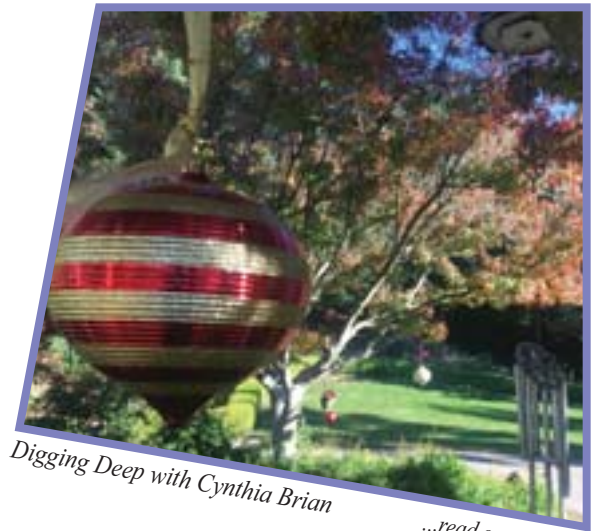


Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 21 Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017

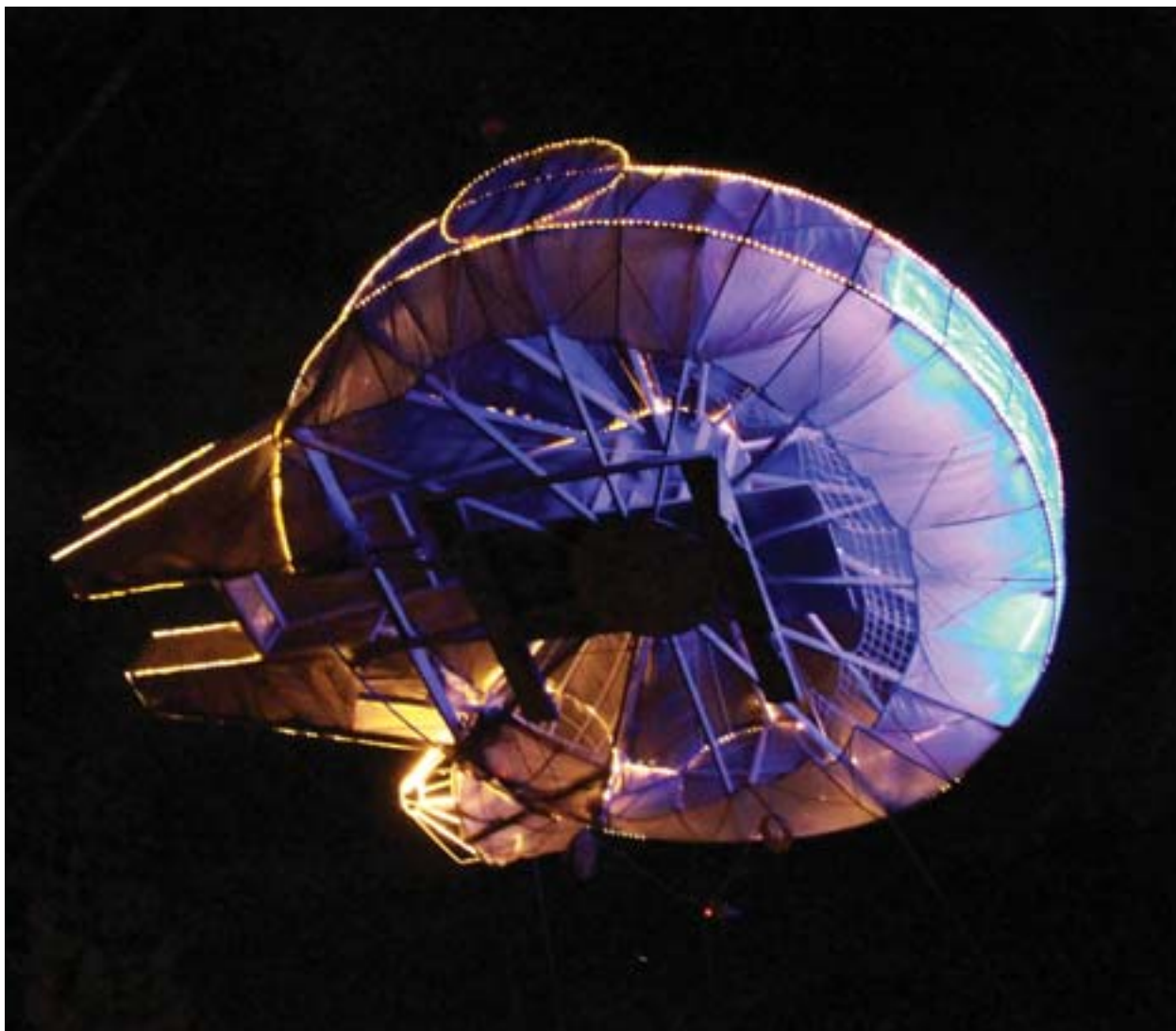


Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D12

Up on the rooftop (...again!)

By Cathy Dausman



It's not a reindeer—it's the ship that made the Kessel Run in less than twelve parsecs.

Photo provided

Colby Powell's rooftop features something that flies this December, but it is definitely not reindeer or a sleigh. It is a 28-foot-long model of a Corellian YT-1300 light freighter, better known to Star Wars fans as the Millennium Falcon.

Powell, his family and neighbors assembled the starship on the ground, then it was lifted into place by a 70-foot crane. The lighted ship made its debut at Halloween. Powell says it will remain aloft until the premiere of the latest Star Wars movie, "The Last Jedi."

As elaborate as it is (a 28 by 20 by 5-foot replica, weighing 700 pounds, pitched at a 40-degree angle on an 11 by 6 foot stand to perfectly showcase the top of its iconic shape) this creation is not Powell's first space rodeo.

Two years ago, he and his family designed and built a replica Death Star ahead of the release of the 2015 blockbuster "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

This time Powell says there were lots more neighbors assisting – everyone from the youngest "Padawans" to enthusiastic adults. Still, he kept his neighbors guessing about what the finished project might be during the five weeks and 400 work hours it took to complete the assembly.

... continued on page D4

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Happy Holidays



RECENT SALES

**97 Oak Rd.,
Orinda**



**122 Stein Way,
Orinda**



**123 Spring Rd.,
Orinda**



**77 El Toyonal,
Orinda**



represented Seller

**6 Cresta Blanca,
Orinda**



**33 Bates Blvd.,
Orinda**



**44 Lost Valley,
Orinda**



represented Seller

**4 Owl Hill,
Orinda**



**67 Corte Yolanda,
Moraga**



