



The Real Estate Informer

From Bernard Gibbons, "The English Agent"

www.BernardGibbons.com

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JUST LISTED FOR SALE



Video Tour at www.2631DurangoLane.com

2631 Durango Lane, San Ramon

This tastefully updated and remodeled home is set on a quiet cul-de-sac in Twin Creeks South, one of San Ramon's most desirable established neighborhoods.

In absolutely move-in condition, this 3 bedroom, 3 full bath 1880 sq.ft. tri-level home has been imaginatively remodeled to provide a generous sized family room of excellent proportions incorporating an attractive library area. The kitchen has also been beautifully updated with breakfast nook, inset lighting, gleaming white cabinetry, modern stainless steel appliances and granite countertops and backsplash.

Outside, there is a large, flat yard with a deck and views towards Mount Diablo—plenty of space for rest, relaxation and outdoor entertaining with the nearest neighbors a good distance away

For more information or to arrange a private viewing of this attractive home, contact Bernard Gibbons at (925) 997-1585 or send an email to bernard@bernardgibbons.com

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Restaurant Review - Chevalier, 960 Moraga Rd., Lafayette



Whenever Sylvia and I visited France, which was quite frequently when we lived in England, every small town and village seemed to have a restaurant that was the local's favorite. The common factors were always excellent food made with fresh ingredients, a great ambience, more seating outside than inside and an owner chef. Chevalier is such a restaurant.

French restaurants are few and far between in the East Bay and why has always been a mystery to me. The French are masters of the art of cooking and a good French restaurant should quickly build a base of customers that will return time after time.

Chevalier is named after its owner / chef, Philippe Chevalier, and has been a Lafayette mainstay since 2008, since garnering two Michelin Bib Gourmand awards. A Bib Gourmand rating means the restaurant is a Michelin inspector's favorite for good value.

Our most recent visit to Chevalier was on a Friday evening at the end of May. We wanted a table on the patio but suspected it would be too cool for that. We were therefore surprised and pleased to see a new addition since our last visit. Chevalier now boasts a covered patio—a tent-like cover with clear sides that can be removed when the weather permits. They still have the outdoor heaters in place so one can enjoy the experience of dining al fresco regardless of the weather.

I should mention that the restaurant proper is also extremely attractive with its attractive wood bar, bare bricks and intimate interior. We just happen to enjoy outdoor dining.

Chevalier's menu is varied and imaginative. As may be expected, there are French classics such as escargots, moule marinières, duck à l'orange and such like, but also some dishes that are clearly designed by the chef.

Eschewing the appetizers (as we wanted to leave room for

dessert), Sylvia chose one of the day's specials, a veal chop, served with a delicious sauce, garnished with wild mushrooms, including delicious morels. For my entrée, I ordered the sweetbreads, a perennial favorite of mine, in this case served in a wonderful Madeira and morel mushroom sauce under a puff pastry lid.

Both dishes were served with a nice selection of vegetables and were cooked to perfection. Sylvia's veal chop was enormous and my sweetbreads were the best I have ever tasted.

Our shared dessert was a portion of crepe Suzettes, a typically French dish served with an orange and Grand Marnier reduction. Absolutely delicious.

As you will gather, we were most impressed with Chevalier. I would certainly rate it five stars out of five. In addition to wonderful food and an attractive setting, we found the service to be first-class (attentive but not intrusive) and the total experience was quite memorable. It is also good to note that they support local suppliers who produce the highest quality all natural products. No factory farmed meat or poultry here.

When you next want to go out for a special meal, visit Chevalier. You will not find a more pleasing restaurant in our area. Visit their web site at www.chevalierrestaurant.com.

THINKING ABOUT MAKING A MOVE?

With plenty of motivated buyers about, low interest rates and less competition than usual, this is a great time to sell.

For a free market evaluation and consultation to evaluate any cost-effective improvements that could help you to maximize your return, call Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585 before this window closes.

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

Thinking of Selling? How Should You Select Your Listing Agent?

Your home is probably your most valuable possession and when you make a decision to sell it, the selection of the right real estate agent can be crucial to the successful outcome of the transaction.

So where do you start? Many people take the approach of noting the agents who have For Sale signs in their neighborhood and interview two or three of these agents. Another approach is to talk to friends and neighbors and get their feedback on their input. Both are valid approaches, but there are other factors that you should consider too.

