraun. Hart was good friends with the original owner’s granddaughter, who wanted to make sure it didn’t get torn down. The team managed to modernize and expand the home using sustainable materials and integrated unique color choices and textures throughout.

“All three of us had a shared vision, and worked together on the design” said

Hart explaining that since the house was built on spec, they had a blank slate to work with. “We weren’t afraid to open up the walls,” added Hart, noting there were some pleasant surprises, like the original copper piping under the floors that provided radiant heat. All the pipes were in remarkably good shape, so put to work once again, with the addition of a new boiler.

The trio sensitively reworked the home from floor to ceiling, and positioned walls of windows to take advantage of the surrounding lush natural landscape. Generous, well-proportioned rooms flow from one to the next in the five bedroom three bath home.

...continued on page D4



*From left, homeowners Gordon and Dorian Chong with remodel team Alan Bergtraun, Eliza Hart, and Stewart Wright in the back yard.*



*Unique water feature lends tranquil element to patio area.*

*Photos Andy Scheck*

# THE BEAUBELLE GROUP

Glenn and Kellie Beaubelle *present...*

## LAFAYETTE ~ MODERN AND FRESH



Enjoy remarkable unobstructed views of the rolling hills from every room in the house!

Built in 1974 and sprawling over a .39-acre corner parcel of land, this home offers beautiful amenities, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, bonus/4th bedroom, sauna/steam room, and more than 2,900 sf of a gracious interior design and grand entertaining spaces.

**Offered at \$1,225,000**

## MORAGA – SANDERS RANCH



A gem in the Lamorinda community, this single level 5 bedroom, 3 bathroom home sprawls over a third of an acre and offering striking curb appeal. Enjoy a private security guard at gate, new appliances, paint, new and refinished hardwood floors, gourmet kitchen with granite countertops, crown molding, coffered and vaulted ceilings, two fireplaces, cedar-lined closets, skylights, new landscaping and roof.

**Offered at \$1,150,000**

## LAFAYETTE – WALK TO TOWN AND BART HAPPY VALLEY ELEMENTARY



This ranch style home has potential galore! The desirable floor plan offers 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, grand living room with fireplace, country kitchen with large eating area, hardwood floors, wood beamed ceilings, some dual pane doors and windows, new paint, newer roof and air conditioner. The approx. half acre parcel offers a private yard, glorious views and a myriad of exploring opportunities for kids.

**Offered at \$610,000**



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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	12	\$350,000	\$3,200,000
MORAGA	11	\$195,000	\$950,000
ORINDA	6	\$738,000	\$1,669,000

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

- 3221 Apache Court, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 2524 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 7-14-11; Previous Sale: \$1,125,000, 06-28-02
- 3348 Betty Lane, \$565,000, 3 Bdrms, 1577 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 7-15-11; Previous Sale: \$290,000, 10-09-92
- 4010 Canyon Road, \$2,455,000, 4 Bdrms, 6603 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 7-11-11; Previous Sale: \$1,725,000, 09-30-97
- 3242 Glenside Drive, \$1,355,000, 3 Bdrms, 3012 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 7-21-11; Previous Sale: \$1,145,000, 05-24-05
- 819 Las Trampas Road, \$1,370,000, 4 Bdrms, 3479 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 7-8-11
- 3268 Marlene Drive, \$350,000, 3 Bdrms, 1160 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 7-15-11; Previous Sale: \$325,000, 04-05-02
- 889 Mountain View Drive, \$865,000, 4 Bdrms, 4778 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 7-8-11; Previous Sale: \$250,000, 01-18-89
- 3995 North Peardale Drive, \$3,200,000, 5 Bdrms, 5194 SqFt, 2004 YrBlt, 7-15-11; Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 10-22-03
- 1475 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,135,000, 5 Bdrms, 2499 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 7-12-11; Previous Sale: \$1,225,000, 07-29-05
- 42 Sunrise Lane, \$624,000, 3 Bdrms, 2135 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 7-8-11; Previous Sale: \$781,000, 01-21-04
- 3275 Vals Lane, \$1,176,000, 3 Bdrms, 2656 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 7-14-11; Previous Sale: \$1,440,000, 01-26-07
- 3 Westminster Place, \$603,500, 3 Bdrms, 1846 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 7-20-11; Previous Sale: \$619,000, 11-13-02

