



The Real Estate Informer

From Bernard Gibbons, "The English Agent"

www.BernardGibbons.com

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- Minimizing The Stress When you are Selling Your Home
- Restaurant Review - Yankee Pier, Lafayette
- Plus All The Latest Real Estate Sales Statistics



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HAPPY HOLIDAYS
TO ALL OUR
READERS

2619 Marsh Drive, San Ramon



Pottery Barn Perfect

With almost 2,000 sq.ft. of well planned living space, this beautiful home in San Ramon's Twin Creeks South is beautifully updated with flair and taste. The kitchen is finished with gleaming white cabinetry. Dual-pane windows and patio doors, inset can lighting, updated bathrooms and much more. Close to award winning schools, shopping and freeway access etc. HOA dues include exterior maintenance and landscaping.

Offered For Sale at \$465,000

For more information or to arrange a private showing, call Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585 or email bernard@bernardgibbons.com

www.2619MarshDrive.com

Restaurant Review:

Yankee Pier, 3593 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette



I first came across

Bradley Ogden, co-founder of the Lark Creek Restaurant Group, many years ago, when I first visited The Lark Creek Inn in Larkspur. This was (and I believe still is) an exceptional restaurant and over the years, Bradley Ogden has gone on to open a string of restaurants including a min-chain called Yankee Pier. This is my review of the Lafayette branch.

Located in a recently constructed building with characterful architecture on Mount Diablo Boulevard, Yankee Pier's exterior is immediately recognizable to anybody who has visited the same restaurant on San Jose's Santana Row. The blue and white décor and nautical theme, with high ceilings and big windows make a great backdrop for this lively eating place and it is obviously well-supported.

Sylvia and I visited early on a cool Saturday evening in November and were quickly shown

to out table (actually a booth with wood slat seats - very nautical and surprisingly comfortable). The restaurant was already bustling and had a moderate to high noise level. Possibly not the ideal place for a quiet dinner, although it is an ambiance that we both enjoy.

Our waitress was very pleasant and attentive without being obtrusive and she showed a good knowledge of the menu, easily answering my questions.

You will have realized by now that Yankee Pier is primarily a fish and seafood restaurant (and it is all sourced in accord with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program). They do offer some meat and chicken dishes together with the odd vegetarian option but I doubt that many people would order these.

Similarly, Sylvia and I would not be very likely to order chicken or meat in a seafood restaurant. To start with, we ordered a portion of fried fresh Monterey Bay calamari, one of my favorite appetizers when it is done well. Yankee Pier did not disappoint. This really was fresh calamari and a generous portion at that. Served with a tasty cocktail sauce and certainly plenty for two to share.

Moving on to the main course, Sylvia opted for fish and chips and I had the sautéed scampi with linguine.

Sylvia found the fish a little lacking in flavor although it tasted fine to me and the texture was nice and flaky and the beer batter light and crisp. The fish was Pacific Rockfish, which may have a less distinct favor than cod or haddock which I think Sylvia would have preferred.

My entrée was served in a particularly flavorful white wine sauce with lots of capers. Again, portion sizes were generous. Other possible choices included tuna, salmon and various shellfish plus they also have a raw bar.

A bottle of Kendal-Jackson Grand Reserve Chardonnay complemented our meal very well and then on to dessert. For us, this was apple and huckleberry crisp, served hot with vanilla ice cream. If you go to Yankee Pier, get this dessert! It is one of the best we have had in ages.

The Yankee Pier seems to have a winning formula for Lafayette with good, fresh food at reasonable prices. You can see menus and more on their web site at www.yankee pier.com

Planning To Make A Move In 2011?

Homes that sell fastest and for the top price are the ones that are prepared for sale and professionally marketed. The preparation often takes time.

Call me now, and I will meet with you and advise you regarding any changes and improvements that I would recommend to get you the best return. If you start now, your home can be ready for the market in peak selling season. Give me a call on (925) 997-1585 or email bernard@bernardgibbons.com. I will respond quickly.

Reviews such as the ones on this page are included as a service to introduce people to interesting restaurants in the San Ramon Valley. I have no connection with any restaurateurs in the area and all opinions expressed are strictly those of the writer. Any comments or feedback are welcome and encouraged. If you have a particular restaurant that you would like to see reviewed, email bernard@bernardgibbons.com and I will do my best to oblige.

