

#### Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Stunning storms and 2023 Garden Trends, Part two



Camellias are blooming.

The color of the year, orange calendulas offerMadeira and sage are happy bedmates.sunshine in the rain.Photos Cynthia Brian

#### By Cynthia Brian

"Hope and faith flower from the cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of the new year's dawn." ~ Terri Guillemets

For the past three-plus weeks, we have endured intense storms (bombogenesis) with strong winds and extreme precipitation. Substantial atmospheric rivers caused flooding, mudslides, debris flows, and power outages. Rock-filled dry creeks are raging, trees have been uprooted, and many residences required sandbags as protection from the heavy showers.

I am grateful for the rain and only wish I had personal reservoirs and underground cisterns to capture the run-off as my barrels and buckets are overflowing. Despite the torrents, the drought is not over. We need more rain.

Weeds and seeds are sprouting everywhere. On my hillside, orange and yellow self-seeded calendula plants are blooming while poppy plants are peaking through the soggy soil. I have begun weeding daily, even in the downpours, as the small seedlings are so much easier to pull. Bruce Macler, a regular reader of Digging Deep and an Ambassador for MOFD's Fire Adapted Community program wrote me to encourage gardeners to start pulling out non-native, invasive, flammable, and difficult-to-control Brooms including Cystisus, Gentista, and Spartum while the soil is soft.

#### Lamorinda home sales recorded

| City      | Last reported | Lowest amount | Highest amount |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| LAFAYETTE | 12            | \$725,000     | \$6,300,000    |
| MORAGA    | 4             | \$1,400,000   | \$1,925,000    |
| ORINDA    | 10            | \$1,600,000   | \$3,750,000    |

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

911 Anita Court, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 1974 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-29-22, Previous Sale: \$590,000, 12-19-01
1000 Dewing Avenue #406, \$725,000, 1 Bdrms, 943 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 12-05-22
2 Harper Court, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2998 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-09-22
9 Joplin Court, \$1,775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-02-22
26 Julie Highlands Court, \$2,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,582,000, 03-16-17
210 Lafayette Circle #302, \$2,101,000, 2 Bdrms, 1658 SqFt, 2021 YrBlt, 12-02-22
3940 Los Arabis Drive, \$6,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 5255 SqFt, 2021 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,475,000, 06-13-17

1845 Reliez Valley Road #A, \$1,461,500, 3 Bdrms, 1870 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-28-22, Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 08-13-20

3276 Vals Lane, \$1,657,500, 3 Bdrms, 1833 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-01-22, Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 08-11-14

9 Warwick Court, \$1,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 2003 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-01-22 4006 Woodside Court, \$1,833,000, 4 Bdrms, 2816 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-07-22 4030 Woodside Court, \$1,835,000, 5 Bdrms, 2823 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-30-22, Previous Sale: \$1,660,000, 02-04-20

#### MORAGA

774 Country Club Drive, \$1,400,000, 2 Bdrms, 2079 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-30-22

83 Greenfield Drive, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2531 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-08-22 36 Greenfield Drive, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2474 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-09-22 48 La Salle Drive, \$1,925,000, 3 Bdrms, 2187 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-08-22,

Previous Sale: \$48,500, 11-29-22

#### ORINDA

718 Ironbark Court, \$1,765,000, 5 Bdrms, 3266 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 12-09-22 23 La Fond Lane, \$3,750,000, 5 Bdrms, 4170 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-09-22,

- Previous Sale: \$1,357,500, 12-13-12 11 Los Altos Road, \$2,193,000, 4 Bdrms, 3015 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 11-30-22,
- Previous Sale: \$600,000, 06-01-90 253 Manzanita Drive, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 2591 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-06-22,
- 253 Manzanna Drive, \$1,900,000, 4 Burnis, 2591 SqFt, 1952 YiBit, 12-06-22 Previous Sale: \$1,862,000, 02-04-21
- 407 Miner Road, \$3,705,000, 3 Bdrms, 4213 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 12-06-22, Previous Sale: \$1,850,000, 08-20-12
- 499 Miner Road, \$1,899,000, 4 Bdrms, 2334 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-01-22, Previous Sale: \$949,000, 04-01-03

589 Tahos Road, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2503 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-02-22

8 Tappan Court, \$3,125,000, 4 Bdrms, 3424 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 12-02-22, Previous Sale: \$2,265,000, 08-26-20

