

# greet LAFAYETTE

## MEET THE SIESTA VALLEY TRIO

*Michael Karp, Campbell Foster, Tom Romary*



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535 Arrowhead Dr	320 E. Lowell Ln	3344 Las Huertas Rd	104 Marsha Pl	920 Reliez Station Rd	576 Silverado Dr (3x)
549 Arrowhead Dr	3392 East Terrace	3364 Las Huertas Rd	131 Marsha Pl	3020 Rohrer Dr	580 Silverado Dr (2x)
554 Arrowhead Dr	3396 East Terrace	3373 Las Huertas Rd (2x)	497 McBride Dr	3028 Rohrer Dr	581 Silverado Dr
565 Arrowhead Dr (2x)	1324 El Curtola Blvd	3390 Las Huertas Rd (4x)	501 McBride Dr	3040 Rohrer Dr (2x)	588 Silverado Dr
570 Arrowhead Dr (2x)	1367 El Curtola Blvd (2x)	3392 Las Huertas Rd (2x)	504 McBride Dr	3083 Rohrer Dr (3x)	590 Silverado Dr
501 Bavarian Ct (2x)	467 Florence Dr	3394 Las Huertas Rd	523 McBride Dr	3164 Rohrer Dr	592 Silverado Dr
3190 Bavarian Ln	473 Florence Dr	2 Leeward Glen	547 Merriewood Dr (2x)	3168 Rohrer Dr	867 Solana Dr
3026 Bradbury Dr	3319 Freeman Rd (2x)	3 Leeward Glen	557 Merriewood Dr	3427 Saint Mary's Rd	3185 Somerset Dr
833 Broadmoor Ct	701 Glenside Cir (4x)	1077 Leland Dr	559 Merriewood Dr (2x)	3497 Saint Mary's Rd	3190 Somerset Dr
4 Burr Ct (2x)	723 Glenside Cir	1090 Leland Dr	568 Merriewood Dr (2x)	21 Samantha Dr (2x)	3197 Somerset Dr
608 Burton Dr	740 Glenside Cir	638 Los Palos Dr	592 Michael Ln	3097 Sandalwood Ct (2x)	752 St. Marys Rd
611 Burton Dr	648 Glenside Dr (2x)	639 Los Palos Dr (2x)	620 Michael Ln	3107 Sandalwood Ct	3416 St. Marys Rd (2x)
624 Burton Dr (3x)	660 Glenside Dr	689 Los Palos Dr	688 Michael Ln	3132 Sandalwood Ct	952 Stow Ln (2x)
3229 Burton Ct (2x)	663 Glenside Dr (4x)	697 Los Palos Dr	3301 Mildred Ln	3148 Sandalwood Ct	977 Stow Ln
3230 Burton Ct	3225 Glenside Dr	710 Los Palos Dr (2x)	3357 Mildred Ln	3155 Sandalwood Ct	980 Stow Ln
3232 Camino Colorados	3251 Glenside Dr	711 Los Palos Dr	546 Morecroft Rd	24 Sanford Ln (2x)	646 Sweet Ct
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3337 Carlyle Terrace	385 Hermosa Ct	771 Los Palos Dr	3312 N. Lucille Ln	859 Santa Maria Way	3090 Sweetbrier Cir
30 Carolyn Ct	390 Hermosa Ct	783 Los Palos Manor (2x)	25 Old Millstone Ln	875 Santa Maria Way	3094 Sweetbrier Cir (2x)
61 Carolyn Ct	393 Hermosa Ct (2x)	786 Los Palos Manor	26 Old Millstone Ln	3210 Sharon Ct	2724 W. Newell Ave
390 Castello Rd (2x)	1026 Hoedel Ct	3222 Los Palos Cir (2x)	31 Old Millstone Ln (2x)	360 Shire Oaks Ct	3283 Walnut Ln
395 Castello Rd	610 Huntleigh Dr	308 Lowell Ln W	32 Old Millstone Ln	376 Shire Oaks Ct	3311 Walnut Ln
419 Castello Rd	624 Huntleigh Dr	2 Lucas Ranch Ct	12 Olympic Oaks Dr (2x)	3 Shreve Ln	3325 Walnut Ln
131 Castle Ct	625 Huntleigh Dr	11 Lucas Ranch Ct (2x)	29 Olympic Oaks Dr	623 N. Silverado Dr	3345 Walnut Ln
144 Castle Ct	3122 Indian Way	33 Lucas Ranch Ct	32 Olympic Oaks Dr (2x)	496 Silverado Dr	8 Warwick Ct (2x)
150 Castle Ct	3153 Indian Way	34 Lucas Ranch Ct	33 Olympic Oaks Dr	514 Silverado Dr	19 Warwick Ct
393 Colorado Ct	3134 Indian Way (2x)	44 Lucas Ranch Rd (2x)	36 Olympic Oaks Dr (2x)	519 Silverado Dr	24 Warwick Ct
3195 Condit Rd	3155 Indian Way (2x)	55 Lucas Ranch Rd	49 Olympic Oaks Dr	521 Silverado Dr	25 Warwick Ct
206 Contessa Ct	103 James Place	625 Lucas Dr (2x)	3379 Oswego Ct	525 Silverado Dr	1035 Windsor Dr
218 Contessa Ct (2x)	670 Jennie Ct (3x)	3159 Lucas Dr	12 Park Gate	528 Silverado Dr	3350 Woodview Dr
3164 Cordova Way	3188 Kingsley Pl (2x)	3165 Lucas Dr	479 Peacock Blvd	529 Silverado Dr	3365 Woodview Dr
3179 Cordova Way	3252 La Canada	3177 Lucas Dr	481 Peacock Blvd	531 Silverado Dr	3395 Woodview Dr
615 Crofton Ct	614 Lancaster Dr	3184 Lucas Dr (2x)	3279 Phillips Rd	545 Silverado Dr	3428 Woodview Dr
5 Diablo Oaks Way	621 Lancaster Dr (3x)	3192 Lucas Cir	3300 Phillips Rd	562 Silverado Dr (2x)	