Personally, I would not consider listing a home with an agent who has less than at least 5 years experience in the business. You should make sure that any agent you consider is familiar with your area, and that they are not a “one man band”. Who will look after you if they take a vacation or if they are sick?

But regardless of whether you plan to interview one, two or ten agents, you still have to have a methodology that will help you to decide who is best suited to sell your home.

Position, Preparation and Presentation

These are what any good agent should focus on

when selling a home and these are the factors you should focus on when talking to a prospective agent.

Position is the same as Price. Any experienced agent should be able to figure out the likely price that your home will sell for. This is done by comparing your home with homes that are similar and that sold in the recent past. An adjustment for the present market can then be made by considering the current competition. We all have access to the same data so if 3 agents were to carry out this exercise, the result should be similar. Interestingly, this is often not the case. It is not uncommon for one agent to suggest a much higher price for your home than other agents. This is simply because they have found that many home sellers base their selection criteria on hiring the agent who gives the highest valuation.

All these agent want is to “get the listing”. They can adjust the price later. There is often a temptation to just hire the agent with the highest price but this is a bad idea. If you start too high and then come down, you will eventually sell for less than if you priced right from the start.

Preparation Is The Key

If you want to get the best price for your home in a reasonable period of time, you really have to get the home ready for sale. A good agent will make many suggestions on what is need to realize the greatest return. This is often an area where a good, experienced agent will really prove his or her value.

Show Time

Exactly what will your agent do to get your home sold? What use will they make of technology? Is the Internet at the core of their marketing campaign (assuming they have one) or are they still using old style print ads that do little other than promote the agent? What use will they make of Video to promote your home? How do they differentiate between promoting the home to potential buyers and bringing it to the attention of other agents? All these are valid questions that you should want answered. This is not an easy market to sell homes in and a professional marketing campaign is essential for success.

Managing The Transaction

Once you have a sale agreed, the work does not stop. Your buyer will want to have inspections carries out and a good agent will want to be present so that you can be kept well informed regarding any findings. And then there

Interest Rate Update:

30 Year Fixed (Conforming) - 4.5%

30 Year Fixed (Jumbo) - 5.125%

FHA 30 Year Fixed - 4.5%

(Source: Wells-Fargo Home Mortgage)

June Dates

June 19—Fathers Day

June 21—Summer Begins

are the many Disclosures and associated documents to complete. You should want to be assured that your agent will be available at all stages in the transaction and hopefully even be present at the signing to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

One final thought is to ask any agent you are thinking about hiring, how they will keep you informed both while the home is on the market and when a sale has been agreed. A good agent will provide you with weekly written reports about the local market with details of homes similar to yours that have either come on to the market or had sales agreed. They will also keep you updated regarding opinions of other agents who have showed your home.

If you are thinking about selling and you need advice on any aspect of the process, give me a call and I'll arrange to meet with you and evaluate your situation. My contact details are on the cover. There is never any obligation and I am always happy to hear from you.

