Somorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 10 Wednesday, July 15, 2015



Acorn Woodpeckers Are Beauties

But they can damage houses and outbuildings By Chris Lavin



This acorn woodpecker is where he or she is supposed to be, on a snag at Valle Vista Staging Area in Moraga, storing acorns in a tree, not in the side of a house.

Photo Chris Lavin

The males' brilliant red heads are spectacularly beautiful – there is even a small patch of green feathers in the middle of their backs if you manage to get a close look – but there is a problem with acorn woodpeckers in Lamorinda. Their domain is spread throughout the area, but they don't just focus on trees.

"They love any wood," said Mario Martinez, of All N One Pest Control in Concord. He makes his living clearing people's houses from the mammals and birds that want to cohabitate against the owners' will. Does he get calls about acorn woodpeckers? "Oh, yeah," he said.

Acorn woodpeckers are brilliantly colored, small woodpeckers, about 8 inches long. Their call is like a laugh in the woods – general folklore has it that the laugh of Woody Woodpecker in the cartoon features the acorn woodpecker laugh, while the character's body is more like that of a pileated woodpecker, which is much larger. Lamorindans have the benefit of each species, and more.

According to Kate Marianchild, who wrote "Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants & Animals Among California Oaks" (Heyday, Berkeley, 2014) acorn woodpeckers have an extremely developed social structure. They are one of the few species to raise their young in groups – yep, they share nests – which causes large numbers, up to 15 individuals, to congregate in one area. Not good for homeowners with large oak trees, where the birds collect the acorns and look for the best possible place to put them for winter.

The summer acorns are their prime target. The woodpeckers hammer out a hole that will just fit the acorn, then fetch it and deposit it in their granary. Hundreds or thousands of acorns can be deposited in a single tree.

While the International Union of Conservation of Nature does not list acorn woodpeckers as endangered, trapping them or killing them is still a no-no.

That has led to some homeowners setting up nets outside their houses to prevent the woodpeckers from landing in the first place. A new hole getting drilled right outside the bedroom window at 6 a.m. is not exactly a welcome sound.

... continued on page D4



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	19	\$850,000	\$3,900,000
MORAGA	10	\$263,000	\$1,540,000
ORINDA	10	\$909,000	\$2,475,000

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

3361 Betty Lane, \$960,000, 3 Bdrms, 1154 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 6-4-15; Previous Sale: \$450,000, 04-02-12

1207 Camino Vallecito, \$1,795,000, 6 Bdrms, 4185 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 5-26-15; Previous Sale: \$1,527,500, 12-19-13

1195 Glen Road, \$1,600,000, 6 Bdrms, 2698 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-1-15

3340 Johnson Road, \$850,000, 2 Bdrms, 1264 SqFt, 1936 YrBlt, 6-5-15

3394 Las Huertas Road, \$2,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 3769 SqFt, 2006 YrBlt, 6-3-15

7 Maloyan Lane, \$1,975,000, 4 Bdrms, 3272 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 5-26-15; Previous Sale: \$1,140,000, 08-29-03

8 Middle Road, \$1,610,000, 4 Bdrms, 2948 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-3-15; Previous Sale: \$1,445,000, 07-28-10

3474 Moraga Boulevard, \$910,000, 3 Bdrms, 1686 SqFt, 2011 YrBlt, 6-2-15; Previous Sale: \$135,000, 01-26-96

1186 Pleasant Hill Circle, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 2428 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-2-15; Previous Sale: \$62,000, 08-09-84

1291 Quandt Court, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1656 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 6-2-15; Previous Sale: \$600,000, 09-04-02

2095 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,209,000, 3 Bdrms, 2230 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 6-2-15; Previous Sale: \$769,000, 06-26-03

33 Sanford Lane, \$2,903,000, 4 Bdrms, 3892 SqFt, 2006 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$2,903,000, 05-22-15

1036 Sunnybrook Drive, \$1,285,000, 2 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 6-5-15; Previous Sale: \$640,500, 09-17-10

860 Tanglewood Drive, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3761 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 6-5-15 1258 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$3,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 4411 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-2-15;

Previous Sale: \$1,365,000, 08-23-96

117 Wilderness Lane, \$3,300,000, 5 Bdrms, 4397 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-5-15; Previous Sale: \$4,195,000, 04-29-15

1009 Windsor Drive, \$1,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 2417 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 6-5-15; Previous Sale: \$1,176,000, 06-20-14

3275 Withers Avenue, \$1,260,000, 4 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-5-15; Previous Sale: \$525,000, 08-06-99