52 Via Floreado, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 3176 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-28-22

30 Wilder Road, \$2,575,000, 4 Bdrms, 3479 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,912,000, 04-06-18





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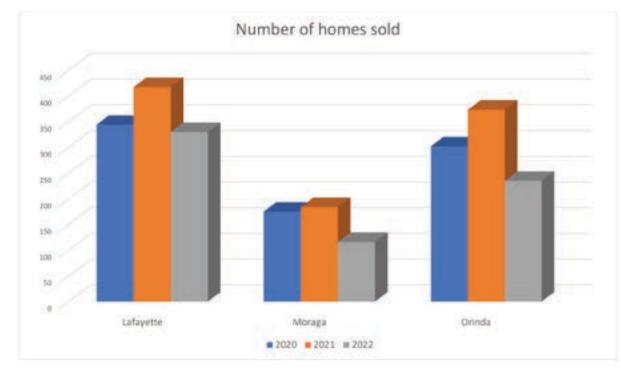
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Based on information from the Contra Costa Association of REALTORS (alternatively, from the Paragon MLS) as of 12/1/22 (date the AOR/MLS data was obtained). All data has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Compass is a licensed real estate broker (01527235) in the State of California and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity Jaws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, changes in price, condition, sale, or withdraw without notice. No statement is made as to accuracy of any description. All measurements and square footages are approximate. Exact dimensions can be obtained by retaining the services of an architect or engineer.

925-377-0977





#### By Conrad Bassett, Licensed Real Estate Broker and CRP, GMS-T

This past year was an interesting year for buyers and sellers of residential real estate in Lamorinda. The first half of 2022 started very strong and then changes came as interest rates increased steadily throughout the last half of the year.

Sales volume was much lower in each community and average prices increased in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

Homes stayed on the market for a similar limited time like in 2021 and the majority of homes still sold at or above their final asking price.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2022, 330 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 417 in 2021. There were 344 in 2020. For the 330 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$655,000 to \$12 million and the average time on market was 17 days, similar to the 16 days in 2021 and 19 days in 2020.

The average sales price was \$2,456,834.

This was a large increase from the \$2,124,266 in 2021. It was \$1,916,042 in 2020, \$1,789,012 in 2019, \$1,736,519 in 2018. The average price has more than doubled in the last decade.

The average sales price was about 107% of the final list price which in 2022 was \$2,293,809. This comes from a combination of properties being listed well below their actual value and in some cases "bidding wars" that pushed up prices. There was one Lafayette foreclosure sold on the MLS.

Only seven homes closed below \$1 million ... the same as in 2021.

In Moraga there were 116 single family closings in 2022. There were 184 single family closings in 2021 and 175 single family closings in 2020. Prices ranged from \$1,350,000 to \$3,625,000. The average sales price was \$2,214,037. This was the first year that the average price in Moraga exceeded \$2 million. In 2021 it was \$1,926,353. In 2020 it was \$1,590,853, \$1,486,327 in 2019 and \$1,485,713 in 2018. As in Lafayette, the average home price has more than doubled in the last decade.

The average number of days on market in 2021 was 12. In 2021 it was 14. As in 2021,

the average home sold for 109% of its asking price. The average list price was \$2,013,167 so the average home sold for about \$200,000 above asking. There were no REO properties that closed on the MLS and no short sales.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 235 versus 373 a year ago. The reported sales ranged in price from \$875,000 to \$6.75 million with an average price of \$2,291,847. In 2021 it was \$2,187,385. In 2020 it was \$1,889,942. In 2019 it was \$1,629,030 and in 2018 it was \$1,729,306. Again, the average sales price has more than doubled in the last 10 years. The average market time was 22 days – up from 17 days a year ago.

The average sales price was an average of 106.4% of the final list price. A year ago it was 107% of the final list price for the reported sales. There were no REO (bank owned) sales in Orinda in 2021.

There were no reported sales in Canyon in the MLS in 2022.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2022, Lafayette homes sold for \$945.10, well above the \$823.60 in 2021.

In 2022, Moraga homes sold for \$872.73 per square foot. In 2021 it was \$775.04 per square foot. It was \$644.18 in 2020.

