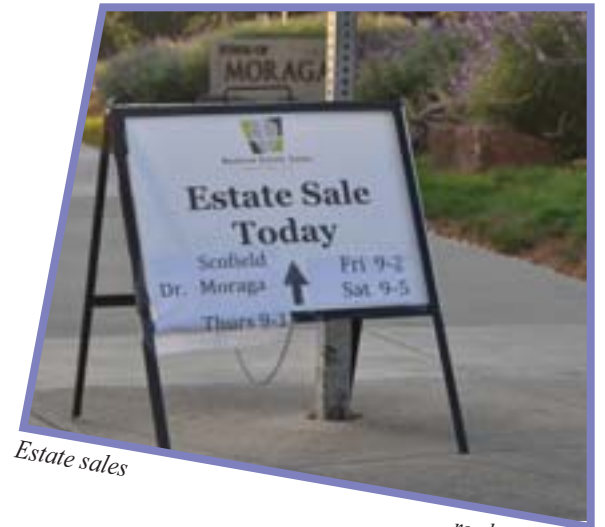


Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 15 Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2017



Estate sales

...read on page D4

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Lamorinda winegrowers join a long distinguished line of grape cultivation

By Cynthia Brian



Lamorinda growers enjoy a glass of wine in the Captain's Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard, from left: Eero Teerikorpi of Noet Vineyard in Moraga, David Ledesma, an Orinda grower, Michel Smith, and Orinda grower, Susan Captain, holding a bottle of Captain's Petit Verdot 2011, Sal Captain, Tiina Teerikorpi of Noet Vineyard, and dogs Cleopatra and Shea.

Photo Cynthia Brian

Wherever you travel in California, you'll witness miles and miles of beautiful vineyards. Over 90 percent of all the wine made in America is produced in our golden state. The cultivation of *Vitis vinefera* dates back to the Neolithic period, more than 7,000 years ago. Grape growing and the making of wine are as old as civilization itself.

In California, Father Junipero Serra planted the first vineyard at Mission San Diego Alcalá in 1779 and the Spanish continued planting grapes at each mission they founded to provide wine for the Mass and the masses. The Gold Rush ushered in a time of great demand for wine as prospectors and settlers increased the population of California.

Lamorinda became a wine region in 1880 when the Trelut brothers became squatters at the top of Bollinger Canyon in Moraga, cultivated grapes, and readied the wine. In 1887 Theodore Wagner (Wagner Ranch in Orinda) supplied grapes to immigrant Italians in San Francisco's North Beach. By 1907, Serafino Rossi made the four- to five-hour trek to Oakland over Fish Ranch Road from Lafayette to sell his grapes and produce.

... continued on page D13



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Orinda



represented Seller

33 Bates Blvd.,
Orinda



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44 Lost Valley,
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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	13	\$1,165,000	\$4,500,000
MORAGA	9	\$580,000	\$2,265,000
ORINDA	15	\$815,500	\$2,650,000

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

921 Diablo Drive, \$1,325,000, 3 Bdrms, 2125 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 8-18-17;

Previous Sale: \$569,000, 07-24-00

3702 Happy Valley Road, \$3,550,000, 5 Bdrms, 4079 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 8-10-17;

Previous Sale: \$2,771,000, 07-13-06

2 Leeward Glen Road, \$1,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 3285 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 8-14-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 04-06-12

592 Michael Lane, \$1,365,000, 3 Bdrms, 1634 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 8-18-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-29-14

3359 Mildred Lane, \$1,165,000, 4 Bdrms, 2109 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 8-17-17;

Previous Sale: \$136,500, 05-02-84

688 Old Jonas Hill Road, \$1,920,000, 3 Bdrms, 3114 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 8-17-17;

Previous Sale: \$82,500, 09-25-70

12 Park Gate, \$1,335,000, 5 Bdrms, 3258 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 8-15-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 04-25-14