3348 Victoria Avenue, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 2525 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$825,000, 03-22-02

MORAGA

1155 Alta Mesa Drive, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2785 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 5-26-15 1905 Ascot Drive, \$720,000, 2 Bdrms, 1379 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$330,000, 08-01-00

126 Ascot Court #D, \$295,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 6-4-15; Previous Sale: \$308,000, 08-03-07

2087 Ascot Drive #125, \$263,000, 1 Bdrms, 761 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 6-3-15; Previous Sale: \$159,500, 02-03-11

50 Corte Maria, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3243 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$975,000, 10-17-01

... continued on page D6



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- 2401± sq. ft., .28± acre lot
- Offered at \$1,275,000 | 4 Offers



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Page: D4 LAMORINDA WEEKLY OUR HOMES www.lamorindaweekly.com / 925-377-0977 Wednesday, July 15, 2015

Acorn Woodpeckers Are Beauties

... continued from page D1



Some houses, such as this one in Orinda, sport bird nets to keep the woodpeckers away from the siding.

Photos Chris Lavin

"Plus they cause hundreds of dollars in damage," said one Orinda homeowner.

Here are some common deterrents to woodpecker visitations, besides nets:

- If you have a dark-colored house, paint it a lighter color. Easier said than done. Plus, expensive.
- Hang nets that will deter the birds from getting to your wood siding in the first place. This should be done especially if you have aluminum siding and the birds are convinced it's wood. (More annoying in the morning.)
- Put a plastic owl on your house that has paper wings that will flutter in the wind.
- If you are technologically enabled, set up a sound system with woodpecker distress calls, and include the call of a hawk. An enterprising young person in the Lamorinda area who does not like to be awakened by woodpeckers might consider putting this on YouTube for distribution to the general public and the Overall General Good, plus for adding to a college application.

If all else fails, one may set up a camera, a suet bag or feeder, snap away at the clown-like birds that live everywhere in this area ... and put up "Most Wanted" posters.



Architect George Kinnell demonstrates how to prevent acorn woodpeckers from burrowing into your house, especially when it's been freshly painted.

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OUR HOMES Wed., July 15, 2015

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from Page D2

MORAGA ... continued

29 Corte Yolanda, \$1,163,000, 4 Bdrms, 2066 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 6-2-15 127 Longfield Place, \$1,540,000, 4 Bdrms, 2436 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$168,000, 12-28-77

149 Miramonte Drive, \$555,000, 2 Bdrms, 1525 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-1-15

153 Miramonte Drive, \$713,000, 2 Bdrms, 1525 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 6-8-15; Previous Sale: \$555,000, 04-19-07

12 Via Barcelona, \$879,000, 3 Bdrms, 2109 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$660,000, 07-22-10

ORINDA

98 Barbara Road, \$1,375,000, 4 Bdrms, 2563 SqFt, 1994 YrBlt, 6-3-15; Previous Sale: \$485,000, 10-15-97

30 Charles Hill Circle, \$1,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2077 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-5-15; Previous Sale: \$50,500, 08-21-74

15 Lavenida Drive, \$1,305,500, 3 Bdrms, 2277 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 6-5-15 16 Lind Court, \$909,000, 3 Bdrms, 1411 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 6-8-15

129 Lombardy Lane, \$2,045,000, 4 Bdrms, 2550 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-8-15

649 Miner Road, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3114 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 5-22-15; Previous Sale: \$820,000, 05-06-11

9 Sally Ann Road, \$950,000, 4 Bdrms, 2527 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-3-15 116 Stein Way, \$1,255,000, 5 Bdrms, 3113 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-3-15;

Previous Sale: \$337,500, 12-29-88

611 Tahos Road, \$1,245,000, 4 Bdrms, 2532 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-5-15;

Previous Sale: \$385,000, 09-06-89

31 Via Hermosa, \$2,475,000, 2 Bdrms, 1642 SqFt, 1936 YrBlt, 6-5-15; Previous Sale: \$690,000, 04-05-13

Quinn Berg

Broker Associate Direct: 925.765.2996 quinn.berg@camoves.com www.quinnberg.com

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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T

The second quarter of 2015 continued with an increase in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate with supply continuing to be low, pending sales down slightly, and closings up with the average sales price higher in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda – much higher than the same period a year ago.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from April 1 through June 30, 128 single-family homes closed in Lafayette versus 100 in the same period one year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$680,000 to \$7.2 million, averaging 19 days on market, similar to the same quarter in 2014 and 2013. The average sales price was \$1,670,209, a significant increase from the year ago quarter of \$1,396,941. Previous second quarter averages were \$1,226,216 in 2013 and \$1,053,173 in 2012.

