

# Real Estate Informer

APRIL 2006

Real Estate News of the San Ramon Valley and Lamorinda  
from Bernard Gibbons of Intero Real Estate Services



## Coming Soon - Great New Listings in Twin Creeks, San Ramon



### Single Level & Tri-Level Detached Single Family Homes

I have a number of sellers in Twin Creeks who are in the process of putting the finishing touches to their homes prior to listing them for sale. These are all considerably updated and in very good locations. Prices, though yet to be finalized, will be in the range \$800-900,000. Contact me now if you would like to have advance notification regarding these properties.

Call Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585 or send an email to [Bernard@BernardGibbons.com](mailto:Bernard@BernardGibbons.com).

## Are You Looking For A 2<sup>nd</sup> Home?

If you are thinking about buying a second home, either a vacation home or an investment property, I can probably help you. I can show you everything that could interest you in the East Bay and I can also introduce you to a financing specialist who can show you how to use the equity in your present home to help finance the purchase of an additional one.

If you are thinking about buying an investment property or vacation home further afield, I can also help you. Through a network of carefully selected real estate professionals of which I am a member, I can refer you to a top agent anywhere in the country who will provide you with the highest level of service when it comes to helping you buy a home.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. You can call me on my cell phone at (925) 997-1585 or send an email to [Bernard@BernardGibbons.com](mailto:Bernard@BernardGibbons.com).

*Bernard Gibbons*



## Restaurant Review

### Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

Another Indian restaurant review! What can I say? My only excuse is that Indian Food is my big addiction!

Swad is a new Lafayette restaurant. As soon as I saw it, I knew I had to go there. Unlike in most Indian restaurants, the owner has gone to a great deal of trouble to make the restaurant enticing as well as the food. The ambience is decidedly minimalist with yellow colored walls and ceramic tile floors, yet an air of Indian authenticity is retained with a number of wall-hangings and black & white photos on the walls, all obviously Indian. It is a fairly small space but there is also have some outdoor seating on a pleasant patio that will undoubtedly be popular when we eventually get some decent weather

“But what about the food?” I hear you say. Well you will be pleased to hear that I consider Swad to serve the best Indian food I have tasted in years. And I am including restaurants visited in England where Chicken Tikka Masala is now considered to be the national dish.

The menu appears to be very similar to most other Indian restaurants in the East Bay although there appears to be a wider range of vegetarian dishes than usual. There are plenty of Tandoori selections and the balance of the main courses is divided between Chicken, Lamb and Seafood dishes.

Some of the less common items include Tariwala Murg (chef's home-style chicken curry with yoghurt and spices, Chandani Gosht (lamb simmered in cardamom flavored cashew nut sauce) and Rasmalai on the dessert menu (farmer's cheese dumplings with saffron flavored thick milk sauce).

Sylvia and I visited Swad on a cold, wet Tuesday evening in March. The restaurant was about two-thirds full and remained so through our visit as the tables turned. Service is attentive but not obtrusive. We were seated promptly and left alone to peruse the menu while we enjoyed some Kingfisher beer. We were then served with complimentary Papadums that were crisp and light with no trace of oil. Sylvia ordered a Butter Chicken (\$11.95) and I had a Murg Elaichi (Chicken) Korma (also \$11.95). In practice we shared them as is common practice in an Indian restaurant, together with a plain Nan (\$2.00) and a portion of Saffron Rice (\$1.50).

Everything was absolutely exquisite. The chicken was tender, the sauces were outstanding, each of them subtly flavored with just the right amount of spiciness. Portion sizes were ample. The prices are a little higher than in some other Indian restaurants but still very reasonable, especially considering the quality of the food. I have no doubt that this will become a regular eating place for Sylvia and me. ■

*Reviews such as the one above are included as a service to introduce people to interesting restaurants in the San Ramon Valley. They should not be taken as any form of recommendation. We have no connection with any restaurateurs in the area and all opinions expressed are strictly those of the writer.*

## Ways to Protect and Raise your Credit Score

When a potential creditor pulls your credit report, much of your personal employment and financial history are revealed. The most important of all of this personal information is your payment history. The key to building and maintaining a good credit score is paying your bills in a timely manner. Pay them a few days before the due date if possible. If irregular payments have become a habit, your credit score will suffer significantly.