**59 Canyon Green
Way, San Ramon**



represented Buyer

**4465 Portola Dr.,
Santa Cruz**



**3484 Hamlin Rd.,
Lafayette**



**86 Hillcrest Dr.,
Orinda**



represented Buyer

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	8	\$1,050,000	\$1,950,000
MORAGA	9	\$710,000	\$1,530,000
ORINDA	12	\$650,000	\$2,250,000

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

3226 Brookwood Drive, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 1897 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-9-17;

Previous Sale: \$193,000, 01-10-86

634 Glorietta Boulevard, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3783 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 11-20-17;

Previous Sale: \$600,000, 04-10-97

3676 Hastings Court, \$1,950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1886 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 11-9-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,025,000, 12-21-11

3513 Moraga Boulevard, \$1,615,000, 4 Bdrms, 1837 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 11-14-17;

Previous Sale: \$768,182, 12-31-14

3949 North Peardale Drive, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2924 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-13-17

3509 South Silver Springs Road, \$1,589,000, 3 Bdrms, 1689 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt,

11-13-17

805 Tanglewood Drive, \$1,610,000, 4 Bdrms, 3059 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 11-8-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,045,000, 11-20-09

3346 Walnut Lane, \$1,270,000, 4 Bdrms, 2031 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-9-17;

Previous Sale: \$336,000, 04-17-98

MORAGA

503 Augusta Drive, \$1,395,000, 4 Bdrms, 3713 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-8-17;

Previous Sale: \$969,000, 07-24-03

785 Augusta Drive, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 2195 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 11-20-17