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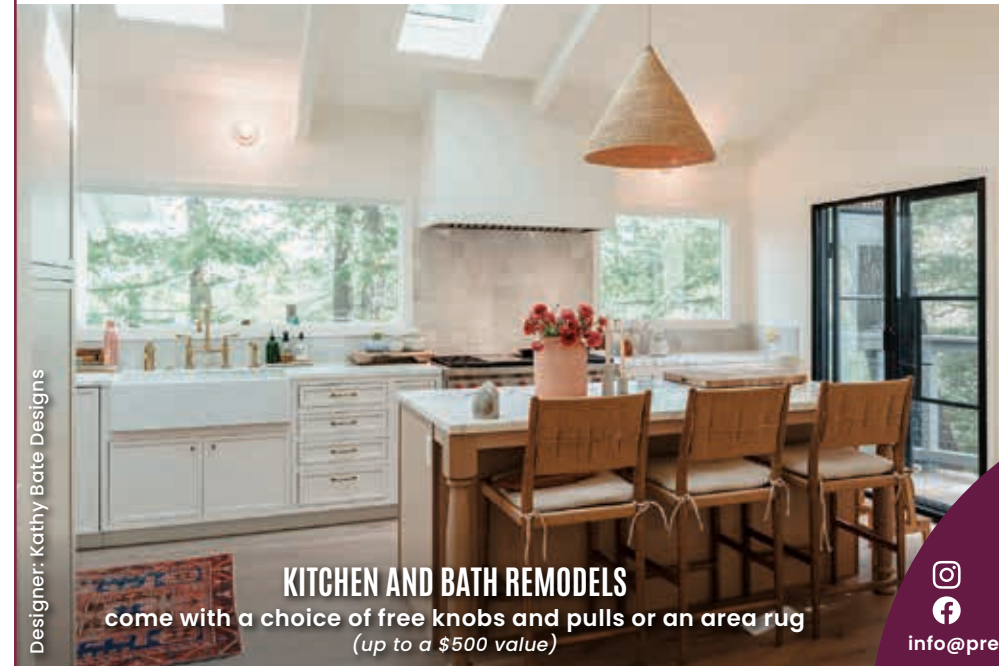
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# DEAR LAFAYETTE,

Goodbye, Cal Shakes. Hello, **Siesta Valley Bowl!** Three Lamorinda guys have come together to resurrect this jewel-box amphitheater. Opening this spring, SVB will present a broader array of performing arts and welcome a wider, more diverse audience.

New places to visit when you're Out & About! On the east side of town, we now have **Local Vines**, and on the west side, **Western Flyer Brewing** has opened its doors. Cheers to these two new Lafayette businesses!

We're thrilled to celebrate **In the Deets** and **Konstructo** this month! Gita Jacobson and Priyam Sawhney are a dynamic duo bringing beautifully designed, expertly built full-home remodels to the Lamorinda community.



Greet Lafayette and Greet Moraga celebrated the opening of Local Vines, a cooperative of Lamorinda AVA growers. Photo by Craig Isaacs, BlueGoo Photography

Please enjoy this issue, chock full of exciting news and wonderful stories. Please consider sharing your story and learning more about becoming a business partner.

Your *Greet Lafayette* Team  
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# GREETINGS FROM MAYOR ANDURI



Mayor Carl Anduri

I hope everyone has had an opportunity to experience the exceptional new mural by Rachel Perls in downtown Lafayette. It is a beautiful step toward the goal of making visual and performing arts part of our surroundings and everyday lives.

The City's Public Art Committee (PAC) took the lead in the development of this inaugural mural in our downtown mural program. The program provides for the PAC to develop and install three more murals over the next three years.

In 2004, the City established the PAC and required that 1% of the cost of each new development be used for public art. You can visit the City's website to see the surprising variety of works of public art in Lafayette.

More are being added. The two newest are at 3666 Mt. Diablo Boulevard: a conical stainless steel sculpture by WOWHAUS and colorful tile work on planters and stairs by mosaic artist Aileen Barr. Coming later this year will be an installation at 950 Hough of three 80-inch-tall cast bronze panels by internationally known Lafayette artist Clay Jensen, along with a large kinetic sculpture by Kinematics Lab as part of the new plaza and pathway on the south side of the BART station.

Of course we also look forward to the opening of a regional art cinema in the heart of our downtown — the renovated and reopened Park Theater.

The arts provide pleasure and inspiration for all ages, but I am particularly inspired by the lifelong benefits that our children and grandchildren derive from growing up in an environment that values the arts.



