

Orinda Home On Market Just In Time For School!



31 Whitehall Drive, Orinda

3 bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms with hardwood floors & bonus family room on popular "Ivy Drive Neighborhood" street.

Coming Soon | Call for Details



809 Rosedale Avenue, Lafayette

This 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom home is just steps from nearby Lafayette Elementary School and downtown.

Sold | Offered at \$799,000



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Uncovering the Pros and Cons of Pool Covers

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They have a pool service that comes regularly to adjust the chemicals and keep the pool clean.

In Lafayette, Vickie and Jeff Martin have a lovely pool, no small children living at home, but two pugs who are not good swimmers, due to their short legs and barrel-shaped bodies. After a recent pool remodel, they opted not to get a pool cover and instead purchased a safety buoy that is designed to float in the pool and detect when something 18 pounds or more falls into the pool. It comes with a house remote receiver that works up to 200 feet away. On a recent day however, the buoy was loudly beeping for no apparent reason. Sonny the pug was also sounding an alarm by barking at the beeping buoy.

There are similar alarms that attach to the edge of the pool that have an underwater sensor which will trigger an alarm on a remote receiver in the house when an object 18 pounds or more falls into the water. This may not be the best option for families with cats or very small dogs, and doesn't address evaporation or heat loss.

On the upper end of the price spectrum are convenient motorized pool covers that are very safe, keep the heat in and the leaves and debris out. But these can run in the \$9,000 to \$10,000 range. With a new pool installation, these can easily be included in the design, so the tracks are underneath the lip of the pool. It's also possible to retrofit an existing rectangular pool, with the tracks are on top of the pool decking.

All summer long, scores of swim team kids as well as adults are using the recently remodeled pool at the Moraga Country Club. Aquatic Director Sean Mason, reports they have tried an enzyme barrier cover, but due to the lane ropes and windy conditions, it had "limited" success. This type of cover works best on indoor pools, said Mason. Unfortunately there was no room for big bulky cover storage reels in the new design,

so the pool goes uncovered, but there is a large, secure fence around the exterior of the pool area.

Manual covers can cost under \$100 and block dirt and leaves from a pool, transmit the heat from the sun to the water, and prevent evaporation. However it can be aggravating getting it on and off. Some homeowners use this type of cover in the winter months, when it's likely the pool won't be used much.

Mesh covers are attached to the pool deck using anchors with stainless steel springs, which provide protection from the elements, debris, as well as accidental drowning or entrapment of loved ones and pets. Similarly, but less solid, net covers attach with anchors around the perimeter of the pool – there are no heat or evaporations savings with these, but they do offer a barrier that is tight enough that if someone accidentally takes a tumble into the pool, they won't drown.

A jackhammer is another alternative. In the 1960s and 1970s as Lamorinda suburbs were sprouting, with no thought of drought, developers were busy installing pools into smallish backyards. As those houses eventually turned over, a number of homeowners opted to simply fill in the pool and landscape over the top, adding to their usable backyard space. For those with vintage pools and pool equipment, this is a much more economical choice than taking on an expensive remodel that will likely include new plaster, tile and coping, not to mention a new heater and plumbing.

California's Health and Safety Code requires private pools built or remodeled after 1998 feature at least one of seven safety devices. The list includes a fence, approved pool cover, an alarm on each house door that accesses the pool or a pool-use alarm that alerts the homeowner when someone enters the water.