In Orinda last year it was \$862.26. In 2021 it was \$797.26.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 34 closings – down from 36 closings in 2021. Sales prices ranged in 2022 from \$623,485 to \$2.6 million. Moraga had 81 closed units – down from the 118 in 2021. Sales ranged from \$340,000 to \$2.1 million. This includes "attached" homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had 16 closings up from 13 in 2021. Four of these were in the complexes on Brookwood Road and the others in Orindawoods. They sold from \$460,000 to \$2.25 million.

It should always be noted that there are also a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These are usually sales between private individuals.

... continued on Page D6

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Ari Hatton 925-323-0789 arihatton@gmail.com DRE #02168343



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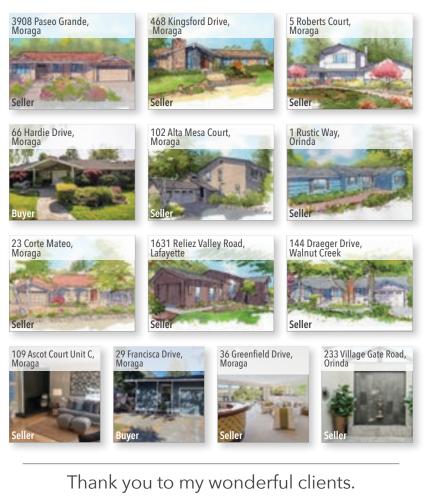
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#### HOMES SOLD IN 2022



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#### **The Real Estate Year in Review**

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As of Jan. 7, there were only 17 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$599,000 to \$3.925 million. It should be pointed out that there are no REOs and no short sales. Prices have continued to rise over the last few years and more owners now have equity in their homes and have not had to go the short-sale process or face foreclosure.

A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined shows 38 homes on the market. Last January there were 18 homes on the market. Seasonally the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer, however this current number may point to a year with additional buying opportunities. The current asking prices range from \$575,000 to \$9.995 million in the three communities combined.

In Lamorinda in 2022, 118 homes sold for over \$3 million! In Lafayette alone 63 sold for \$3 million or more in 2022.

Mortgage rates have been steadily climbing since they reached historic lows. Corporate relocations have increased as many companies want their staff to be in their destination offices rather than working remotely from their departure locations. We have not seen many outbound relocations for people working for companies who have announced that their corporate headquarters will be moving out of the state.

One other factor that is and will affect the markets will be the reluctance of those who financed or refinanced at rates below 3% to want to make discretionary moves and pay rates of twice as much as they have today. This will limit supply.

The East Bay communities like Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda as well as Piedmont and several neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley continue to benefit from their proximity to San Francisco where prices remain very high. Comparably speaking, the East Bay is still relatively more affordable and many of the buyers in the East Bay have come from the peninsula and Silicon Valley and San Francisco.

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### Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Stunning storms and 2023 Garden Trends, Part two



The citron lemon (Citrus medica) is the original citrus fruit from which The architectural elegance of a bare Pistache tree in winter. all lemons have been cultivated.

Photos Cynthia Brian

.. continued from Page D1

For those big broom plants that are difficult to eradicate, MOFD has a special tool available to lend to the public which will pull out these unwanted invaders, including the taproot. Contact MOFD to borrow this useful device. Thank you, Bruce, for the nudge to work on making our gardens fire safe while it is still winter.

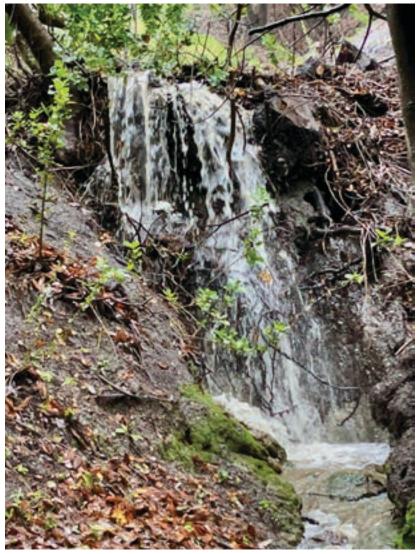
In my last column, I discussed popular trends predicted for 2023 by the Garden Media Group with suggestions as varied as vertical gardening to the age of 100 being the new 50! (www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1623/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-2023-Garden-Trends-Part-1.html) Gardening at age 100 will require raised beds to avoid having to bend over as well as provide a manageable height for wheelchairs. This year, classic columns, statues, boxwood hedges, and iconic Greek gardens offer inspiration, especially with Gen Z. Stone walls, archways, and olive trees are in demand. For a timeless arrangement, roses, agapanthus, cyclamen, and water-wise succulents are included in designs as key plants. A staple of Greek design is gravel gardens, excellent choices for large and small spaces, requiring minimal maintenance in drought times.