# You Are Invited!

Join fellow business owners and professionals for networking opportunities. Lafayette and Moraga residents, along with *Greet* business partners, are invited to the following networking events.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11**  
**GREET HAPPY HOUR (5 - 7 PM)**  
Canyon Club Brewery, 1588 Canyon Rd., Moraga

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25**  
**GREET NETWORKING LUNCH (11:30 AM - 1 PM)**  
Social Bird, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette  
Scan here to RSVP



Register Here  
greetlafayette.com/events

**BY INVITATION**  
**Greet Restaurant Tastings**  
Residents and participating business partners come together to make friends and enjoy delicious food! Residents can email Lafayette@n2co.com to be added to the invite list.

**Greet Gatherings**  
Select *Greet* business partners are invited to participate in conversations about different opportunities and developments throughout Lamorinda. Email Christine.Raymond@n2co.com to learn about becoming a business partner.

## YOUR GREET LAFAYETTE CONTRIBUTORS & TEAM

Thank you to everyone who made this special issue possible!



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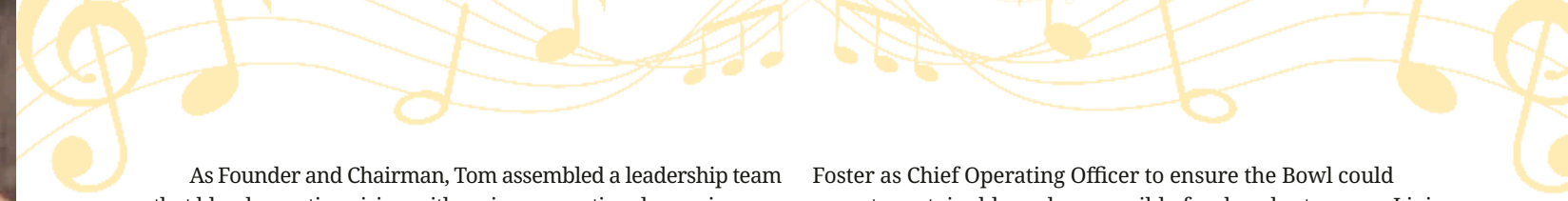


MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

# Music IS IN THE AIR



Lamorinda's own — Campbell, Michael, and Tom, the new owners of Siesta Valley Bowl!  
Photo by Ann Murphy Photography



As Founder and Chairman, Tom assembled a leadership team that blends creative vision with serious operational experience. In July 2025, they reached a major milestone: securing a 15-year lease from EBMUD to operate live performances, food and beverage offerings, and community programming at the site.

Siesta Valley Bowl plans to host 40 to 60 live performances annually, spanning rock, jazz, blues, classical music, dance, theater, and educational programming, including local artists, high school performances, and vocational training programs. The Siesta Valley Foundation, the non-profit organization that stewards the property, is making the facilities available for booking to schools, civic groups, and other community organizations.

Turning a vision into a place people return to year after year requires more than passion; it requires deep experience in hospitality and live entertainment. That's where Michael Karp came in. Michael doesn't think of himself as a music impresario. He describes himself as a hospitality professional and a community supporter. That distinction matters.

After graduating from Tulane University, Michael moved to Los Angeles and built a career working with some of the largest food and live entertainment organizations in the world. He worked as a food and beverage executive with industry leaders including AEG and Live Nation. Michael currently owns four restaurants in Napa, Oakland, Brentwood, and Orinda, as well as a location at the Oakland International Airport.

Yet even as the scale grew, his philosophy stayed the same: take care of the space, the experience, and the people. "In earlier ventures, food came first, and music followed," Michael says. "This time, music is at the forefront and premium food and beverage support it." As Founder and President of Siesta Valley Bowl, Michael will bring operational rigor and an audience-first mindset that ensures the venue and the guest experiences there feel right.

With vision and hospitality expertise in place, the final piece was execution. Tom and Michael brought on Campbell

Foster as Chief Operating Officer to ensure the Bowl could operate sustainably and responsibly for decades to come. Living in Lafayette since 2013, Foster was drawn to the region's unique blend of natural beauty and civic pride. "People in Lamorinda show up," Foster says. "They sit on boards, they go to city council meetings, they vote. And they don't just consume culture — they protect the places that make it possible."

As Founder and COO, Campbell brings experience across finance, technology, early-stage ventures, and nonprofit leadership. His work has centered on building complex organizations, from governance and capital formation to strategy, marketing, and operations. All this, paired with a deep, personal connection to the performing arts.

"The biggest challenge is awareness," Foster says. "There's an exquisite, world-class, jewel-box amphitheater right in our Lamorinda backyard that, until recently, only Shakespeare fans seemed to know existed. Our goal is to broaden the performing arts presented there, and to welcome a wider, more diverse audience."

The team at Siesta Valley has expanded to include more community members, including Phil Pierce and Lisa Mueller, both of whom serve on the Foundation board, as well as Lisa's husband, Kyle Mueller, a professional designer and musician who created the Siesta Valley Bowl brand identity. Another addition is Christian Stratton, a seasoned creative professional who plays in a band with Kyle and Tom, plus leads the theater's Vision/Customer Experience Strategy. Last but not least, Paul Scanlan joined the board as an advisor, bringing a wealth of experience in entrepreneurial leadership, media innovation, and community-driven business models.