Too much debt, or having a high debt-to-credit available ratio will also have a negative effect on your credit rating. Most consumers with maxed out credit cards are able to keep up with minimum payments. However, excessive debt obligations make potential lenders wary that the consumer may not be able to satisfy all their obligations should an emergency arise or the consumer's income decrease. The more credit you are using, the greater the negative effect on your credit score.

Low credit card balances will not have a damaging effect on your credit rating. Consumers are encouraged to keep credit balances below 25% of the credit limit. If your balance exceeds this amount, take the necessary steps to reduce the principal balance. This may include paying down the principal with triple the minimum payments, transferring the balances to lower interest rate credit cards, or obtaining a debt consolidation loan.

If your credit score is low, making an effort to raise your score before trying to acquire home loan financing will qualify you for more loan programs, better rates, and decreased down payment requirements.

If you or any of your friends or family are looking into financing a new home or refinancing their existing home, please feel free to give me a call.

**David Bellinger, MBA**

925 830 4220 x105

[dbellinger@mvplending.com](mailto:dbellinger@mvplending.com)

**MVP**  
FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.



## State Of The Real Estate Market In The San Ramon Valley

**This should help you decide if it's better to buy or sell now or wait until later**

Spring is traditionally the most popular time of year to buy or sell a home. The week after Easter is traditionally the period when many homes are offered for sale and buyers are ready to write offers.

The past few years have seen tremendous increases in real estate values. Inevitably, the pace of growth started to slow and since fall of 2005 we have seen numerous articles in the press predicting that "the bubble is about to burst". The reality is that there is no bubble, a fact confirmed by many economists, but that story does not sell newspapers. Prices have mostly remained static and numbers of home sales reduced but there has been no evidence to support this hypothetical "bubble" theory.

But what of the future? What can we expect to see in the rest of 2006? I don't have a crystal ball but the following considerations appear to suggest that there is little point in delaying a sale or purchase:

- 1. The federal funds interest rate has just been increased for the 15<sup>th</sup> time in a row.** The indication is that this will continue to be an ongoing pattern for some time. While this indicates confidence in the economy, it also means an inevitable increase in mortgage rates, which are still very attractive. If you delay a home purchase, your mortgage will probably cost you a lot more in a few months time.
- 2. The Bay Area economy is strong and there are plenty of job opportunities in most areas.** Silicon Valley and other parts of the South Bay are seeing boom times once more. What happens in the South Bay is often a precursor of what happens in the East Bay (many people commute to Silicon Valley from the East Bay). Jobs drive the real estate market.
- 3. The median sale price in Contra Costa County in February was \$540,000.** This is the latest figure available and compares to \$467,000 in February 2005. This looks like a pretty strong housing market to me.

There are a lot of homes for sale in Contra Costa County at the moment. You would think that buyers would have no difficulty in getting what they want, maybe even at lower than list price. The reality is that although there are a lot of homes for sale in general, there are quite a few areas where people want to live that are very short of homes for sale. West side Danville and Twin Creeks, San Ramon spring to mind as immediate examples.

As I say, I don't have a crystal ball but if I was planning to buy a home this year I would move sooner rather than later. The likelihood of increasing mortgage payments alone would convince me of that. ■

### **What's Your Home Worth?**

**Thinking of selling?** To get a **Free Up-To-Date Valuation** of your home without any obligation, together with suggestions for what you can do to maximize its appeal, visit [www.BernardGibbons.com](http://www.BernardGibbons.com) or for an immediate response call Bernard Gibbons on **(925) 997-1585**.