1560 Rancho Del Hambre, \$2,375,000, 3 Bdrms, 5213 SqFt, 1994 YrBlt, 8-18-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,056,500, 06-27-96

369 Read Drive, \$1,905,000, 5 Bdrms, 3578 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 8-15-17;

Previous Sale: \$2,050,000, 09-14-15

816 Solana Drive, \$1,875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2245 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 8-14-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,370,000, 09-12-13

27 Southampton Place, \$1,394,000, 4 Bdrms, 2924 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 8-18-17;

Previous Sale: \$965,000, 03-30-12

3540 Springhill Road, \$4,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 3402 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 8-15-17;

Previous Sale: \$860,000, 05-26-00

3714 Sundale Road, \$1,259,000, 4 Bdrms, 2093 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 8-17-17;

Previous Sale: \$865,000, 03-14-06

... continued on page D11



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BACK TO SCHOOL

The hustle and bustle of Fall is here but the moms and dads of Lamorinda get a moment to catch their breath now that school is back in session. Summer vacations are in the rear-view mirror, weekend trips to Tahoe make way for Saturday soccer games, fall basketball and parent school parties. September traditionally brings an increase in real estate activity as parents or soon-to-be parents are back in town and can focus on where they want to live for the next twenty years. In recent weeks, an uptick of new listings and fresh inventory has hit the market in hopes of capturing the attention of parents in between weekend activities and after school practice or music lessons.

As September has come around we have seen the market remain strong throughout the Summer and into Fall. Inventory remains tight as Buyers continue to out-number Sellers. The stock market is back to hitting all-time highs as the S&P recently closed just shy of 2,500. Mortgage rates also remain close to historical lows as according to Freddie Mac, on September 7th the 30-year mortgage rate was down to 3.78%, down from 4.30% in March. The job market remains strong as evidenced by what seems to be increasing traffic during commute times. The unemployment rate is 4.4%, down from 4.9% a year ago and 10.0% at the peak of the recent great recession.

The light drizzle in early September is also a good reminder to start preparing for rainy season by clearing gutters, checking that your drainage is intact and functioning properly, your crawl space below your home remains dry, and windows and doors are sealed to prevent dry-rot and leaks. Also, if you have not done so already now is a good time to replace any aged roof that might have leaked during the record rains last Winter. Keeping up with regular maintenance is the best way to avoid expensive repairs or challenging disclosures when it comes time to sell your home.

Please feel free to call or email us with your real estate questions or for a free home evaluation. We can be reached at (925) 951-3817 or by email erin@martinhomesteam.com or darrick@martinhomesteam.com.



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Estate sales: a lifetime of belongings going, going ... gone

By Cathy Dausman



Estate sale signs lead customers to the door.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Traffic came and went on a Friday morning along a quiet Lafayette side street in a neighborhood of 1950s-built ranch homes. The printed sign near the door read “Warning: You are entering an Estate Sale.”

A handful of baby boomers wandered the common rooms and garage searching for something of value. One man’s excess is often another man’s – or woman’s – treasure. Nowhere is this more obvious than at an estate sale.

The season was just heating up but Hazel Kravariotis, of Senior Sorters & Estate Liquidators was booked two months out. Kravariotis and her coworkers spent four sales hours Friday and again Saturday overseeing that particular event, but before the doors even swung open they were already on the clock to make the sale most beneficial for dual clients – the family who hired them and the customers, both collectible dealers and private citizens who frequent these events.

Clearing clutter. Downsizing. Transitioning to se-

nior housing. Dispersing a deceased loved one’s lifetime possessions. Those are all possible reasons for holding an estate sale. It can be overwhelming to dispense with the “stuff” accumulated during someone’s lifetime. While a yard or garage sale may be manageable minus professional help, an estate sale is generally of broader scope and therefore more complex.