In Moraga there were 40 single-family closings, about the same as the 43 in 2Q2014 and up from 36 in 2Q2013. Prices ranged from \$925,000 to \$2,572,025. The average sale price was \$1,368,425, a slight increase from the \$1,301,236 for the same period a year ago, and up from \$1,144,668 in 2013 and \$983,785 in 2012. The average marketing time was 13 days, similar to the same period in 2014 and 2013.

There were 86 single-family closings in Orinda. Sales prices ranged from \$624,000 to \$3.738 million with an average price of \$1,532,761, up from the same period in 2014 of \$1,434,930 and \$1,282,236 in 2013. It took an average of just 19 days on the market to sell.

In the quarter ending June 30, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$594 per square foot, versus \$537 per square foot in 2Q2014 and \$495 per square foot in 2Q2013. Moraga homes sold for \$538 and Orinda for \$558. In 2014, in the same calendar quarter, these amounts were \$506 and \$530, respectively.

In Lafayette, the average sales price was 103.9 percent of the final asking price. In Moraga it was 104.5 percent and in Orinda it was 105.1 percent.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had four closings between \$585,000 and \$701,000, Moraga had 20 ranging from \$260,000 to \$879,000 and Orinda had two listed at \$466,000 and \$875,000.

As of July 10, there were 85 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined with asking prices of \$239,000 to \$6.5 million. A year ago there were 119 pending home sales. There is only one "Potential Short Sale" that is currently pending and subject to lender approval, compared to three at this same time in 2014, nine in 2013, and 29 in 2012!

This is due to property values continuing to increase versus three years ago, with many of those sellers who no longer "under water" or who have refinanced their homes and are no longer at the point of foreclosure.

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

Inventory, however, remains low, but it has finally started to increase after several quarters of decline. There are 110 properties on the market in the three communities combined compared to 126 a year ago. This is quite a change from July 2011 when the inventory was at 219 homes

There are "only" 49 properties on the market in Lafayette – similar to the 47 at this same time a year ago. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$780,000 to \$4.25 million. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of only 21 homes or condominiums listed between \$299,000 and \$3.65 million, versus 17 a year ago, and there are only 40 in Orinda, way down from the 62 on the market at the same time a year ago. The list prices range from \$875,000 to \$7 million.

There is only one bank-owned or short sale currently in the MLS available in any of the three communities.

At the high end, 42 homes sold above \$2 million in the three communities combined. A year ago there were 32 and in 2013, a total of 12 sales in the \$2 million-plus range closed in the second quarter. There are 35 currently available above this amount in the three communities combined.

Interest rates continue to be at very attractive levels and many corporations have expanded their businesses and continue to relocate families both into and out of the area.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices, and they do not sell, but in the second quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

We are also seeing many buyers having to make offers without the traditional contingencies of obtaining financing or having a home appraised or even having the home inspected. Many sellers are now opting to obtain pre-sale inspections in order to understand the condition of their homes and to also prevent a buyer from trying to renegotiate a lower price or repairs.

Of the 128 single-family sales that closed in Lafayette in the second quarter of 2015, 95 sold at or above the list price. All four of the non single-family homes in Lafayette sold at or above the asking price.

In Moraga, 31 of the 40 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 59 of the 86 sold at or above the final listing price.



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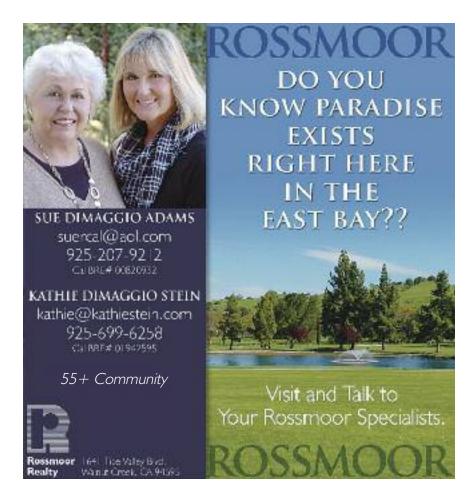


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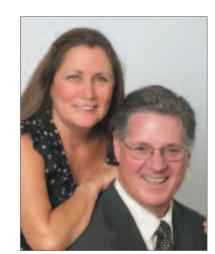


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Page: D10 LAMORINDA WEEKLY OUR HOMES www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977 Wednesday, July 15, 2015

Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia Brian

Bug Out!