### MORAGA

- 144 Ascot Court #1, \$195,000, 2 Bdrms, 945 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 7-21-11
- 2135 Ascot Drive #8, \$258,000, 2 Bdrms, 1643 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 7-21-11; Previous Sale: \$380,000, 01-09-03
- 641 Augusta Drive, \$715,000, 2 Bdrms, 1552 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 7-21-11; Previous Sale: \$466,000, 01-05-99
- 1379 Camino Peral #C, \$202,000, 2 Bdrms, 1031 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 7-20-11; Previous Sale: \$110,000, 10-19-82
- 2121 Donald Drive #1, \$309,000, 3 Bdrms, 1513 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 7-20-11; Previous Sale: \$351,000, 07-26-01
- 26 Laird Drive, \$809,000, 4 Bdrms, 1700 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 7-15-11; Previous Sale: \$992,000, 08-16-07
- 1179 Larch Avenue, \$905,000, 4 Bdrms, 2332 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 7-12-11; Previous Sale: \$489,000, 01-14-98
- 173 Miramonte Drive, \$410,000, 4 Bdrms, 1772 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 7-20-11; Previous Sale: \$400,000, 06-25-03
- 3983 Paseo Grande, \$680,000, 3 Bdrms, 1745 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 7-13-11
- 811 Villa Lane #4, \$226,000, 2 Bdrms, 882 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 7-14-11; Previous Sale: \$410,000, 11-23-05
- 60 Wandel Drive, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 2374 SqFt, 1991 YrBlt, 7-20-11; Previous Sale: \$488,000, 06-27-91

### ORINDA

- 128 Diablo View Drive, \$922,500, 4 Bdrms, 4579 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 7-19-11; Previous Sale: \$575,000, 08-06-96
- 25 Ramona Drive, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 2085 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 7-14-11; Previous Sale: \$467,500, 02-11-98
- 120 Ravenhill Road, \$738,000, 3 Bdrms, 2231 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 7-14-11; Previous Sale: \$563,000, 11-28-00
- 239 Sundown Terrace, \$1,669,000, 5 Bdrms, 3648 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 7-15-11; Previous Sale: \$2,325,000, 05-17-07
- 88 Tarry Lane, \$1,480,000, 5 Bdrms, 3114 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 7-13-11; Previous Sale: \$1,750,000, 05-15-03
- 12 Valley View Drive, \$970,000, 3 Bdrms, 2565 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 7-13-11; Previous Sale: \$1,280,000, 08-11-05

# FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BUEHLER HOUSE



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Photography by Jeff Anderson



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18 Wandel Drive, Moraga



### Cute-as-a-Button

Charming 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath single-story on level corner lot w/office/bonus room. Updated w/dual-paned windows, granite counters, & remodeled master bath. Close to top-rated schools. **\$649,950**



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## Mid-Century Remodel Handle

...continued from page D1

Once the jungle outside was tamed, clearing away years of unmaintained brush, a new tranquil zen-like yard began to emerge. A fence was moved back toward a natural gully to do double duty, improving the view and keeping the deer out. Adding multiple skylights at key locations provided light at the ends of the spine of the home illuminating both ends and adding an airy feeling. The new homeowners love the lighting – in addition to the windows and skylights, the architects included built in valence lights on dimmers that emit a soft glow on the ceiling.

The former funky, unheated rumpus room has been transformed into a tranquil master suite with a wall of built in cabinetry. Pristine, unadorned functionality continues in the master bath featuring concrete counters, large rectangular sinks and fresh white rectangular tile. Same size, but different color - bright yellow tile is a focal point of the kitchen, echoing the design theme. Concrete countertops are also repeated throughout the home.