Kravariotis explains that most families go through such a thorough liquidation process only once or twice in a lifetime. It is comprehensive in scope, and company and customer both hope everything goes – from laundry detergent to tea towels, lamps, video games and music, furniture, fine art and flashlights.

What doesn’t sell is generally passed on to charities. Vicky Kearsy runs her Beehive Estate Sales company with an eye toward reusing, recycling and repurposing; she explains that incurring more than a few hundred dollars in hauling fees on leftover items means she has not done a good job liquidating the estate.

... continued on page D10

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Feng Shui

Feng shui fixes for energy-draining bathrooms

By Michele Duffy



A marble vanity in this bathroom underscores the earth element.

Photo Michele Duffy

Summer bathrooms have earned a poor reputation in feng shui circles – they leak positive energy and accumulate lower vibrations – but there are practical ways to mindfully balance the draining chi or energy most often associated with our bathrooms and mitigate much of these challenges through a bit of elbow grease and modern design.

The ancient Chinese never built bathrooms inside their homes because they were impossible to keep clean, and with all of the draining energy associated with

the physical drains in a bathroom, including the toilet, sink, shower and bath, bathroom placement inside a home was considered “bad” feng shui. But by utilizing the many modern designs of the 21st century, including state-of-the-art plumbing, lighting, ventilation, fragrance and colors, we can create a spa-like atmosphere that can shift how we spend time in our bathrooms, allowing for our most intimate personal care moments to be supported and nourished in luxurious surroundings.

While bathrooms may still represent draining energy, the energetic challenges of any bathroom can be easily overcome. Bathrooms are closely associated with the water element, so incorporating the wood element in this space is a great way to enhance the water element. Live plants and flowers symbolize the wood element and continual, upward growth, countering much of the “draining” chi in the bath.

It is also important to note where the bathrooms are located in your home per the Feng Shui Bagua (see diagram on page D12). Are your bathrooms in the far left “wealth” area, ruled by the wood element? Or in the far right “relationships” area, ruled by the earth element?

Weakened, draining energy in any area can be problematic, but if the bathroom is located in the wealth area, it can be destabilizing, or conversely, can create rocky relationships. A bathroom placed in the center of the home is one of the most challenging locations since this is the “health” area, so if health is compromised or weakened, it affects all the other eight areas of the Feng Shui Bagua.

But even if the bathroom is located in the center or “health” area, it does not have to mean a sentence of ill or declining health for residents. For example, one of my clients in Lafayette with compromised health had a guest bathroom in the center of her home. We remodeled to freshen the bath space, painted the walls a bright tomato red (fire creates earth), installed a crystal chandelier (earth), marble vanity (earth), a vibrant orchid (live upward growth, wood element), a Doterra essential oil diffuser, and the bathroom is kept spotlessly clean.

... continued on page D12



Adding a crystal chandelier to a bathroom space enhances the earth element, which can bring balance to a location associated with the water element.



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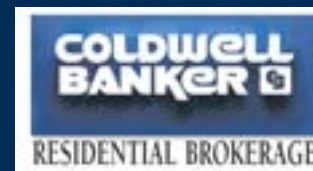
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Estate sales: a lifetime of belongings going, going ... gone

... continued from page D4



Beehive Estate Sales staff, from left, Pam Bishop, Barbara Kearsey, Vicky Kearsey and Robert Lovelace work an estate sale in Moraga

Photo Cathy Dausman

When Lamorinda Weekly caught up with a Beehive sale it was the dog days of late summer – so hot that Kearsey actually saw their customer base erode slightly. Those who braved the triple digit heat found furniture, paintings, bedding, fine china – even a stair lift chair for sale.

The latter was the company's first such item to be sold and it did sell.

Kearsey says other medical aids for seniors – canes and walkers, for example, are always popular items. She and her crew work six days a week to prep and hold a single estate sale, starting with an appraiser visit mid-week. Then Kearsey personally goes through every drawer in every room to ferret out any hidden treasures, such as money, coins or passports, perhaps, before sending staff in to process the room.