Together, Tom, Michael, Campbell, and their team are shaping a public space and cultural institution rooted in creativity and care for place. "This belongs to the community," Tom says. "The best part is that anyone who cares about music, nature, or this historic amphitheater can be part of it."

To learn more or get involved, visit [siestavalley.org](http://siestavalley.org).

## Life After Cal Shakes

### INSIDE THE VISION OF SIESTA VALLEY BOWL

If you ask Tom Romary what he loves most about living in Lamorinda, he won't hesitate — it's the setting and the people. After moving from Seattle to Orinda in 2012 with his wife, Linda, their three sons, and two Labradors, Tom quickly fell for the rolling hills, open space, and winding trails that define the East Bay. Beyond the landscape, what truly stood out was the community itself. "There's a real kindness here," he says, "and a thriving culture of artists and musicians who care deeply about where they live."

That blend of nature and music is exactly what inspired Tom to help bring the former Cal Shakes amphitheater in Orinda back to life as Siesta Valley Bowl, an ambitious new chapter for an historic amphitheater set to open in 2026. Located on protected EBMUD watershed land stewarded by a nonprofit foundation, with a potential capacity of up to ~700, this venue will bring conservation, culture, and community together in a way that feels unmistakably local.

The idea took shape in late 2024, after the closure of Cal Shakes left a noticeable void in the local arts scene. For Tom, a pianist and guitarist who plays in several local bands, the loss felt personal. "Live music and theater are essential to being human," he says.

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# ART IN BLOOM

## Rachel Perls Paints the Town

**B**right white poppies are blooming along Mt. Diablo Boulevard. The mural, “Matilija Sky,” is the first in the City of Lafayette’s new Downtown Mural Program and a full-circle moment for artist and Lafayette native Rachel Perls.

“I grew up here,” Rachel says. “I always had summer jobs on Mt. Diablo — Lucky, Ace Hardware, Double Rainbow Cafe, Take One Video. So painting a mural on this street feels really meaningful.”

Art has long been where Rachel found joy and expression. She earned her degree in studio art from UC Davis and first experienced large-scale painting while working on theater sets. After college, her career took many forms, including graphic design, architectural color consulting, custom pet portraits, and even high-end cake painting.



Rachel Perls with her mural, “Matilija Sky.” Photo by Craig Isaacs, BlueGoo Photography



“Matilija Sky” by Rachel Perls, located at 3578 Mt. Diablo Blvd., is the first in the City of Lafayette’s Downtown Mural Program.

Her hope is simple: that the mural brightens someone’s day. She wants them to “take a moment to engage with these joyful flowers, see the beauty in the details, and feel a sense of awe.”

Rachel offers special thanks to Trent and Sorell of ABG Project, Jesus of El Talpense Restaurant, and Shila of Zahra Boutique Salon for their support and enthusiasm, along with Dudum Real Estate for providing the wall, and the Public Art Committee and the City of Lafayette for the opportunity to be part of the mural program.

Learn more at [lovelafayette.org/murals](http://lovelafayette.org/murals). Find Rachel’s work at [rachelperls.com](http://rachelperls.com) and [@rachelperls](https://www.instagram.com/rachelperls).

Special thanks to Realtor Ashley Battersby for sponsoring our Learning & Education section.

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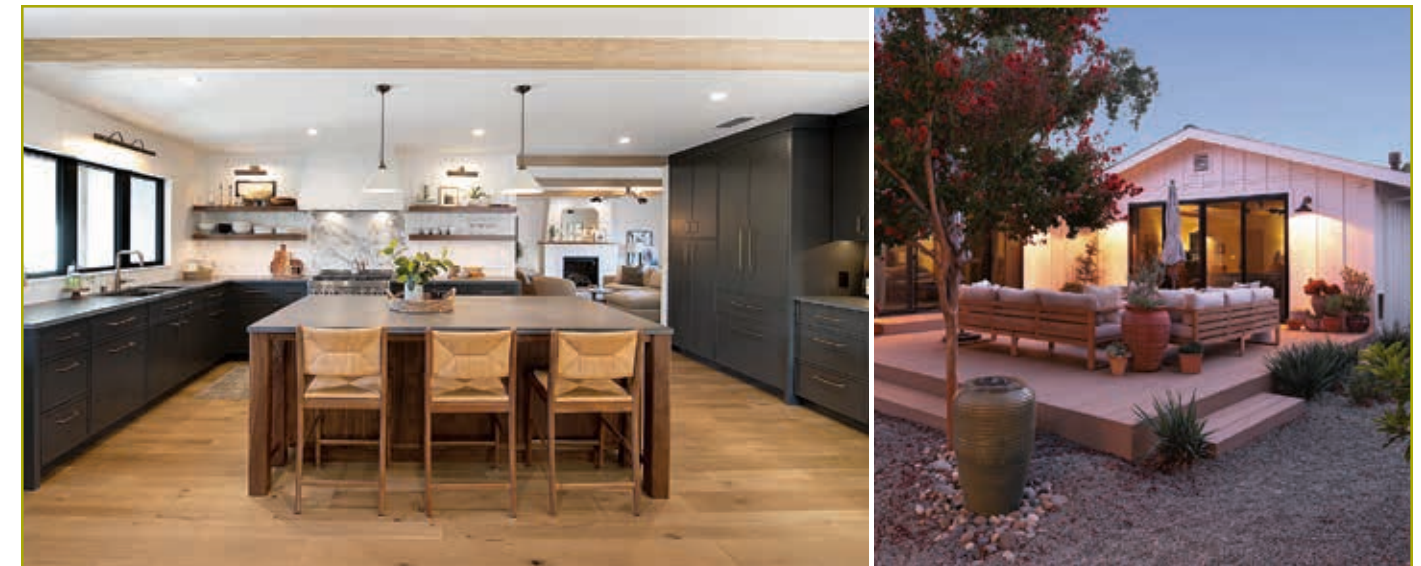
Rachel developed an appreciation for murals during the pandemic. “I love how public art benefits everyone and brings life to spaces that reflect the neighborhood,” she says. In 2024, she began painting walls in her Rockridge neighborhood to deter graffiti, and the positive feedback from the community has been gratifying.