Minimizing The Stress When you are Selling Your Home

When you are selling your home, the best part of the transaction for most people, the time when the stress melts away, is when you sign the final papers at the Title Company. For many, the run up to that point can be extremely stressful but with some foresight, it can be minimized.

PREPARATION IS KEY FOR HOME SELLERS

The less time your home is on the market, the better you will feel. It therefore makes sense to do everything you can to influence a fast sale.

Getting the price right is essential. If your home is over-priced it is guaranteed to stay on the market for a long time, but if you have a good real estate agent to guide you, it will soon be obvious where your home should be priced to generate sufficient attention from buyers.

Having attracted buyers' attention, you need to maintain their interest by making your home look as good as you can. Again, your agent should be able to advise you with that, but you may want to do some

preparation in advance of that. If so, your best approach is to go through your home, room by room, looking at it as if you have never seen it before. Does the paint or carpet look old or faded? New paint or carpet is not that expensive and can often add more value than it costs. Does it seem overcrowded? Take out excess furniture and the rooms will appear much larger. Today's buyers want space.

You should aim to de-clutter your home and de-personalize your home as much as you can. Buyers need to envisage themselves living there, so remove any distracting personal photos and trophies etc. Open the drapes and increase the lighting levels. This also makes for a bright, spacious feel. Then don't forget the outside of the home. Use shredded bark and bedding plants to improve the landscaping. Power wash the driveway and clean the windows. First impressions are crucial.

Now having got the home ready for the market and set the price

at the right point, you need to make it easy to show. Ideally, have your agent put a lock box on the home and allow showings at an hours notice. If you have pets, you may want to think about boarding them out while the home is for sale.

The first week (or at least the first weekend) your home is on the market, is when you are likely to get the maximum interest. This is another reason you need to get the price right from the word go. If the thought of loads of real estate agents passing through your home with their buyers is daunting, this could be a great time to treat yourself to a few days away. You may even return home and have offers to consider.

Your real estate agent will also be doing lots of preparatory work while this is going on. Preparing marketing materials, writing copy, arranging for Internet marketing etc. and carrying out advanced promotions. Once your home is ready to show, he will want to arrange for photos and/or videos to

Interest Rate Update:

30 Year Fixed (Conforming) - 4.5%

30 Year Fixed (Jumbo) - 4.625%

FHA 30 Year Fixed - 4.375%

(Source: Wells-Fargo Home Mortgage)

November/December Dates

November 2 - Election Day

November 11 - Veterans Day

November 25 - Thanksgiving

December 25 - Christmas Day

be taken so your home can be professionally presented to prospective buyers.

If everything is carried out as described, you will have minimized the stress to the point where an acceptable offer should come in quickly. After that, it should be a matter of negotiating the terms of sale, yet another area where you will be relying on your real estate agent's help, then working with the buyers regarding inspections and agreeing to any repairs. All that should be necessary then is to follow the transaction through to its successful conclusion when you sign the transfer papers at the Title Company and move on to the next great adventure in your life.

If you would like any further advice or information regarding any aspect of selling your home in today's real estate market, call me on (925) 997-1585 or email bernard@bernardgibbons.com and I will be happy to help in any way I can.

Market Update

San Ramon Valley & Lamorinda

Source: Contra Costa / MAX MLS

The 40 most recently Closed Sales of Single Family Detached Homes in Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda
(Sorted By City and Closed Date)