403 Belfair Place, \$1,530,000, 4 Bdrms, 2560 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-14-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,238,500, 07-03-07

335 Constance Place, \$1,420,000, 4 Bdrms, 3222 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 11-8-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,160,000, 08-13-04

116 Cypress Point Way, \$1,120,000, 3 Bdrms, 1644 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-8-17;

Previous Sale: \$825,000, 11-01-04

103 Devin Drive, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2849 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 11-8-17

8 La Salle Drive, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1573 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 11-9-17;

Previous Sale: \$739,000, 10-17-14

191 Miramonte Drive, \$710,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-9-17;

Previous Sale: \$426,000, 10-18-02

255 Tharp Drive, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 1956 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-8-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,085,000, 06-30-15

... continued on page D11

Warmest Holiday Wishes

from all of us at



CalBRE#01882902

We would like to thank the Lamorinda community for another amazing year, and we look forward to being your preferred real estate brokerage for years to come. Wishing you and your loved ones great joy and many blessings this holiday season.

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Up on the rooftop (...again!)

... continued from page D1

And the project nearly failed before it began when Powell couldn't locate any to-scale drawings online.

His son solved the problem by suggesting they scale it after his LEGO Star Wars ship.

A last-minute design change during construction scrapped the use of some plastic in favor of wood to in-

sure the necessary frame rigidity, but the Millennium Falcon was ready to fly in time for the Powell Halloween party.

Asked if he might consider a career change to full-time prop construction, the Lafayette contractor laughed. "It's pretty fun, actually," he said of his price-

less rooftop projects.

Would Powell design a different model before the release of Star Wars IX in 2019? Possibly. There just might be one more light sabre trick left up his Jedi sleeve.

... continued on page D9



Working on a classic: Powell's neighbor Michael Ferrif and friend Bob Christopher inside the framework.



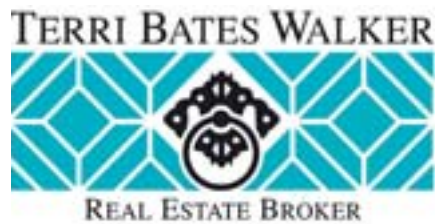
Ian (7), Drew (12) and Cameron (11) Powell.