Prior to one estate sale three volunteers discovered a U.S. flag with only 48 stars. They deemed it “faulty,” not realizing it was instead a collectible item. Then “everything is priced,” Kearsey says. Her company has even

sold light fixtures and at least one porcelain sink.

Estate sales companies are commission based; most expect to gross a minimum amount before they will accept a job. Kravariotis says it is important to select a licensed, bonded and insured company which can provide good references. Hiring someone who is professionally accredited as a property appraiser, estate liquidator or gemologist is a plus.

Make sure to get a written contract detailing home preparation, advance advertising, what occupants need to do before and during the event, and how leftovers are to be distributed. On the other end, a courteous estate sale company will distribute door tags to neighbors asking for their patience with extra traffic on sale days. Sandwich board signs go up the day of the sale, directing traffic, and customers may line up hours before the house actually opens. Kearsey says she has seen some of her regulars cueing up before dawn.

Occasionally there are reasons an estate company

will decline to take on a job. Perhaps the house has a pest infestation or mold problem, possibly street parking or access is too limited or the road is too difficult to navigate, or perhaps family members have unrealistic sale expectations or intend to occupy the home during the sale itself. A company may also refuse to bid the work if proof of home ownership cannot be verified.

Kravariotis says there are currently no federal laws or governing bodies dictating the operation of estate sales, so buyers must do their homework. If you're a potential seller, be prepared to wait, because lead time to book your estate sale usually runs several weeks.

And remember, “Each house is its own challenge,” Kearsey says.

Ready to attend your first estate sale? Sign up on these websites and get notified of events coming to Lamorinda:

<https://estatesales.org/>

<https://www.estatesales.net/>



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

MORAGA

- 1986 Ascot Drive #D, \$580,000, 3 Bdrms, 1473 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 8-9-17;
Previous Sale: \$489,500, 07-03-06
- 504 Augusta Drive, \$1,065,000, 3 Bdrms, 2059 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 8-10-17;
Previous Sale: \$500,000, 12-22-92
- 754 Augusta Drive, \$950,000, 2 Bdrms, 1556 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 8-16-17;
Previous Sale: \$315,000, 04-11-96
- 121 Brookline Street, \$1,695,000, 4 Bdrms, 3327 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 8-18-17
- 1057 Camino Pablo, \$2,265,000, 4 Bdrms, 4373 SqFt, 2010 YrBlt, 8-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$955,000, 06-16-08
- 1401 Camino Peral, \$719,000, 3 Bdrms, 1440 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 8-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$226,000, 04-28-94
- 1954 Joseph Drive, \$1,685,000, 5 Bdrms, 2729 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 8-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,300,000, 07-23-04
- 240 Scofield Drive, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 1426 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 8-22-17;
Previous Sale: \$660,000, 07-12-02
- 3 Stewart Court, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2023 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 8-14-17;
Previous Sale: \$830,000, 09-21-04