By Cynthia Brian

"Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions." ~ Albert Einstein

of 60 is the new 40, golden is the new green, and driving a dirty car is the sign of being environmentally correct, it's time to talk about what's really bugging us. With the drought, many homeowners are experiencing an invasion of uninvited insects and varmints hungry to eat what's left of our crops while some are dining on us as main courses.

Although many of the insects such as lady beetles, ground beetles, lacewings, praying mantis, and predatory nematodes that visit our gardens are beneficial biologicals, the ones that we want to bug out are the bugs (arachnids, arthropods, and other entomological species) that bother, interfere, destroy and traumatize.

ANTS

Ants in the garden are actually dining on the sweet honeydew made by mealybugs and aphids. Although some species of ants feed on soft plant tissue or seeds, you'll usually find ants crawling up and down plants where they are herding colonies of aphids or mealybugs. If you grow artichokes, you've probably witnessed ants infesting the chokes. Armies of ants on the kitchen counter in summer are scream-able. Make a tea of cayenne pepper, lemon rind, mint, rosemary and clove. Spray on the soil ... and in your kitchen.

FRUIT FLIES

Stone fruit like apricots, peaches, plums, prunes and nectarines are ripe and ready right now. Whether you buy them at the farmers' market or grow them in your backyard, if left in the fruit bowl, fruit flies will appear. The eggs could be in the fruit, or the flies could be flying in through an open window or door. Fruit flies are just a nuisance doing little harm except being annoying. Keep your compost bucket outside and covered during the summer. If they are bothering you indoors, add vinegar, wine, and a piece of any fruit to a bowl. Cover tightly with foil. Punch holes in the foil and watch them drown!

TICKS

Ticks are not going to damage your garden, but they could cost you a trip to the emergency room or hospital. Ticks attach themselves to the fur and feathers of animals and birds. Often they reside on grasses or brush and hop onto a warm-blooded creature where dinner awaits. As gardeners, hikers or animal lovers, ticks are a common problem. Wearing long sleeves, removing clothing, and washing hair after being outdoors may help in the prevention of tick bites. However, because of the possibility of Lyme disease or a severe allergic reaction, it's best to see a medical professional immediately when bit. If you remove the tick, make sure to save it in a jar for identification.

MOSQUITOES

Buzzing bloodsuckers, these tiny vampires wreak havoc on humans. They are considered "public enemy number one" in the fight against global infectious diseases. Interestingly, only the female has the mouthparts to suck our blood, homing in on exhaled carbon dioxide, certain body odors, heat and movement. The itchiness you feel after a bite is an allergic reaction to the saliva. The only good news about these vectors is that birds, frogs, bats, turtles and dragonflies eat them in the garden. Empty any standing water as they breed rapidly, slather on the DEET, and when outdoors, plug in a large fan to blow them away. Planting citronella on the patio may help.

APHIDS

These true bugs puncture plant tissue and suck the juice, attacking our peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots and many flowering plants. They prefer to be upwind in a garden and often are herded by ants. Overfeeding with nitrogen encourages aphid infestation as they eat new growth. Aphids multiply rapidly. Spray with water mixed with dishwashing detergent and use row covers on crops.

EARWIGS

It's a myth that the name was derived because these pinchers drilled into the ears of sleeping humans, burrowing into their brains. They are omnivores who tunnel into fruit and bulbs as well as dine on lettuce, potatoes, roses, zinnias, artichokes, corn and many other plants. Make traps out of small cardboard boxes baited with a piece of meat and oil. They'll hide at night and you'll get them in the morning. Despite nibbling on plants, they do help gardeners by devouring other predatory insects.

With the California drought a reality, expect more intruders into your landscape pillaging, biting and sucking. Get creative with natural tonics and use your imagination to keep the stinging, nibbling and gnawing at bay. Enjoy the coming attractions of summer!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Prunes and apricots along with herbs make a great summer gift.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Vetch adds natural nitrogen to the soil without overdoing while tangling with the euphorbia.



Red dahlia



Your friendly neighborhood

arborists Darren and Lew Edwards

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Tips for July

- PERUSE bulb catalogues for the varieties of tulips and daffodils that you'll want to buy this fall for November through January planting.
- **PLANT** succulents and cactus for the most effective waterless garden.
- **DISCOVER** the benefits of Miniclover® as a lawn alternative. I have found that Miniclover® stays green when the rest of my lawn is "golden" and it is very low maintenance. Although I mow, it probably would be fine without mowing. Check out www.outsidepride.com for more information.
- SPEND a morning at your local farmers' market and load up on veggies and fruits that you are not growing in your garden.
- HARVEST beans, eggplants, greens and peppers before they reach their full size. Smaller vegetables are tender and tasty.
- **BEAUTIFY** your landscape with pavers or crushed granite paths. Plant creeping thyme between the stones.