Address	City	Beds	Baths	1/2 Baths	SqFt	Lot Sq Ft	List Price	Sold Price	Sale \$/SqFt	Closing Date
16 Treetop Terrace Court	Alamo	5	4	1	5061	17389	\$1,864,990	\$1,882,917	372	10/29/2010
314 Las Quebradas	Alamo	5	6	0	6080	20520	\$2,400,000	\$2,300,000	378	10/28/2010
1020 White Gate Rd	Alamo	4	2	0	2141	43995	\$859,900	\$890,000	416	10/28/2010
1530 Hillgrade Ave	Alamo	3	2	1	2110	25956	\$1,029,000	\$1,025,000	486	10/27/2010
719 Genoa Ct	Danville	5	4	0	3252	8558	\$899,000	\$888,000	273	10/29/2010
415 Rioja Ct	Danville	5	4	1	3313	6300	\$929,900	\$915,000	276	10/29/2010
3277 Griffon Street West	Danville	4	2	1	2506	4880	\$852,544	\$804,900	321	10/29/2010
554 Zephyr Circle	Danville	3	2	0	1803	8550	\$729,000	\$735,000	408	10/27/2010
1380 Monterosso St	Danville	6	4	1	4241	6319	\$1,049,900	\$1,005,000	237	10/27/2010
837 Matadera Cir	Danville	4	2	1	2272	20072	\$715,000	\$710,000	312	10/27/2010
846 Diablo Rd	Danville	5	2	1	2505	18400	\$798,000	\$770,000	307	10/26/2010
1014 Katherine Ln	Lafayette	4	3	0	2321	12960	\$875,000	\$875,000	377	10/29/2010
1090 Oak Hill Rd	Lafayette	3	2	1	2066	18270	\$799,000	\$770,500	373	10/28/2010
20 Olympic Oaks Dr	Lafayette	3	3	0	2330	12500	\$965,000	\$965,000	414	10/27/2010
985 Hawthorne Drive	Lafayette	3	2	0	1400	9900	\$799,000	\$799,000	571	10/27/2010
1369 Reliez Valley Rd	Lafayette	3	2	1	1483	57934	\$1,000,000	\$875,000	590	10/26/2010
8 Amanda Lane	Lafayette	3	2	1	2037	3542	\$949,000	\$940,000	461	10/26/2010
19 Springhill Ln	Lafayette	4	4	0	2797	128937	\$1,439,000	\$1,325,000	474	10/26/2010
549 Augusta Dr	Moraga	4	2	1	3424	7866	\$1,179,000	\$1,100,000	321	10/29/2010
10 Tara Rd	Orinda	3	2	0	2397	45738	\$1,050,000	\$1,014,000	423	10/29/2010
1 Villanova Drive	Orinda	3	1	0	1000	13975	\$500,000	\$497,000	497	10/29/2010
1149 Arrowfield Way	San Ramon	5	4	1	3296	5509	\$899,000	\$880,000	267	10/29/2010
6008 Hedgecrest Cir	San Ramon	4	3	0	2700	5103	\$1,060,000	\$975,000	361	10/29/2010
746 Birdwood Court	San Ramon	4	2	1	2363	6277	\$650,000	\$710,000	300	10/29/2010
9566 Velvet Leaf Cir	San Ramon	5	5	0	3847	9992	\$1,298,000	\$1,260,000	328	10/29/2010
9554 Davona Dr	San Ramon	5	2	1	1921	8000	\$499,000	\$531,000	276	10/29/2010
3331 Roma Pl	San Ramon	4	3	0	2343	7000	\$550,000	\$555,000	237	10/29/2010
9738 Tareyton Ave	San Ramon	3	2	0	1361	7000	\$444,900	\$427,000	314	10/28/2010
2032 Maidenhair Way	San Ramon	4	3	0	1940	3094	\$575,000	\$590,000	304	10/27/2010
2225 Tahiti Dr	San Ramon	4	2	1	2547	16000	\$683,900	\$683,900	269	10/27/2010
665 Argyle Ct	San Ramon	4	2	1	2507	11195	\$759,000	\$775,000	309	10/27/2010
519 Byer Court	San Ramon	4	4	0	2704	6204	\$799,000	\$800,000	296	10/27/2010
1008 Overlook Dr	San Ramon	4	2	1	2877	11400	\$839,000	\$795,000	276	10/27/2010
210 Canyon Lakes Pl	San Ramon	4	2	1	2374	7100	\$824,950	\$824,000	347	10/26/2010
2996 Montevideo Dr	San Ramon	4	2	0	1520	7125	\$545,000	\$545,000	359	10/26/2010
3354 Nutmeg Park Street	San Ramon	4	2	1	2448	5179	\$825,660	\$790,000	323	10/26/2010
1509 Arbutus Drive	Walnut Creek	4	4	1	3581	32016	\$1,150,000	\$1,100,000	307	10/29/2010
3303 Whitehaven Dr	Walnut Creek	4	2	1	2374	13200	\$865,000	\$850,000	358	10/29/2010
30 Mayo Ln	Walnut Creek	2	1	1	1335	11124	\$520,000	\$470,000	352	10/28/2010

How much did that home down the street sell for? For more detailed information on home sales anywhere in Contra Costa or Alameda County, call Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585 or send an email to Bernard@BernardGibbons.com