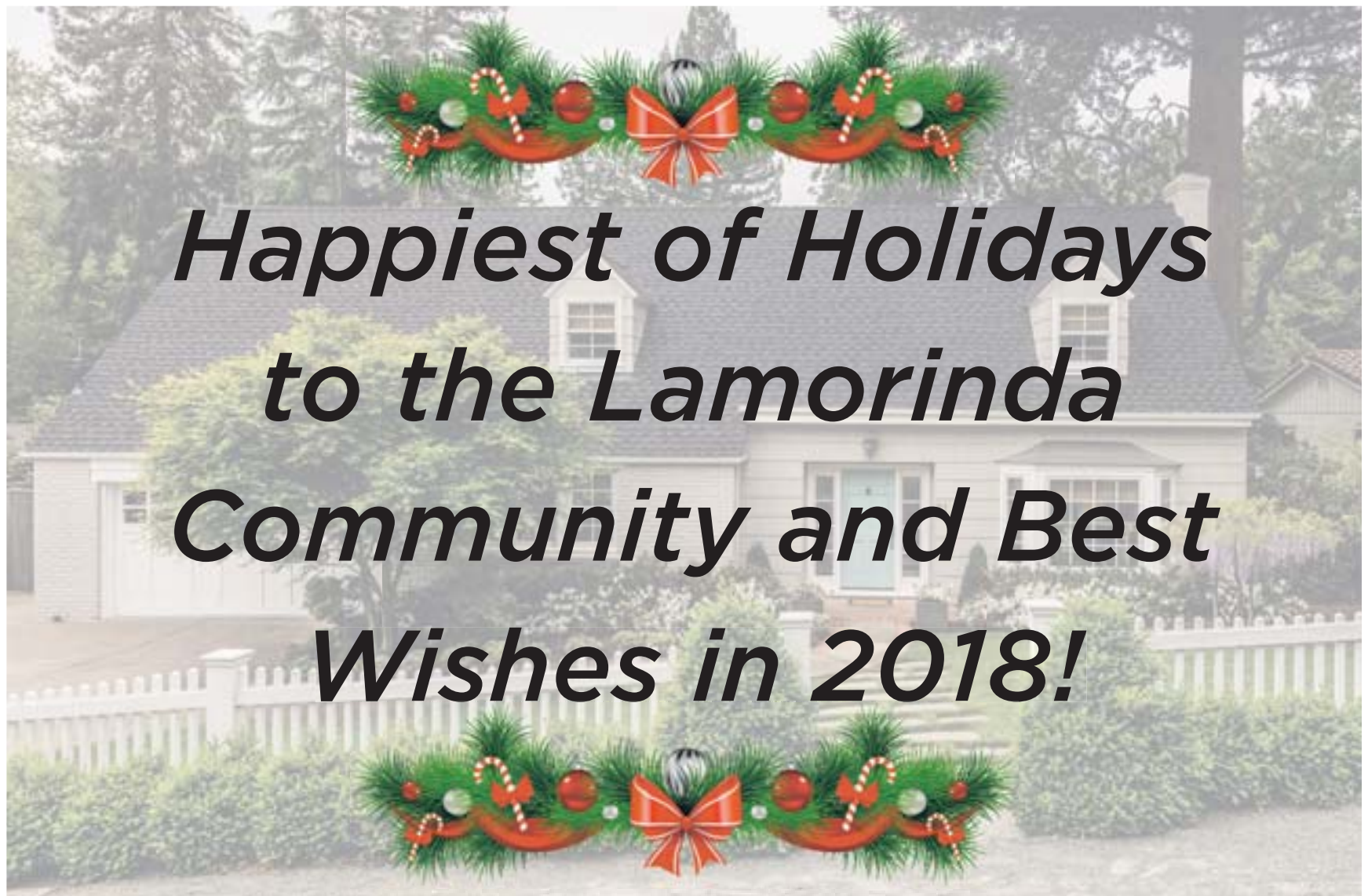
Framework assembled, and filling up the driveway.



Familiar faces, both human and humanoid, look toward the stars.



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Spring Market- Prepare Now

Despite the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, now is the perfect time to start laying the groundwork for a successful sale. This is especially true in Lamorinda where the “spring” market has gotten progressively earlier; school enrollment begins in the early spring which means many buyers are looking to close on their new home even earlier in the year to ensure that their child is able to attend neighborhood schools. It is more important than ever to start making your to-do list now if you want to take advantage of this typically strong early selling market.

We always suggest that sellers spend time de-cluttering and getting rid of things that they no longer use or need. Consider donating your unwanted treasures. These donations not only help deserving non-profits, but your generosity will be repaid come tax time when you are looking for those itemized charitable deductions.

Now is also the time to start getting quotes, picking finishes and lining up contractors if you plan to make updates to your home prior to selling. Make sure that you consult with your Realtor throughout this process to ensure that you are making choices that will appeal to current buyers. It is important to make sure that the money you put into upgrades will translate into more profit at the close of escrow. However, there are some circumstances in which it does not make financial sense to make updates in advance of a sale. In this case or when the budget for repairs and upgrades is limited, I often recommend just a simple coat of paint. It can go a long way to brightening up a house.

And finally, take a good look at what your home is worth before you go full speed ahead. This means looking beyond your Zestimate and seeking the advice of a local Realtor who understands the nuances of the Lamorinda market. They can help you to evaluate your situations and make sure your expectations are realistic and that a move makes financial sense.

We wish you and your family a wonderful and restful holiday season.

Please feel free to contact us with your real estate questions - Erin at erin@MartinHomesTeam.com or Darrick at darrick@MartinHomesTeam.com.