Then came an opportunity that brought her back home. Rachel was selected as the mural program’s first artist, giving her the chance to contribute an original, lasting piece of art to her hometown.

Flowers seemed a natural fit for the design. “I love painting flowers at all stages of their lives,” Rachel says. “I’m transfixed by their translucency and the play of light and shadow across the petals.” She paints them larger than life, so they dominate the space and demand attention.

For this inaugural piece, the Public Art Committee hoped to feature a hyper-local wildflower. Rachel considered California poppies, but the Matilija poppy won everyone’s hearts. “They feel so ephemeral, the way their paper-thin petals dance in the wind,” she says. “The poppies have a humble elegance and optimism that I think reflects Lafayette’s vibe so perfectly.”

After months of planning and creating digital mockups from her own flower photos, Rachel spent about 70 hours painting on-site. She began with a base layer, then projected the flower outlines onto the wall and traced them in chalk. Working from a scissor lift to reach the 20-foot roofline, she layered exterior and mural paints and sealed the finished piece with a protective varnish.



## Building *Better* Experiences

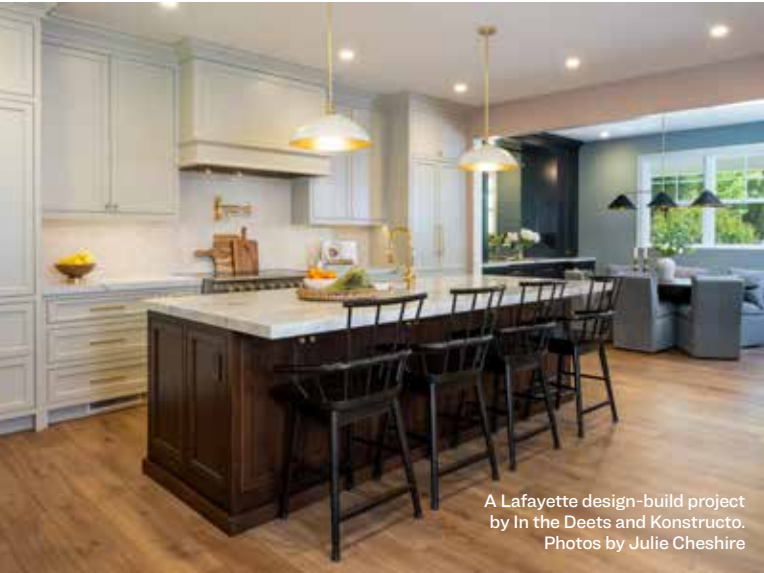
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A Lafayette design-build project by In the Deets and Konstructo. Photos by Julie Cheshire



# Building Homes, Building Community

Lafayette isn't just where we work, it's where we live. You'll find us cheering from the bleachers at baseball games, counting laps at swim meets, and bumping into clients at Diablo Foods or grabbing coffee or a quick bite at Lafayette Public House. We're Gita Jacobson, owner of In the Deets, and Priyam Sawhney, owner of Konstructo, and our story starts right here in Lamorinda.



We met on a construction site — Gita as the designer, Priyam as the contractor — and instantly clicked over the chaos of raising kids the same age. Between carpools, homework battles, and school fundraisers, we realized we shared something bigger: a vision for building homes with the same care and attention we bring to everything in our own lives. That chance meeting sparked a partnership, and now we're helping neighbors across Lamorinda create homes they truly love.

We're both raising our families in Lafayette — Gita in Burton Valley with a 4th grader at Burton Valley Elementary and a 6th grader at Stanley Middle School, and Priyam in Reliez Valley with 3rd and 5th graders at Springhill Elementary. We get it, we're living the same busy family life as our clients. We know how overwhelming a renovation can feel, and we're here to make the process clear, collaborative, and (dare we say it?) even enjoyable.

What makes us different? We've built a unique design-build model that brings together the creativity of a boutique design studio with the reliability of an in-house construction team. No more playing telephone between the designer and the contractor. From day one, we're both at the table, which

means transparent pricing, realistic timelines, and zero surprises.

We're also passionate about supporting the community that's given us so much. With our kids thriving in Lafayette schools, we're proud supporters of Lafayette Partners in Education (LPIE). We also partner with other local women-owned businesses for our building and finish materials, because investing in our neighbors is important.