ORINDA

- 147 Ardith Drive, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2050 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 8-11-17;
Previous Sale: \$499,000, 06-13-03
- 245 Camino Pablo, \$815,500, 4 Bdrms, 1591 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 8-16-17;
Previous Sale: \$395,000, 12-29-99
- 6 Cresta Blanca, \$965,000, 3 Bdrms, 1813 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 8-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$840,000, 09-01-05
- 4 De Soto Court, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 3279 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 8-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$595,000, 04-23-99
- 58 Evergreen Drive, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2270 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 8-10-17
- 3 Gardiner Court, \$2,650,000, 5 Bdrms, 5156 SqFt, 1992 YrBlt, 8-17-17;
Previous Sale: \$985,000, 12-30-92
- 205 Glorietta Boulevard, \$885,000, 3 Bdrms, 1524 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 8-17-17;
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 03-29-06
- 188 Hall Drive, \$1,635,000, 4 Bdrms, 2548 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 8-11-17;
Previous Sale: \$10,000, 06-15-98
- 90 Hillcrest Drive, \$1,525,000, 3 Bdrms, 2129 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 8-14-17;
Previous Sale: \$880,000, 11-01-16
- 9 Las Piedras, \$1,752,000, 5 Bdrms, 3745 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 8-9-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,483,000, 05-13-04
- 89 Oak Road, \$1,310,000, 2 Bdrms, 2040 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 8-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$820,000, 06-01-11
- 11 Patricia Road, \$1,110,000, 4 Bdrms, 2442 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 8-14-17;
Previous Sale: \$385,000, 11-14-97
- 51 Valencia Road, \$1,305,000, 3 Bdrms, 1959 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 8-9-17;
Previous Sale: \$440,000, 12-01-98
- 17 Via Las Cruces, \$1,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 2256 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 8-10-17;
Previous Sale: \$930,000, 12-18-02
- 35 Wilder Road, \$2,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 4283 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 8-9-17

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Feng Shui

Feng shui fixes for energy-draining bathrooms

... continued from page D8

It is now a bright, cheery, uplifting and stylish bathroom space. My client also embraced yoga and mindfulness practices with ease and grace, and her health continues to improve each day.

Remember, each home is unique and the family that lives there is, too, so while general tips abound, there is no substitute for receiving specific and personalized feng shui advice for the difficult chi of bathroom area placement within your home.

Here are a few tips for creating spa-like, intimate, nourishing and supportive bathroom feng shui:

- 1) Keep your bathroom beautiful, spotlessly clean and clutter free.
- 2) Hold the intention that your bath is a sacred place to purify mind, body and spirit.
- 3) Choose a color that will activate the element that rules the area of the Bagua or watery blues or woody agave greens.
- 4) Keep the toilet seat down, the bathroom door closed, and drains closed when not in use.
- 5) Bathrooms need ventilation, open windows or get a small fan.
- 6) Place live plants to purify air and bring in vital continual upward growth energy (a silk plant will do).
- 7) Upgrade your bathroom lighting and also include candles and sconces and low lights for lingering in the bathtub.
- 8) Invest in lavender essential oils, bath salts, Epsom salts and get grounded with a rejuvenating soak in the tub.
- 9) Dress up your bathroom windows with easy care and privacy wielding plantation shutters or blinds.
- 10) Place images that represent purification and relaxation like the ocean, rivers, flowers, nature and trees.

For more complicated issues like seeing a bathroom upon entry to the home, or above the entryway, or bathrooms off master bedrooms, it is important to apply all of the above tips or consider consulting with a professional feng shui expert for more specific ideas on how to address the challenges that all bathrooms present.

Taking a look at your bathrooms and making even a few of these small enhancements can help transform in big ways, and remember to slow down and enjoy your bath like a five-star resort.

WEALTH & PROSPERITY XUN Wood Southeast Purple	FAME & REPUTATION Li Fire South Red Summer	RELATIONSHIPS Kun Earth Southwest Pink
FAMILY ZHEN Wood East Green Spring	HEALTH TAI JI Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	JOY & COMPLETION DUI Metal West White Autumn
KNOWLEDGE & SELFCULTIVATION GEN Earth Northeast Blue	CAREER & OPPORTUNITIES KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

The Bagua Map: Front Door

Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2017 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Lamorinda winegrowers join a long distinguished line of grape cultivation

... continued from page D1



A row of Cabernet Sauvignon.

Photos Cynthia Brian

In the late 19th century a parasite that feeds on and destroys the roots of vines, Phylloxera infested vineyards. The national Prohibition Act of 1919 uprooted vineyards, destroyed cellars, and outlawed the sale and consumption of alcohol. Between these two major calamities, the wine industry in America collapsed.