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Making your holiday parties bright

By Amanda Eck



Photos Amanda Eck

The Holidays are fast approaching and there's lots of hustle and bustle happening. The endless list of gifts to buy and parties to attend can be daunting. But I do enjoy setting aside time to entertain friends and family in my home. Over the years I have hosted countless cooking exchange parties, Christmas tea parties, and pajama and wine nights. I have learned to streamline my party preparedness so that I can actually enjoy my guests instead of feeling completely wiped by the time the doorbell rings.

Here are a few of my holiday party tips:

A week before your event shop for all your nonperishable items: Paper goods, wine, coffee, etc. Keep your list with you at all times, so when you are out and about you won't forget something. Or if you are tech savvy, download a “to-do” list app. I am old school and still prefer to write things on paper.

Keep the décor simple: Fresh flowers or greenery and candles are your best friends. Make sure to use unscented candles near food. No one likes to smell aude de gardenia while eating hummus dip.

Keep the menu simple: This is not the time to try that new recipe you found on Pinterest. Keep to your “go-to”s and crowd pleasers. Or be sneaky like me and pick up some yummy pastries from La Chataigne bakery in Lafayette or some tasty orzo pasta from the Whole Foods' deli. From that point on it's all about presentation. I like to use unique items to serve or display the food.

... continued on page D10

Up on the rooftop

... continued from page D4



Running lights on and primed for liftoff!

What it takes to build a Millennium Falcon:

- 630 feet of LED lighting
- 400 feet of conduit
- 1,000 wood screws
- 728 board feet of 2 x 4 wood
- 2 T-10 parachutes from eBay

What it took to assemble a Death Star:

- 162 geo hubs
- 18 cans of paint
- 2,000 feet of 1/2-inch PVC conduit, cut in six various lengths

Watch Death Star and Millennium Falcon construction videos online at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OT0RH4EAnLY&feature=youtu.be>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHzes5_tY&feature=youtu.be



It helps to have a 70 foot crane for pre-launch

Patti Camras

I believe in the art of living well.

Happy Holidays



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 REALTOR®

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patti.camras@camoves.com
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Making your holiday parties bright

... continued from page D8



Photo Amanda Eck

Party Favors: I love sending my guests home with a little treat or memento. I've given Christmas ornaments, small wrapped hand soaps, votive candles, small potted plants tied with ribbon, chocolates, and hot cocoa mix with a peppermint stick tucked in a mug.

The day before: I like to have the table set at least a day before, if it is a formal

sit down. For more casual parties I lay out all my serving dishes and attach sticky notes with what food items are going where. It sounds silly, but I promise you, it's a lifesaver when you are running around the day of trying to get things ready. Place all the fresh flowers in their containers, this will give them a full day to open up and if you happen to realize you need more you are not running to the store last minute. I make sure all of my running around is done a day ahead, so that on the day of I can focus on getting the house ready.

Day of: After all the finishing touches, the table is set, the flowers are placed, I try and set aside at least an hour or two of downtime before the party. It may mean taking a leisurely bubble bath, or curling up on the sofa with a book and a cup of tea, or even a little power nap. Having that quiet time will help you recharge. One hour before everyone arrives light the candles and turn on some music.

Ding dong! Now go enjoy your guests. Happy Holidays, friends. I wish you and yours a very wonderful holiday and Happy New Year! See you in 2018!

Amanda's go-to cocktail: Sparkling Pomegranate Punch

- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 1 c. pomegranate juice
- 2 bottle Sparkling wine
- ¾ c. white wine
- 2 oranges
- 1 c. diced fresh pineapple
- ¼ c. pomegranate seeds
- Ice cubes
- In a punch bowl, dissolve the sugar in the pomegranate juice, stirring vigorously. Add the sparkling wine and white wine, then add the orange slices, diced pineapple, and pomegranate seeds. Serve the sparkling pomegranate punch over ice cubes.

As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity."

With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art.

Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

ORINDA

- 187 Canon Drive, \$1,265,000, 3 Bdrms, 1779 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-17-17;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 10-13-10
- 210 Canon Drive, \$1,275,000, 4 Bdrms, 1956 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 11-8-17;
Previous Sale: \$990,000, 09-01-10
- 20 Coffee Berry Lane, \$2,040,000, 4 Bdrms, 3196 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 11-9-17
- 29 Dias Dorados, \$1,790,000, 5 Bdrms, 3537 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-13-17
- 45 East Altarinda Drive, \$1,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2254 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-14-17;
Previous Sale: \$89,500, 12-13-73
- 6 El Nido Court, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1619 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-9-17
- 9 Las Mesas Path, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 1144 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 11-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$25,000, 08-10-70
- 51 Martha Road, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 2918 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 11-17-17
- 49 Singingwood Lane, \$1,775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2955 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$900,000, 03-03-89
- 28 Sunnyside Court, \$1,225,000, 2 Bdrms, 2153 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 11-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$772,500, 09-12-03
- 53 Tappan Lane, \$1,405,000, 5 Bdrms, 2862 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 11-16-17;
Previous Sale: \$489,000, 06-23-88
- 9 Valley View Road, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 4268 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 11-8-17;
Previous Sale: \$950,000, 08-12-04



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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Light the night

By Cynthia Brian

“Moon and stars are giving light. With gifts of nature’s giving, we complete the cycle of living. Let us give from our mind, hands, and heart to the world.” – Chitrabhanu



The azaleas and bergenia highlight the blow-up Santa and snowman.

Photos Cynthia Brian

It was a holiday tradition for our family of seven to pile into our old station wagon to head to the hills of San Francisco to experience the beauty of the decorated homes in Pacific Heights. We called our favorite street Teddy Bear Lane, since we were so young we didn’t know its real name. (And I still don’t know where it was!) It was spectacular with a full block of beautiful Victorians lit up with teddy bears flanked by flickering candles in every window. Another street boasted sparkling reindeer, glistening snowmen, serene nativity scenes, and some even show-

cased Santa and his sleigh on the steep rooftops. Gardens twinkled with illumination making the night merry and bright.

After all the “oohing and aahing,” we’d head to Fisherman’s Wharf to pick up fresh crabs for our Christmas Eve meal, then wander down to Ghiradelli for a cup of hot cocoa. The coins we had been saving all year to help children enjoy a festive celebration were deposited into the bucket of the man ringing the bell from the Salvation Army. We kids dreamt of sugarplums, teddy bears, star-studded skies, and busy elves on the two-hour drive back to the ranch as we anxiously anticipated the excitement of the season. It was a deeply satisfying annual excursion, the kind that etches itself into one’s memory forever.

Since we lived in the middle of nowhere, down a mile-long lane with no street lamps to light the night, our fear was that Santa wouldn’t be able to find our farmhouse, much less our chimney. To ease our worries, our parents lit two acres of our fields, orchards, and gardens, creating a virtual runway as a navigational guide to steer Rudolph to the right place. We pulled carrots from the vegetable garden to nourish the tired reindeer. Naturally we baked gingerbread cookies as a treat for Jolly St. Nick accompanied by a big glass of milk and a note of gratitude for his generosity. We hoped his list had checked us off as “nice” instead of “naughty.”

This December as I drive around local neighborhoods, I am reliving the joyfulness of my youth without having to drive to Teddy Bear Lane in San Francisco. Residents who celebrate Christmas adorn their houses, trees, shrubs and gardens with garlands, wreaths, ornaments and twinkling lights of every color. The décor is rich, festive and fun. It takes time and patience to unravel a string of lights, especially if they are from a previous year, but the rewards are worth the trouble.

Aside from raking leaves, mulching, planting cover crops, and transplanting cuttings, there isn’t too much work to do in a December garden. Across the country, most landscapes are setting in for their winter slumber. With less chores to accomplish, I champion a different decorating challenge every day with the final goal of having the crape myrtle trees on my driveway shimmer under the glinting moonlight. I’ll be snipping fresh redwood, cypress and pine boughs for their fresh forest scent to add to doors and windows adorned with holly and pistache berries. Poinsettias are already on the porch and vases of blooming narcissi perfume the bathrooms. Amaryllis is budding in anticipation of a Dec. 25 appearance.