Arbors have graced gardens throughout history. They provide shade and add a focal point to any landscape design. Although Greek decor will be progressively popular, when considering an arbor, select one that will complement the style of your home and garden. Choose durable materials that will withstand the weight of vines.

Climate action is also addressed in the trend report. The first hardiness zone map was drawn in 1960 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The country is half a zone warmer since the last map was updated in 2012 indicating that the climate velocity of heat will increase 13 miles per decade. Our earth's climate is projected to warm by an additional 11 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century. Planting climate-resilient trees will be one way to combat this warming planet. Reforestation produces clouds that cool the climate. Trees sequester and store carbon, conserve energy through their shade, decrease stormwater runoff, filter air pollutants, and reduce urban heat. It is critical to plant the correct trees in the correct places to increase biodiversity and resilient ecosystems. Hiring a gardening coach or arborist for specific zip codes will become increasingly important.

Orange is the designated color of the year. Orange has spiritual connotations deeply rooted throughout history. In Buddhism, it is the color of perfection and illumination. In Confucianism, it is the color of transformation. In Hinduism, Krishna's dresses are orange. In Western culture, orange is considered earthy, amusing, exciting, and warm. It is also the preferred pigment for prison apparel. Showcasing plants with orange or terra cotta hues will be the rage in garden centers this year.

Although we don't need to implement suggested trends, it's always beneficial to understand what is happening in the world. With a new year ahead of us, we can plan how we want to spend the next 11 months and how we want our landscapes to look and operate. ... continued on Page D10



A waterfall on Cynthia's property.

Photos Cynthia Brian



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Plump purple-black olives on the tree

Photos Cynthia Brian Greek fountains and ornamentation are popular this year.

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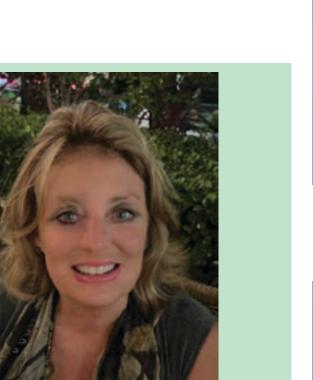
Attract wildlife, especially birds, to your property by enticing them with native plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers. These will provide a consistent source of food throughout the year. Hang feeders, nesting boxes, fountains, and birdbaths to welcome these avian guests who will pollinate and protect your yard.

What's happening on my property right now? Listening to the cascading waterfalls, thunderous creeks, and croaking frogs brings joy to my heart. Watching the birds find shelter throughout my landscape indicates these feathered friends call my garden home. Newts and salamanders are frequenting my pond. My camellia tree is full of buds and blooming. Pink Bergenia brightens the understory of shrubs. The 37-year-old olive tree boasts big black olives, although I am not

planning on harvesting them. The hillsides are carpeted with sprouts of wildflower seeds scattered in the fall. Sage and Madeira are dazzling companions. The grass is emerald with new growth. Deciduous trees fascinate with branches of architectural interest. Lemons, limes, and tangerines knocked out of trees by the rains are gathered daily to use in the kitchen. The ground is saturated and unable to drain quickly. Retaining walls, gravel walks, and sandbags are protecting my home from the deluge. Thousands of narcissi blossoms scent the air. The heavy pruning of rose bushes will commence soon.

Indeed, with the stunning storms, hope and faith flower from the cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of this new year's dawn.

I am grateful. Stay safe and weather the storms. Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy January!



Cynthia Brian wishes you a healthy, happy, prosperous, and golden New Year!

Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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 StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, No Barnyard Bullies, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store For an invitation to hang out with Cynthia for fun virtual events, activities, conversations, and exclusive experiences, buy StarStyle® NFTs at https://StarStyleCommunity.com Hire Cynthia for writing projecter gardon consults and inenjectional loctures

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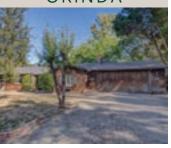
LAFAYETTE

16 Diablo Circle

\$1,749,000

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#### ORINDA



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## LAFAYETTE



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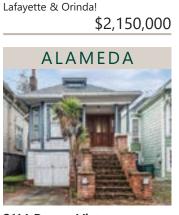
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