

The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS

The third quarter of 2012 again showed significant activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from July 1 through September 30, 2012, 80 single-family homes closed in Lafayette which was higher than the 76 that closed in the third quarter of 2011. Sales prices ranged from \$433,000 to \$2.7 million. There were two additional homes listed above \$2 million that closed during the quarter but the prices were not provided to the Multiple Listing Service. The average number of days on market was 37 versus 46 days for the same period in 2011 and 67 days in the third quarter of 2010. The average sales price was \$1,001,291 which was lower than the year ago period where the average was \$1,071,776. The average sales price was \$1,053,173 in the second quarter of this year.

In Moraga, the number of single-family closings was 34, identical to the same 90 day period a year ago. Prices ranged from \$615,900 to \$3.5 million. The average sale price was \$1,049,408, up significantly from a year ago's \$874,909. As Moraga had 2 sales above \$2 million, which is not typical, the numbers were affected accordingly. The average marketing time was similar at 34 days on market where a year ago it was 35 days. In the second quarter of this year, the average sale price was \$983,875.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings was up to 81 which far exceeded the third quarter of 2011 when there were 47. Sales prices ranged from \$483,000 to \$2.35 million with an average price of \$1,109,094, an increase over 3Q11 when the average

was \$1,055,629. There were 2 sales where the sale price was not reported to the MLS. In the second quarter of this year, the average price was \$1,132,702. It took an average of only 38 days to expose a home to the market prior to contract and it was 55 days a year ago.

In the third quarter of this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$419.49 per square foot. A year ago it was \$416.05 per square foot. Moraga homes sold for \$396.29 up from \$381.18 per square foot a year ago and Orinda was at \$417.70 per square foot this last quarter.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had four closings between \$514,000 and \$600,000; Moraga had 19 ranging from \$141,000 to \$640,000. The 2 highest sales were in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had three—\$220,000 to \$790,000. The first was on Brookwood and the other 2 in Orinda Woods.

As of October 3, 2012, there were 107 pending sales per the MLS in the 3 communities combined. A year ago it was 71 which points to a significantly increased number of closings in the fourth quarter of the year. The asking prices were from \$199,000 for a Moraga condominium to \$2,495,000 for a single family home in Lafayette. It should be pointed out that there are 20 "Potential Short Sales" that are currently pending and were subject to lender approval. Four of the pending sales are REOs (bank owned properties.) The number of REOs in Lamorinda continues to be very low on a percentage and actual basis when compared to other communities.

It is interesting to point out that of

the 107 pending sales in the area, 66 have received acceptable offers since September 1. That is an average of just over 2 per day. Usually many of the sales are completed prior to the start of school. Depending upon how many of the homes are being purchased by families with children who are new to Lamorinda, it may impact certain grades at the elementary level.

Inventory, however, continues to plummet when looking at the available homes. In Lafayette there are 42 on the market versus 84 on the market a year ago in early October. At this same point in 2010 there were 114 on the market.

In Moraga buyers have their choice of only 15 properties, down from 41 homes 12 months ago, and 64 on the market on this date in 2010.

Orinda inventory has fallen from

80 available properties in October, 2010 to 64 homes in October, 2011 and to only 39 at the beginning of this month.

In total, as of October 7, 2011 there were 189 residences available in the 3 communities including 2 in Canyon. As of last week there were only 96. Asking prices range from \$202,950 for a condominium in Orinda to \$7.75 million for a Lafayette property.

As is the case nearly every quarter, the most active price range is in the more "affordable" price ranges. At the high end, 10 homes sold above \$2 million in the 3 communities combined versus six the same period in 2011. There are 22 currently available above this amount—8 in Lafayette, 11 in Orinda, and 3 in Moraga.