At the end of the day, our projects aren't just about beautiful kitchens or perfectly planned additions. They're about creating spaces where your family can gather, grow, and build memories for years to come. Some of our greatest rewards? The friendships that last long after the final walk-through, running into clients at school events, sharing sideline stories at soccer games, or just waving hello around town.

For us, this isn't just business. It's home.

"Gita and Priyam from In the Deets and Konstructo were amazing to work with on our whole house remodel! Their exceptional design, outstanding communication, and incredible organization resulted in an on-time finish — rare in remodeling. This duo goes above and beyond at every step. We happily recommend them to any homeowners!" — ALANNA PETERS, LAFAYETTE



Learn more about this dynamic duo at [inthedeets.com/konstruckto](http://inthedeets.com/konstruckto).

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ADDRESS	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE	DOM	BEDS	BATHS	SQ.FT.	LOT SIZE
9 Burton Vista Court	\$5,100,000	\$4,675,000	115	6	7+	8772	2.55
631 Murray Lane	\$3,350,000	\$3,350,000	0	4	3	3171	0.24
3958 Franke Lane	\$2,995,000	\$3,250,000	2	4	3.5	3194	0.5
30 Arieys Lane	\$3,250,000	\$3,150,000	41	5	4.5	4490	0.31
3938 Los Arabis Drive	\$2,995,000	\$2,700,000	212	4	4	4150	0.87
30 Presher Way	\$2,795,000	\$2,660,000	11	5	2.5	3650	0.88
1000 Walnut Drive	\$2,388,000	\$2,300,000	16	4	3.5	2980	0.14
1834 Ivanhoe Avenue	\$2,345,000	\$2,250,000	3	5	4	4021	0.37
11 Silverhill Way	\$2,150,000	\$2,180,000	10	4	3.5	3207	0.84
1255 Sunrise Ridge Drive	\$2,079,000	\$2,125,000	13	4	3	2970	0.34
2199 Hidden Pond Road	\$1,950,000	\$2,105,000	19	4	3.5	3352	0.54

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# DONS, DREAMS, & COMMUNITY PRIDE

## Acalanes Takes the Field at Oracle Park

BY CODY MICHLITSCH, ACALANES HIGH SCHOOL



Acalanes players celebrate their 2025 NCS championship. From left: Tommy Terhar, Cody Michlitsch, Gavin Beers, Isaac Copen, Branson Smith, and Riley Gates. Photo by Glen Gates.

When I walk out of the dugout and onto the field at Oracle Park, it will mark my growth as a baseball player, celebrate our supportive Acalanes community, and help others experience the joys of youth athletics.

Growing up a Giants fan, I imagined making diving plays in Triples Alley and hitting home runs into McCovey Cove. As I watched legends like Buster Posey and Madison Bumgarner win championships, I wondered what it would be like to play at the corner of 3rd and King. On Saturday, April 18, I will have the opportunity to take the field alongside my Acalanes teammates as we take on Marin Catholic High School at Oracle Park, the home of the San Francisco Giants.

Competing in a major league stadium will be a great way to show our team's hard work and teamwork. It will be an exciting game against a tough opponent in one of the grandest venues in baseball. But for all the grandeur of the event, I know I will be able to lean on the lessons I learned playing in Little League.

Playing alongside some of my best friends at Buckeye Fields, I learned the fundamentals of the game. I learned the importance of teamwork, dedication, and sportsmanship. Since then, the competition has toughened, and the playing field has grown, but the values I've adopted from Little League have continued to guide me on and off the baseball diamond.

While the game will be an exciting opportunity for our team, it will also be a chance to support a great organization. Ticket sales will raise funds for Dante's Boys Foundation. The foundation, named after legendary San Francisco baseball coach Dante Benedetti, provides financial support for youth athletic organizations and life coaching for underserved youth in the Bay Area. Since 2006, the Dante Benedetti Baseball Classic at Oracle Park has raised funds and highlighted top competition at the high school and collegiate level.

Although I don't usually like seeing the stands filled with blue at the home of the Giants, a large crowd of Acalanes fans would make the game even more magical. It's an opportunity for our Acalanes community to display our spirit and to support kids in the Bay Area through sports. And our team would greatly appreciate the energy of a sea of cheering Dons fans. We can't wait to take the field and represent Acalanes at Oracle Park, and we hope to see you there.

**CHEER ON THE DONS AT ORACLE PARK!**  
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Tickets are available at [gofan.co](http://gofan.co). Fans are invited to meet at Lafayette BART at 4 pm to ride together.

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SCHOOL SCENE

# A WORLD BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: Stanley's Spanish Exchange That Changes Lives

BY THE LAFAYETTE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Stanley student Turner Deane hosts Colombian exchange student Edgar, making masa together.

What began as a last-minute scramble more than two decades ago has grown into one of Stanley Middle School's most cherished traditions. In the late 1990s, a school in the Bay Area was unexpectedly unable to host a visiting group of students from St. George's School in Bogotá, Colombia. With just two weeks' notice, a former Stanley Spanish teacher was asked if Stanley families might step in. They did, and a remarkable international exchange program was born.

Organized by Primavera Camping Tours, the exchange continues to thrive thanks to the extraordinary commitment of teachers on both sides and the warmth and generosity of host families in Lafayette and Colombia. Each year, students open their homes to peers from another country, creating a true cultural exchange that goes far beyond textbooks.