## San Ramon Valley Market Update

The 40 most recently Closed Sales in Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda  
(Last Calendar Month - Sorted By City and Price)

Address	City	Beds	Baths	Part Baths	Sq Ft	Lot Sq Ft	Sold Price	DOM
2478 Alamo Country Cir	Alamo	5	4	1	4057	22781	\$2,040,000	9
1537 Serafix Rd	Alamo	5	4	1	5171	16120	\$2,250,000	15
1552 Mission Dr	Danville	3	2		1638	2520	\$620,000	53
411 Skylark Ct	Danville	3	2	1	1599	0	\$630,000	21
1833 Forest Hill N Pl	Danville	3	2	1	1664	3200	\$663,000	11
15 Cross Bridge Ct	Danville	4	2	0	2458	7500	\$1,025,000	16
35 Devonshire Ct	Danville	4	2	0	1860	11400	\$1,050,000	3
627 Crystal Springs Ct	Danville	4	3	0	3278	9900	\$1,185,000	5
795 Tunbridge Rd	Danville	4	2	1	2941	12850	\$1,275,000	13
106 Carole Meadows Ct	Danville	4	3	1	3114	13750	\$1,359,000	8
106 Windover Dr	Danville	4	3	1	3669	12632	\$1,500,000	14
3336 Springhill Rd.	Lafayette	4	3		3200	27007	\$1,399,000	14
80 Miramonte Dr	Moraga	3	3	0	1742	1568	\$635,000	17
830 Augusta Dr	Moraga	2	2	1	1743	3795	\$762,000	1
1204 Larch Ave	Moraga	4	2	0	2102	12000	\$1,100,000	9
158 Selborne Way	Moraga	4	2	1	2433	11500	\$1,299,000	23
73 Brookwood Rd, #38	Orinda	2	1		882	0	\$455,000	12
205 Glorietta Blvd	Orinda	3	2	0	1524	20038	\$750,000	7
39 El Gavilan	Orinda	4	4	0	3249	15600	\$1,575,000	0
10 Katrina Ct	Orinda	4	3	0	3093	51836	\$1,780,000	4
596 Dalewood Drive	Orinda	5	4	1	5515	40000	\$2,700,000	9
481 Carillo Ct	San Ramon	2	1	0	954	1066	\$415,000	1
224 Tangerine Ct	San Ramon	2	2	0	1255	0	\$485,000	173
133 Adams Place	San Ramon	4	2	0	1544	8000	\$718,000	12
110 Mavis Pl	San Ramon	4	2	0	1520	7200	\$729,950	25
2457 Camino De Jugar	San Ramon	4	3	0	2518	18150	\$940,900	5
2664 Celaya Circle	San Ramon	4	3	0	2800	9720	\$950,000	2
7 Connick Ct	San Ramon	4	3	0	2915	8000	\$1,075,000	14
2579 Derby Dr	San Ramon	4	3	0	2291	25530	\$1,100,000	7
2750 Salisbury Way	San Ramon	5	3		3223	7727	\$1,139,000	15
1241 Homestead Ave, #216	Walnut Creek	1	1	0	729	0	\$319,500	13
150 Sharene Ln, #109	Walnut Creek	1	1	0	695	0	\$334,000	6
310 N Villa Way	Walnut Creek	2	2	0	931	0	\$440,000	27
1798 Candelerio Court	Walnut Creek	2	2	0	1088	2340	\$529,000	18
22 Sierra Lane	Walnut Creek	3	2	0	1312	792	\$619,000	8
2637 San Benito Dr	Walnut Creek	2	2		1890	7200	\$780,000	18
933 Kane Cir	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	1959	10043	\$879,000	10
1044 Alfred Ave	Walnut Creek	3	2	0	1526	12400	\$895,000	9
2482 Lariat Lane	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	2045	0	\$905,000	3
148 Arlene Dr	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	1943	10800	\$965,000	2



Source for the above data is the Contra Costa / Alameda Multiple Listing Service.

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](mailto:Bernard@BernardGibbons.com)