The resurgence for demand of California wines didn't occur until after 1976 when California wines won top awards for both red and white varieties in a blind tasting at the historic upheaval competition against the best of Bordeaux vintages known as "The Judgment of Paris." The renaissance of viticulture in California began anew.

Here in Lamorinda, amateur farmers were experimenting with growing grapes again, too. The climates and microclimates are protected from coastal cooling, the slopes are carved from young sedimentary rock, the soil's content is mostly clay, sunshine is abundant, and drainage is satisfactory. With homes built on large lots, small vineyards began to flourish.

Having grown up in the vineyards of Napa County, when I first heard about Captain Vineyards, I thought the name was a charming play of viticulture publicity. Then I learned that "Captain" was the surname of the owners, Sal and Susan Captain who moved to Moraga in 1989 to raise their four children. Sal was a vice president, engineer, and researcher at a multinational medical device company, while Susan spent her days carpooling, volunteering, and juggling kids as a hands-on mom. Being wine aficionados, they had traveled extensively to many wine regions of the world and realized that their hillside in Moraga possessed the perfect terroir, soil, slope and climate to grow grapes. Susan, with a bachelor's in statistics, especially admired the farming culture and went to work to learn as much as possible about enology and viticulture, taking classes at UC Davis, Sonoma City College, Napa Community College as well as attending symposiums and conferences in



Petite Sirah grapes are netted when sugars reach 15 Brix to keep the birds from devouring them.

related subjects. By forming friendships with vintners from many states and countries, the Captains learned quickly.

Following cultivating techniques from Tuscany, the French Rhone Valley, and the German Heidelberg region as well as Napa Valley their hillside acreage was planted on their 20-35 percent slopes ensuring 10 hours of summer sunlight, excellent drainage, and soil erosion prevention. The vines and rows of their six red varieties – Pinot Noir, Petite Sirah, Grenache, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, and Cab Franc – are established in a 3 by 5 foot matrix with vines spur trained to limit production to less than five pounds per vine resulting in a complexity of flavor and body. As dry farmers, the grapes rely on rainfall or minimal watering only to keep the vines alive, not to increase production. Dry farming results in bolder body, richness and character.

When Sal retired in 2008, he devoted himself to becoming a winemaker with a bonded winery. Captain Vineyards was the first green winery in Contra Costa County dedicated to utilizing sustainable vineyard practices. Sal and Susan have designed and established 12 vineyards for other landowners ranging in size from 35 vines to over 3,000 vines.

Sal's "grape escape" hasn't allowed him to desert his engineering background. He orients vineyards to the topography while maintaining aesthetics. Soils characteristics are never adjusted with chemicals. Synthetic pesticides or herbicides are not used or recommended. Instead all vineyard and winery waste and output is recycled back to the soil. Although his expertise is in demand, he says that he talks more people out of planting a vineyard than planting one.

In 2005, The Lamorinda Winegrower's Association was established to create a community of people who share a passion for grape growing and wine making.

... continued on page D14

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Lamorinda winegrowers join a long distinguished line of grape cultivation

... continued from page D13



The cellar and barrel room at Captain Vineyards.

Photo Cynthia Brian

One of the stated missions of the LWGA was to establish an AVA (American Viticultural Area) for Lamorinda. With Susan Captain as president of LWGA, with the help of Dave Rey, AVA committee leader, and all of the members of LWGA, that goal was accomplished on March 25, 2016. At application 139 acres of planted vines and future planned plantings were recorded. The AVA for Lamorinda covers 29,369 acres making Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga official wine country destinations.

There are currently 76 members of the LWGA although there are many households who grow grapes but have not joined the group. By federal law, for a winery to post the “Lamorinda” AVA on a bottle, 85 percent of the grapes must be grown in Lafayette, Moraga or Orinda. If a winery needs other grapes to blend with their wine, it is

allowed as long as the outside grape content is less than 15 percent. This protects the unique qualities and individuality of a region.