For students, the experience makes language come alive in unforgettable ways. Stanley students suddenly realize that the Spanish they've been practicing actually works — whether reading a menu in a restaurant or spotting the word fútbol splashed across a storefront in Bogotá. Likewise, Colombian students staying in Lafayette are fully immersed in English, often in homes where Spanish isn't spoken at all. As Stanley Spanish teacher and program leader Katie Pitts puts it, "There's nothing like real life. Try as we might to make our classrooms authentic, nothing compares."

The growth students experience is profound. Navigating airports, managing their own belongings, adapting to new foods and routines, and communicating in another language, all without their parents, push them beyond their comfort zones. And almost without exception, they rise to the challenge. "Everyone grows up a lot on the trip," Katie says. "They learn responsibility, independence, and how to support one another."


The connections formed often last a lifetime. Katie recalls former exchange students who later became college roommates abroad, friendships sustained through years of video calls, and even families who continued hosting long after the official exchange ended. The program has shaped lives in unexpected ways — including Katie's own, as a professional partnership with the Colombian program coordinator blossomed into a lifelong friendship.

For Katie, the reason she returns year after year is simple: watching the world become smaller. "Seeing students embrace the challenge, grow in confidence, and form deep connections — it's incredibly heartwarming," she says. "These experiences truly change lives."

Special thanks to In the Deets and Konstructo for sponsoring our School Scene section.




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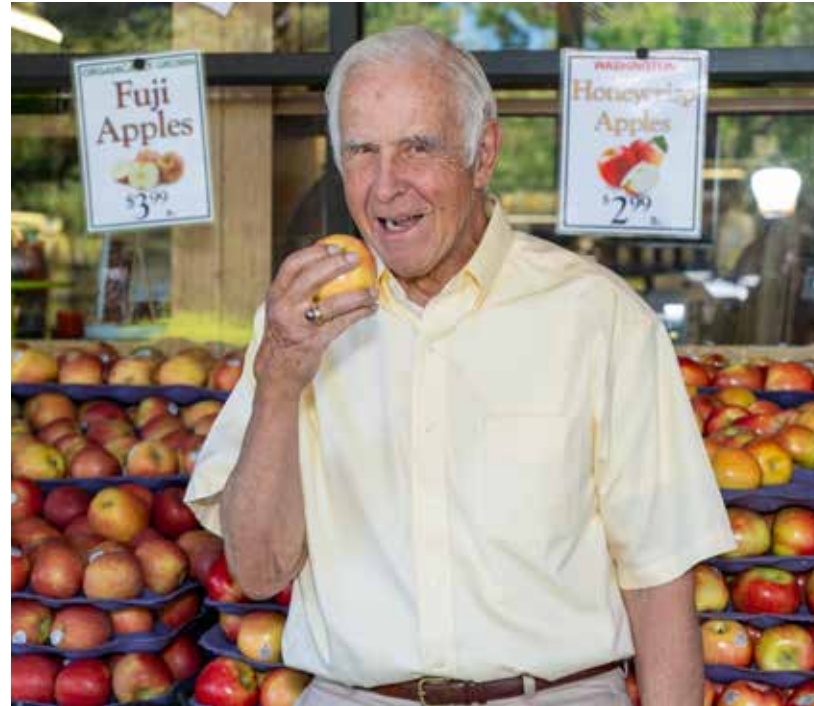
# HOW DIET CAN TRANSFORM GUT HEALTH

BY JAMES SCALA, PH.D.

“Can I shake your hand?” a man asked after I gave a lecture about nutrition at a veterans meeting in San Antonio, Texas. I gladly shook his hand; however, I was surprised when he hugged me and said, “I can’t thank you enough.”

When I asked why, he explained that reading “Eating Right for a Bad Gut” had changed his life. He had been hospitalized with a serious intestinal disorder and was scheduled for surgery that would remove a large portion of his intestine, leaving him with a permanent intestinal pouch.

He explained that his wife had bought him the book. After reading it, he pleaded with his doctor to let him try the dietary approach I described. The doctor agreed to postpone the surgery, and three months later, he was cleared without



Jim at Diablo Foods, apple in hand. Photo by Craig Isaacs, BlueGoo Photography

needing the procedure. He continues to follow the diet plan to this day.

The goal of this approach is to provide people who have intestinal problems with a plan that will stop intestinal flare-ups while providing good nutrition. It focuses on 12 key factors that help adults and children control intestinal disorders, including dietary fiber, the most critical nutrient; cooking methods that reduce inflammation; the sensible use of food supplements; and lifestyle practices, such as controlling stress, maintaining fitness, and keeping a food diary.

The plan explains why fiber, often called “the forgotten nutrient,” is essential in many ways beyond daily bowel movements. The plan discusses how to get enough of the right kind of fiber using normal foods. It also explores intestinal flare-ups and how to prevent them through dietary interventions. For example, when flare-ups are triggered by milk or its components, it outlines how to adjust the diet to avoid symptoms while still maintaining adequate nutrition. The plan is designed for people with conditions such as ileitis, colitis, Crohn’s disease, and other inflammatory bowel diseases.

I was reminded recently that the book is still reaching people with these conditions when I received a royalty check from my agent, Writers House in New York City, many years after it was first published.