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 SqFt | List Price | Sold Price | Sale \$/SqFt | Closing Date |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------|-------|-----------|------|----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 10 Viejo Vista | Alamo | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3136 | 25020 | \$950,000 | \$885,000 | 282 | 5/27/2011 |
| 10 Gran Via | Alamo | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2221 | 22080 | \$750,000 | \$680,000 | 306 | 5/27/2011 |
| 185 Gardner Pl | Danville | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1755 | 5850 | \$599,000 | \$524,000 | 299 | 5/31/2011 |
| 420 La Gonda Way | Danville | 2 | 2 | 0 | 824 | 16100 | \$495,000 | \$439,500 | 533 | 5/31/2011 |
| 936 Blemer Rd | Danville | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4543 | 23000 | \$1,249,000 | \$1,130,000 | 249 | 5/31/2011 |
| 4178 Rockcreek Dr | Danville | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3237 | 6960 | \$749,000 | \$749,000 | 231 | 5/27/2011 |
| 306 Sun Stream Ct | Danville | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3281 | 7740 | \$799,900 | \$800,000 | 244 | 5/27/2011 |
| 614 Glen Road | Danville | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3800 | 12420 | \$1,599,000 | \$1,500,000 | 395 | 5/27/2011 |
| 1007 Mccauley Rd | Danville | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4045 | 11970 | \$1,229,000 | \$1,200,000 | 297 | 5/27/2011 |
| 220 Stetson Dr | Danville | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2059 | 5300 | \$739,950 | \$715,000 | 347 | 5/27/2011 |
| 795 Danville Blvd | Danville | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1858 | 17331 | \$750,000 | \$740,000 | 398 | 5/27/2011 |
| 990 Ocho Rios Drive | Danville | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2856 | 16800 | \$929,000 | \$929,000 | 325 | 5/27/2011 |
| 120 El Portal | Danville | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1334 | 16000 | \$313,405 | \$267,000 | 200 | 5/27/2011 |
| 70 Novara Ct | Danville | 5 | 3 | 0 | 3120 | 19160 | \$1,100,000 | \$1,060,000 | 340 | 5/27/2011 |
| 2345 Mount Diablo Scenic Blvd | Diablo | 7 | 5 | 0 | 5761 | 32200 | \$2,250,000 | \$2,000,000 | 347 | 5/31/2011 |
| 1330 El Curtola Blvd. | Lafayette | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1084 | 16983 | \$475,000 | \$400,000 | 369 | 5/31/2011 |
| 688 Michael Lane | Lafayette | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3900 | 16247 | \$1,785,000 | \$1,635,000 | 419 | 5/31/2011 |
| 3145 Padre St | Lafayette | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2920 | 15290 | \$799,000 | \$755,000 | 259 | 5/31/2011 |
| 1128 Perales St | Lafayette | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2019 | 13500 | \$650,000 | \$655,000 | 324 | 5/27/2011 |
| 3647 Boyer Cir | Lafayette | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1380 | 10153 | \$539,500 | \$525,000 | 380 | 5/27/2011 |
| 432 Deerfield Dr | Moraga | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2236 | 10500 | \$885,000 | \$850,000 | 380 | 5/31/2011 |
| 557 Dalewood Drive | Orinda | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3938 | 21120 | \$1,595,000 | \$1,595,000 | 405 | 5/31/2011 |
| 2227 Magnolia Bridge Drive | San Ramon | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2809 | 5200 | \$687,000 | \$687,000 | 245 | 5/31/2011 |
| 2280 Rosemount Ln | San Ramon | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3826 | 7538 | \$899,000 | \$886,000 | 232 | 5/31/2011 |
| 53 Dos Rios Court | San Ramon | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2113 | 15400 | \$729,000 | \$723,500 | 342 | 5/27/2011 |
| 5078 Champion Dr | San Ramon | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2801 | 5200 | \$828,000 | \$810,000 | 289 | 5/27/2011 |
| 2801 Yosemite Ave | San Ramon | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1550 | 7140 | \$449,000 | \$400,000 | 258 | 5/27/2011 |
| 2205 Canyon Lakes Drive | San Ramon | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2169 | 3960 | \$649,950 | \$635,000 | 293 | 5/27/2011 |
| 9623 Camassia Way | San Ramon | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1646 | 3342 | \$559,900 | \$548,000 | 333 | 5/27/2011 |
| 43 Centennial Way | San Ramon | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2087 | 6000 | \$639,950 | \$639,950 | 307 | 5/27/2011 |
| 33 Winslow Pl | San Ramon | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1795 | 10350 | \$550,000 | \$490,000 | 273 | 5/27/2011 |
| 30 Centennial | San Ramon | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2087 | 5440 | \$665,000 | \$650,000 | 311 | 5/27/2011 |
| 206 Knightsbridge Ct | San Ramon | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4030 | 6772 | \$925,000 | \$925,000 | 230 | 5/27/2011 |
| 2147 Angus Dr | Walnut Creek | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3261 | 9776 | \$1,349,000 | \$1,250,000 | 383 | 5/31/2011 |
| 59 Saddle Rd | Walnut Creek | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3172 | 33800 | \$675,000 | \$630,000 | 199 | 5/27/2011 |
| 1220 Elmwood Drive | Walnut Creek | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2246 | 10000 | \$649,000 | \$652,000 | 290 | 5/27/2011 |
| 199 Hilltop Crescent | Walnut Creek | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2201 | 17600 | \$799,000 | \$785,000 | 357 | 5/27/2011 |
| 40 Norlyn Dr | Walnut Creek | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1756 | 14250 | \$639,000 | \$658,387 | 375 | 5/27/2011 |
| 1781 Castle Hill Road | Walnut Creek | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1933 | 26650 | \$675,000 | \$690,000 | 357 | 5/27/2011 |

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