When finished, even this gem was a victim of a tough real estate market, and sat unsold for a year. The current owners started a home search a couple of times. On their first foray into house hunting – they saw the recently renovated property and were intrigued – but not quite ready to make a decision. Twelve months later, the home was still on the market so they took a tour on a Friday and made an offer on Sunday. Unfortunately on Monday there were three offers. When it rains it pours, but the sellers ultimately chose Dorian and Gordon Chong's offer because of Gordon's profession – he's also an architect – they knew their diligent work on the design would be appreciated.

The Chong's prior home was perched high in the Berkeley hills with expansive views of multiple bridges. Although they loved the view, they weren't in love with the 38 steps required to get to the garage. Throw in endless schlepping of groceries and life's essentials and it was time to make a change.

Having lived in the home for about a year, the couple has settled in with their Schnauzer, Shelby, to enjoy the breezy informality of their new and improved Mid-century California modern remodel. This residence was recently included, with seven other unique homes, in the East Bay's first American Institute of Architects home tour celebrating design excellence.



*Yellow rectangular tile sets off kitchen.*  
Stewart Wright.



*Spacious living room featuring new*



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## Thinking About Buying?

There's a saying that your biggest gains are to be made when you buy, not sell.

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## Top 4 Opportunities in 2011

- 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.

DRE# 1835783





# ed With Care



*When with open, custom Europly shelving designed and constructed by architect*



*new cement cladding on existing fireplace.*



*Re-purposed original decking was used as a wall treatment in the main hallway.*



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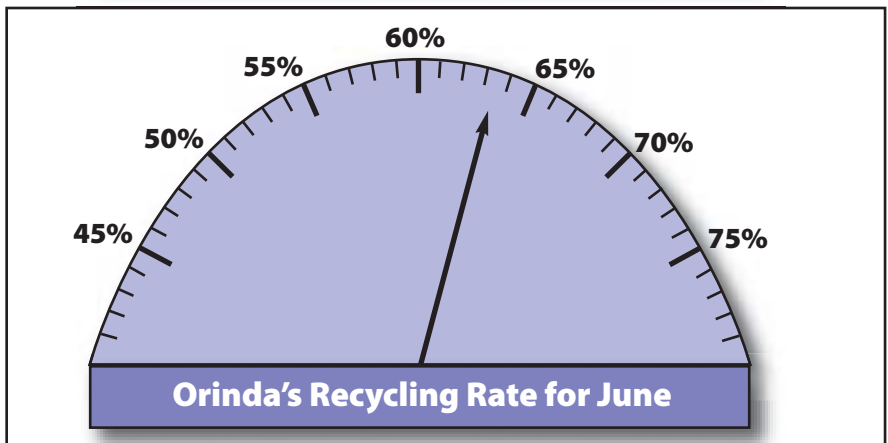
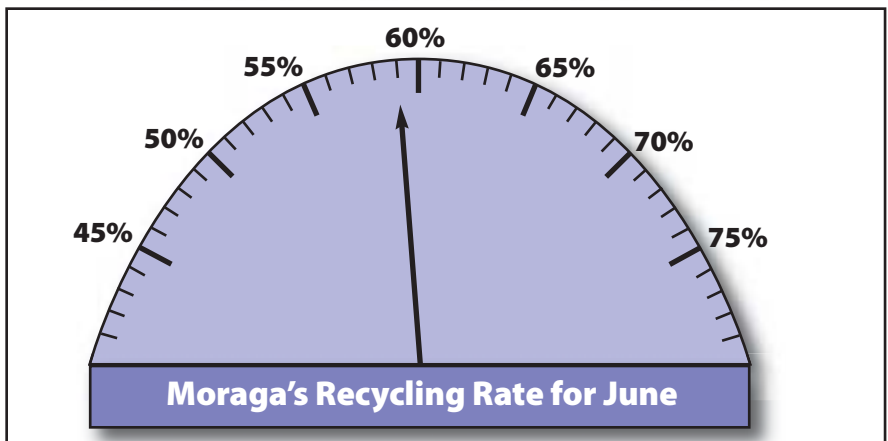
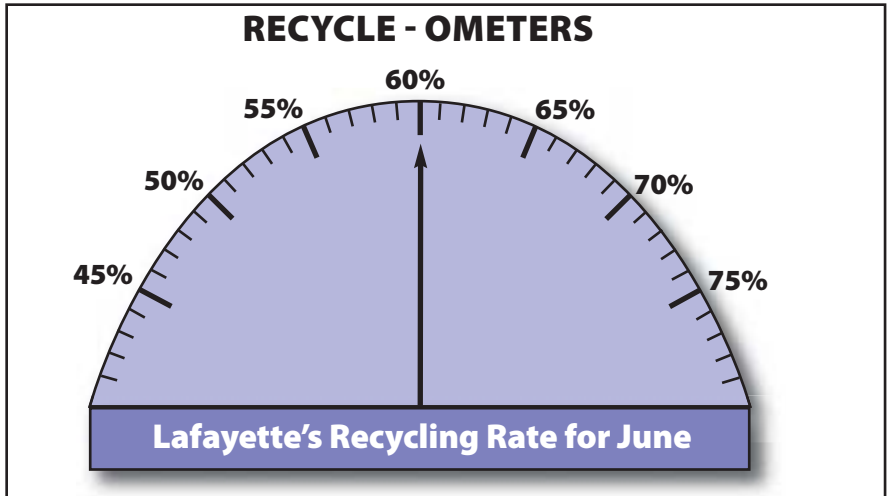
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## Recycling in Lamorinda