Special thanks to Aegis Living Moraga for sponsoring our Senior Living section.

Would you like to suggest a Senior for the Senior Living section?  
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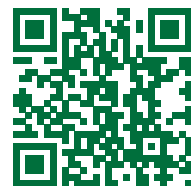
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## Thriving as We Grow Older

BY JAIME POLSON, CARE AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP, LOPC



At Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), we believe that growing older should mean growing closer — to each other, to our community, and to the things that bring us joy. Our Senior Programs are designed to welcome everyone, creating a warm and inclusive space where lasting friendships flourish, spiritual connections deepen, and the isolation that sometimes accompanies aging is replaced with meaningful connection and support.

We know that when we engage with one another in authentic ways, we don't just age — we thrive. That's why LOPC's Senior Adult Ministry offers a rich variety of programs that bring people together. Whether you're exploring creative activities and the arts, sharing educational experiences, embarking on travel adventures, or simply finding emotional support among friends, there's a place for you here. Seniors are valued members of our entire church community, and we warmly invite you to join us in building a welcoming home for all.

### THURSDAY FELLOWSHIP

Every Thursday from September through June, our Thursday Fellowship program creates a caring social network where our senior community gathers for connection and fun. Enjoy a creative morning craft activity, a delicious lunch featuring salad, dessert, and beverages, followed by varied entertainment that makes for a wonderful afternoon of fellowship and friendship. This program is open to everyone in the community on a drop-in basis, with no commitment required; just come as you are! To learn more, contact Julie Peterson at [julie@lopc.org](mailto:julie@lopc.org).

### SPECIAL EVENT: NAVIGATING AGING WITH CONFIDENCE

Join us on March 21 for an enriching day designed to empower you with practical strategies and expert guidance for aging well. Whether you're focused on your own wellness or supporting aging loved ones as an adult child or caregiver, this workshop series will equip you with valuable tools.

Dr. Matthew Wynn, Ph.D., Clinical Neuropsychologist from Integrity Geropsychology, will lead the day alongside experts covering hospice and end-of-life care, combating loneliness, healthcare planning, nutrition and exercise, legal considerations, cognitive health, and more.

March 21, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm  
LOPC49 Knox Dr., Lafayette  
Register at:  
[lopc.org/registrations](http://lopc.org/registrations)



Hosted by LOPC in partnership with Lamorinda Village. All are welcome!



Kate Kuisel and Ollie at Sather Gate, UC Berkeley.

Ollie is a four-year-old American Shorthair — better known as a tuxedo cat — with serious "tuxitude." According to owner Kate Kuisel, that means a big personality, plenty of sass, and a strong bond with his human.

### How did Ollie come into your life?

Ollie is originally from South Carolina, where I rescued him from a shelter in my hometown. He's been a California resident with me for three years, since

PETS WITH PERSONALITY

# MEET OLLIE

INTERVIEW WITH KATE KUISEL

I moved here to pursue my Ph.D. at Cal. I wouldn't have been able to make this move so far from my family without Ollie's constant company.

### How would you describe his personality?

Ollie is full of life with a very distinct personality. He's very 'black and white.' One second, he wants to sit on your lap, and the next, he is full of energy. He's extremely social and loves people!

**What are his favorite activities?** Ollie is very adventurous. He loves to walk on his leash around the backyard, or I take him for walks in his stroller. This is where he makes so many friends. Most people assume it's a child in my stroller, but it's actually just my cat. He loves to watch birds out the window and is, overall, a very noisy neighbor. But I like to think he is keeping us safe.

**Any memorable moments?** Ollie often flies home with me to South Carolina. Here we have made many friends at the airport, like nervous travelers, people who miss their own cats, and lots of kids.

**What do you love most about Ollie?** Ollie is a great source of company. When I'm working long hours, he'll sit in my lap or next to my desk, wanting to get fresh air, or just needing extra love. He is always there.

Special thanks to RecycleSmart, a valuable resource for residential recycling information, for sponsoring our Pets with Personality section.



Ollie on a stroller walk at the Lafayette Reservoir.

## FREE COMPOST PROGRAM

RecycleSmart provides free compost to residents in partnership with Republic Services and the City of Walnut Creek.

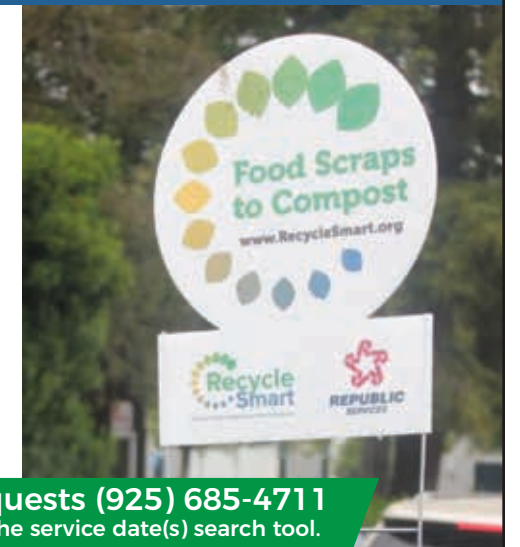
Compost is available for pickup at Heather Farm Park located at 301 N. San Carlos Drive in Walnut Creek.

**Composting organics is now the law for everyone in California!**

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