This is an enchanted time of year. Take time to savor the seconds with family and friends as you watch the lights of the nights. Offer your heart. Bequeath your soul. Gift suggestions that cost you nothing include forgiving someone who has injured you, being a role model to young people, providing kindness to all, while respecting and loving yourself.

As Norman Vincent Peale wrote, “Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.” May the magic of this blessed time shine a light on you and your loved ones. Merry Christmas from my home to yours.

... continued on page D13





Holly is a traditional symbol of the holidays.



Guavas as falling from the trees. Make cookies, jams and guava duff.



The red, regal, and exotic dragon fruit will spark a holiday conversation.



Be on the alert for the first signs of the snow plant.

Cynthia Brian's mid-month garden guide

... continued from page D13

CLEAN the dead leaves from bearded iris to prevent rot and insect hideouts.

CUT boughs of evergreens to mold into wreaths and garlands.

PLANT a cover crop to increase nitrogen and protect against winter erosion. Fava beans, clover, vetch and mustard are excellent choices. To find seeds, visit www.rareseeds.com or www.sowtrueseeds.com.

GIVE the gift of my new book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," 12 months of inspiration and gardening tips to sustain your inner gardener with a full year of kindness and happiness in nature. Buy directly from www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store and 25 percent is a donation to Be the Star You Are!® charity, plus you'll receive extra goodies and an autographed copy.

FEED the birds. Baby, it's cold outside and our birds need food and shelter. Make sure to clean your birdhouses and feeders regularly.

WATCH for rats and mice. As the cold weather begins, vermin seek a warm bed and easy-to-find food.

CHECK plants that you've brought inside for the winter for any insect infestation.

WATER your Christmas trees. If you purchased a cut tree, make sure it has plenty of water throughout the month as indoor heat will quickly dry out any conifer.

COVER frost tender plants with burlap, sheets, newspaper or straw. Be on the alert for swift temperature swings.

REMOVE the longer canes from wisteria.

PRUNE crape myrtles and fruit trees once all the leaves have dropped.

RAKE leaves as they fall and add to the compost pile. Allow a half inch to an inch of leaves to remain on the soil. Compost the rest.

PERUSE garden catalogues and read books about landscaping as you curl up with with cup of hot chocolate or licorice cinnamon tea.

PREVENT snails and slugs from devouring your plants by adding copper strips or bowls of stale beer to the perimeter of your garden.

PICK UP guavas that fall and use for jams or juices.

ADD a bowl of freshly picked Meyer lemons to your countertop as a useful culinary display.

FILL your Christmas tree or Hannukah bush with every family ornament that you've been saving for years! Nostalgia reigns supreme.

BUY a small living cypress tree to use as an inexpensive Christmas tree in lieu of a cut fir. Some stores have been selling three- to four-foot specimens for less than \$8.

VISIT an Asian market to buy the delicious exotic Dragon fruit.

SELECT colorful and easy-to-grow crotons or ginger plants to add a fantasy island fling to your festivities.

WATCH for snow plants to sprout in the Sierras.

MAKE a tax-deductible donation to help with hurricanes and California fires disaster relief at www.BetheStarYouAre.org. Every dollar counts. Be the Star You Are!® cares.

It is the season of giving and sharing. Have yourselves a very Merry Christmas.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!
Cynthia Brian



Crotons are easy to grow and make lovely houseplants.



Tropical ginger plants may need draping with burlap as they are frost tender.



Meyer lemons will ripen on the counter.



A traveler's tree with a row of white poinsettia.



Wishing you a holly, jolly Christmas

Cynthia Brian and her Be the Star You Are!® volunteers wishes you a Holly Jolly Christmas.

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.

Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com.

My new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, is available at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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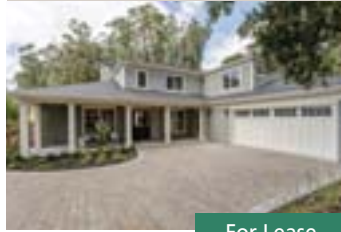


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