The numbers below are provided by the Central Costa County Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) and will be included in the Lamorinda Weekly on an ongoing basis when available.



### To register with Recycle Bank:

If you've lost the letter that contained your PIN number, no problem – Go online to [recyclebank.com](http://recyclebank.com) and click on 'register.' Enter your information, including your address. Get a new pin by mail or immediately with a message sent to your cell phone; now you can complete your registration.

# As Thick as Thistles

By Cathy Dausman



A swath of purple thistles covering a Lamorinda hillside makes a great photo op. To borrow a phrase from a Frank Baum character, the vista is quite “soothing to the eye”. It turns out these weeds have more in common with the Wicked Witch than any good Oz character. The photo shows *Cynara cardunculus*, or artichoke thistles, says Contra Costa County Agriculture Commissioner Vince Guise. He said those thistles, plus “purple star, yellow star, and French and Scotch broom are major pests in the Lamorinda area.”

Artichoke thistle is the native Mediterranean plant from which the globe artichoke was developed, but you probably don’t want to eat one. The thistles grow several feet tall and can spread to seven feet in diameter. Their needle-like spines are up to an inch-and-a-half long, and the blue flower measures up to six inches in diameter.

Flowering takes place in June. After the flowers mature the plant goes dormant turning brown and black. The plant emerges again next winter. Seeds can last in the soil more than 20 years. To rid an area of artichoke thistle, its taproot must be dug out eighteen inches beneath the soil. Otherwise, it sprouts back. Eradication help from Mother Nature includes gophers and voles that will eat the thistle roots, and birds and squirrels that eat the seeds. Goats sometimes munch on the plant tops but aren’t brought in for grazing because they don’t dig the out the taproot.

A 2009 Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture publication referenced surveying and treating thistle “on a 458 acre privately owned property called Palos Colrados located in Moraga.” At the time the property was over half infested with artichoke and purple star thistle.

The county agriculture department does have a thistle control/eradication program, but “the Lamorinda area is pretty much the hold-out epicenter [on infestation because] we have not had the resources to get on all the affected properties.”

The California Invasive Plant Council out of Berkeley has more information on native weed control. Call (510) 843-3902 or log onto [info@cal-ipc.org](mailto:info@cal-ipc.org).

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## Mulching trees and shrubs conserves water

Mulching is important for trees and also shrubs. Besides being attractive, mulch can be used to conserve soil moisture, to buffer soil temperature extremes, to control weeds and competing vegetation and to replenish organic matter and nutrients in the soil.

The majority of landscape trees evolved in a woodland environment with natural mulch around them. Often the practice is to rake up or blow away any natural mulch in a home landscapes.

In a natural environment, trees generally do not grow in lawns or meadows and their root systems do not compete well against lawn grasses. A mulched area around a tree should be provided for the benefit of the tree. The size of the mulched areas around a tree depends on the size of the tree.