Succulents and cactus create artistic and imaginative droughtresistant landscapes.



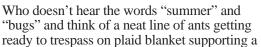
Cynthia Brian in the Shasta Daisies

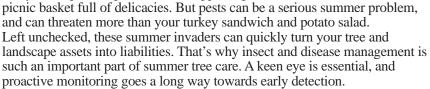
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134 El Toyonal Charming one level, 3 bed/2 bath, easy open living floor plan, very light+bright exposure on ideal knoll. Exceptional in/outside living, nature at your doorstep. Truly lovely native landscaping.

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216 Crestview Drive Charming 2825sf home on 1.4 serene acres. 3bd/2ba main house level-out to yard + 2-story guest house/ art studio w/ 1ba & kitchen. Needs some TLC. Tons of potential!

\$1,100,000

ORINDA

20 Austin Court Beautiful 2 story, 2529 sf home situated on cul de sac on private 1.45 ac. lot w/pool, spa & extensive patios, master retreat, office, gourmet kitchen, spacious living room & formal \$1,350,000 dining room.



2 Cedar Lane Private setting, Inviting Pool, Expanded Master Suite + 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, playroom/ art studio & detached workshop. Lots of outdoor living

\$1,350,000

ORINDA



39 Zander Drive Fabulous 2930sf one level custom home. Incredible 2+ac knoll, unobstructed views of valley & Mt. Diablo. Beautifully maintained w/sunflooded rooms. Hardwood floors throughout.

\$1,639,000

ORINDA



31 Crestview Drive Enjoy incredible views from this remodeled & renovated contemp. 5bd/3+ba, 3275sf home on .49ac lot. Hdwd flrs, Marvin windows, large fam rm & master. Drought tolerant gardens. Top schools. \$1.795,000

ORINDA



73 Scenic Drive Secluded Glorietta custom w/high ceilings, 2 spacious fam rms, 3 of 5 bdrms are ensuite, 6 baths. Level lawns, new decks, views, chef's kitchen, master retreat w/private deck. 3 car garage.

\$2,195,000



74 Van Tassel Lane Exceptional Custom Single Story Contemporary w/ open floor plan perfect for families/ entertaining built in 2006 in The Heart of Sleepy Hollow. Apx. 4000sf, 4bed+office, 3.5bath on .48ac. \$2.895,000

ORINDA



25 Rustic Way Impressive property w/ top-of-the-hill privacy, fab. views & custom built 6bd/5.5ba home of apx. 8514sf on 8.14 acres. Racquetball court, pool w/ unique water-slide, tennis court. Mins to top-rated schools. \$3,695,000

MORAGA



8 Berkshire Street Stunning remodeled single level, Plan 2 in Moraga Country Club. Chef's kitchen, spa-like master bath. Beautiful setting. Former MCC Home Tour Home.

\$885,000

LAFAYETTE



3638 Bickerstaff Road Totally adorable cottage-styled 2 bed home. Walk to town, great schools, restaurants & BART! Hardwood floors, granite kitchen & big level lot perfect for expansion/ pool/ gardens! \$848,000

LAFAYETTE



3108 Del Oceano Charming ranch home w/hdwd flrs, tons of natural light & private setting. Updated eat-in kit adj. to FR. Level yard with patio, lawn, play areas, raised garden beds & RV parking if needed. \$900,000

LAFAYETTE



14 White Oak Drive Dramatic 2900+sf mid century contemporary nestled among majestic oaks on fabulous level 1/2 acre. Soaring ceilings, spacious kitchen, in-law apartment. Private swim/ tennis club. \$1,250,000

LAFAYETTE



4038 Happy Valley Road Premium Happy Valley loc, 2+ac gated estate. Stylish 3bd + 2 Offices, soaring ceilings, walls of glass, spectacular views from every room. Beautiful updates, Resort pool/spa, great schools. \$2,295,000

LAFAYETTE



3921 Happy Vally Road Fabulous gated estate in coveted Happy Valley. Custom home w/beautiful landscpng, pool w/waterfall, patios & decks. Hdwd & marble floors. Chef 's Kit/Fam. room. Au pair set-up. Walk to HV School. Views! \$2,595,000

WALNUT CREEK



172 Rudgear Drive Amazing

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