Two other intriguing local growers, both members of the LWGA, have vineyards planted and managed by Sal and Susan Captain. NOET Vineyard, owned by Kristiina and Eero Teerikorpi, grows solely Cabernet Sauvignon. Eero and Tiina continue the great tradition of excellent California Cabs grown by immigrants from Finland, started by a sea captain and an entrepreneur Gustave Niebaum. In the late 1800s, Gustave was one of the early premier wine growers in California on his Inglenook winery. (As an interesting side note, my mother was born across the street in Rutherford from Inglenook on the property of Beaulieu Winery.) To fully close the circle, Eero

Teerikorpi is also an entrepreneur, navy officer and avid sailor. After 15 years living in London and commuting to Milan working in the fashion industry, Michel Smith, with her husband David Ledesma came to Northern California where they discovered a hidden gem of a mid-century home complete with a vineyard planted with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot on an Orinda hillside. They credit the Captains with passionately training, teaching, and managing the vineyard while making the wine that comes from their grapes.

When to harvest is a combination of science and taste. Now that the grape skins are soft, the seeds are brown and crunchy, the berries exude that elusive bouquet of blackberry, plum and blueberry. Once the sugar content or Brix has been measured (never more than 24 Brix or the alcohol buzz is overpowering), the harvest commences with clusters picked by hand. In recent years it's been challenging finding reliable and knowledgeable pickers for hire. Families, friends and wine members assist in this time-consuming, centuries old ritual.

After the grapes are picked, the artistry begins. Grapes are the only fruits that possess the necessary esters, acids, and tannins to make a consistent and stable wine. The acidity, flavor and sweetness need to be perfectly balanced. Although every wine master varies the technique, the five basic steps to the winemaking process are harvesting, crushing and pressing, fermentation, clarification, and aging and bottling. Sal Captain likes to use new French oak barrels for the first 12 months. He then transfers the juice to older barrels for 36 to 50 months for his Petit Verdot, Petite Sirah, and Cabernet. The Pinot Noir is aged for 24 to 30 months.

The 2017 vintage will produce excellent wines as the bloom was fantastic and the berries are spectacular. How privileged we are to have dedicated grape growers who share their talents and time to bring us the gift of wines from the vines.

Dionysus, the Greek god of grapes, wine, and wine-making and his Roman counterpart, Bacchus raise their mutual glasses in admiration after a visit to the vineyards of Lamorinda.

Salute!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!

Captain Vineyards offers tours and tasting by appointment only. Call (925) 330-2440, or visit captainvineyards.com for bookings. Classes are offered through the Moraga, Orinda, and Lafayette Parks and Recreation Departments on the second Sunday of each month. A Viticulture 4H project and high school wise programs are offered.



Susan Captain, Cynthia Brian, and Sal Captain outside the Moraga winery.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, is a New York Times best selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Please make a donation to help with hurricane disaster relief at www.BetheStarYouAre.org.

Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com. The new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, is delayed. Thanks for your patience.

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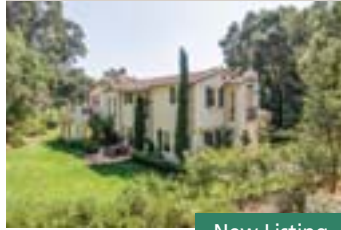


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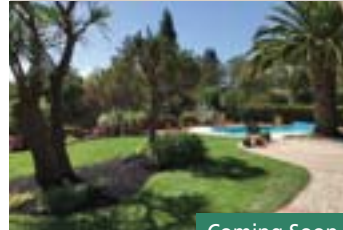
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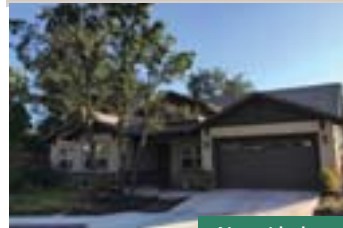


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