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ORINDA



### 11 Arroyo Drive

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**Offered at \$895,000**



ORINDA



### 30 Rio Vista

Charming "Pottery Barn" 3bd/2ba, 1978 sf trad on .42 ac at end os in pvt setting adj to open space. Updated kit w/granite, updt'd baths, new paint & cpt. Level lawn/play area. Walk to Bart.

**Offered at \$899,000**



ORINDA



### 99 La Cuesta

Stunning OCC custom home. Gorgeous views of Lake Cascade filtered thru mature oak trees & lovely pvt level yard. Beaut renovated thruout w/granite & stainless dream kitchen.

**Offered at \$1,179,000**



ORINDA



### 69 Tara Road

Very special 4bd/3.5ba hm of great style, lovely decor & quality enhancements. 4382 sf of ideal spaces, high ceilings, ofc. Pvt gated 1 acre w/outstanding outdoor areas w/pool.

**Offered at \$1,595,000**



ORINDA



### 50 Haciendas Road

Classic Old Orinda estate hm. Prime 1 acre parcel at end of court. 5bd/5ba, 5110 sf architecturally designed by Wm Knowles. Spectacular setting w/lawns, gardens, pool, in-law apt.

**Offered at \$1,895,000**



ORINDA



### 502 Miner Road

Classic 5 bd/3.5ba 4193 sf Cape Cod style, fully renovated in Orinda Country Club. Quality craftsmanship, exquisite attn to detail. Dlx chef's kitchen, fab mstr suite + formal trad living & dining rms. Views!

**Offered at \$2,495,000**



MORAGA



### 527 Chalda Way

Enjoy private attractive courtyard - charming updated 2bd/1.5ba townhome with shaker style cabinetry, granite counters, great convenient location.

**Offered at \$319,000**



MORAGA



### 272 Tharp Drive

Move right in. Lovely single level 3bd/2ba hm w/great curb appeal. Hdwd flrs, fresh paint, newer appliances. Great location, convenient to schools & Rancho Laguna Park. Beautiful landscaping front and back.

**Offered at \$729,000**



MORAGA



### 927 Augusta Drive

Best buy in MCC! Fab new price for 3424 sf of living! Located at end of cul de sac, this prof decorated 4+bd/2.5ba home is most desirable. Privacy, views & an open space feeling.

**Offered at \$875,000**



MORAGA



### 136 David Drive

4bd/3.5ba home offering 3763 sf w/oversized rms, an abundance of windows & quality craftsmanship throughout. End of cul de sac location on 1.86 ac w/trees, lvl lawn, decks.

**Offered at \$1,295,000**



LAFAYETTE



### 945 Mountain View Drive

Charm abounds in this 867 sf 1bd/1ba cutie nr all Lafayette dwntwn conveniences (walk to Trader Joe's). Exceptional curb appeal, attn to detail thruout. Sep artist's studio.

**Offered at \$515,000**



LAFAYETTE



### 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**



LAFAYETTE



### 859 Acalanes Road

Up a long drive you will find this allremodeled 3bd/3ba artist's home on .61 acre of mature landscaping, patios & views. Total privacy with iron gate yet close to freeways, schools, Bart.

**Offered at \$1,125,000**



WALNUT CREEK



### 352 Kinross Drive

Spacious Heather Farms twnhm w/3bd/2.5ba, 1796 sf on lovely quiet tree lined street. Kit/fam rm combo, LR, DR, spacious mstr suite w/lounge area. New cpt/paint. Nr shopping, trail, Bart.

**Offered at \$389,000**



WALNUT CREEK



### 664 Charleston Court

Fabulous 2-story detached home built in '94. Very spacious light & bright on quiet court. Gorgeous remodeled kitchen, private yard.

**Offered at \$519,000**



WALNUT CREEK



### 1296 Rudgear Road

Updated stylish 3bd/2ba ranch style home + separate cabana. Solar powered! Landscaped with California natives on 1/3 acre.

**Offered at \$629,000**

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