



Real Estate News of the San Ramon Valley and Lamorinda
from **Bernard Gibbons** of Alain Pinel Realtors
"The English Agent"

November 2006



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INTEREST RATE UPDATE - 30 Year Fixed (Conforming) - 6.125% (Source: Wells-Fargo - Nov 10th, 2006)

Thinking Of Selling Your Home? - Plan Now For Early 2007

If you have been thinking about selling your home but are hesitant due to the number of homes on the market, there may be good news on the horizon. As I write this newsletter in early November, inventory levels have dropped significantly and are likely to continue doing so as we approach the end of the year owing to many sellers taking their homes off the market through the Holidays. One result of this is that we should enter 2007 with much reduced inventory levels.

If I was planning to sell my home next year, I would want to get it on the market in January or February. Quite apart from having less competition, interest rates should still be low and there will likely be a greater feeling of optimism as we enter a new year. Buying activity is almost always at its highest in the first 4 months of every year.

If you plan to sell soon, call me now on (925) 997-1585 so I can make any suggestions for improvements you may want to consider to maximize your selling price and for a Comparative Market Analysis.

Making The Most Of My Services

Please don't think that the only time to contact me is when you are thinking of buying or selling your home. I can be of considerable help to you in almost anything that is remotely real estate related:

- If you are thinking about buying or selling investment property, commercial premises or a vacation home (including time shares), either inside or outside California, even overseas, I can provide you with a referral to a local qualified, experienced agent. The same applies to any of your friends, relations and business colleagues.
- If you just want to get an idea of the present value of your home, whether or not you are planning to sell it soon, I can provide you with the information you need.
- If you are planning to carry out some maintenance or improvements on your home, I can refer you to a professional who is either known to me or has been recommended to me as a reliable person who provides good value for money. Everything from architects and general contractors to gardeners and odd-job men.
- I am also very happy to provide you with input regarding any improvements that are worth making to your home before listing it for sale so that when the time comes, your home will sell quickly and for the best price.

Call me any time on (925) 997-1585 or send an email to Bernard@BernardGibbons.com. I am always happy to hear from you!

Le Bistro, 1606 N. Main Street, Walnut Creek

Le Bistro is one of a very small number of French restaurants in the East Bay and this was our first visit. It is a small, individual, restaurant owned and operated by chef Jean-Paul Peluffo and his wife Kathleen. My first impression on entering was that it seemed somewhat lacking in ambience (not really very much of a French feel) although I was pleased to see an open kitchen. And the staff appeared professional and were obviously kept fully occupied.

Sylvia and I booked in for a Friday evening and reservations are essential at the weekend. It was full. For a starter, we shared a plate of French pâtés, two different pâtés served with thinly sliced crusty bread with a salad garnish and a small bowl of gherkins. Chef Jean-Paul makes his own pâtés and they are absolutely exceptional. We were very impressed.

For a main course, Sylvia ordered the duckling in orange sauce and I had a butcher's steak with a Cabernet sauce reduction. Sylvia's dish was a huge disappointment as the duckling was obviously undercooked and extremely tough. My steak was good (although not particularly outstanding) but the sauce was very intense (almost like a molé, which is great in the right place but not in a French restaurant in my opinion).

We accompanied our meal with a pleasant enough French Chardonnay and finished with an excellent warm apple tart which we shared.

On reflection, I would suggest taking your own wine here. They do charge corkage but the wine list is very small and has few wines that would be familiar to most diners. It also struck me as a little on the expensive side.

I had been looking forward to dining at Le Bistro for some time. It does get good reviews and French restaurants are few and far between in the East Bay. Unfortunately, we were rather disappointed with our experience. This is certainly not an inexpensive restaurant and our waiter was disinterested in the fact that Sylvia had a problem with her duckling until she eventually made an issue of it. He then consulted with the chef and they removed it from the bill.

For more information about Le Bistro, visit www.lebistro.fr.

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.

What Happened To Real Estate?

Have you seen all the stories on the real estate market recently? Not sure what to believe? Well, the authority on California real estate, the California Association of Realtors (CAR) says that 2006 marked a turning point in the California housing market.

After four successive years of new records for both statewide sales and the median price, the existing home market declined sharply in 2006, while the pace of price appreciation slowed with each passing month. So yes, there has been a slowdown statewide taking us into more of a normalized real estate market.

According to CAR chief economist Dr. Robert A. Kleinhenz, the general economy appears likely to expand slightly in 2007 rather than tip into recession. The Fed has held steady with the federal funds rate, attempting to strike a balance between curbing inflation and moving the economy forward. It is unlikely that the Fed will cut rates over the next few months.

The good news is that Northern California, particularly the Bay Area has been called out as an area that will outpace the general economy, with Silicon Valley and high technology being our vanguard.

If you are thinking about making a real estate move in the foreseeable future, particularly if you are planning to buy a larger home and stay in the Bay Area, you may be well advised to do so sooner, while interest rates are still low, rather than later. When you are buying and selling in the same market, you should also focus on the price difference rather than the dollar value of homes. And remember that when home prices start to rise again next year, the price difference will increase.

If you list your home for sale now, it may take longer to sell than it would have a year or so ago, but once you have agreed a sale, you are in a very strong position. There is a wide selection of homes for sale in most areas and sellers are willing to make a deal. You could find a bargain in today's real estate market!

Regardless of short-term fluctuations, California real estate over the long-term has been a very sound investment. CAR reports that since 2002, the median price of a home in California has increased by 16.5% each year, and that percentage is significantly higher in pockets around the Bay Area.

If you want to get your home sold and focus on making your next move, call Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585 for a confidential discussion.

This newsletter is for information purposes only and nothing herein is offered as advice. It is not intended to solicit any properties currently listed for sale with a broker. All content is believed to be accurate but is not verified or guaranteed. E&OE

Market Update – November 2006

Which Way Is The Market Moving?

It's been a tough year for home sellers as we have experienced a real estate market correction following years of unparalleled increases in home prices. And correction it was, rather than a bubble bursting as was predicted by much of the national press. Hopefully, the worst is past, although we won't know for sure until we get into 2007.

There are two things that should be uppermost in the minds of people who want to sell their home. First is how quickly they can expect to achieve a sale and secondly, what will be the sale price.

The length of time a home takes to sell, assuming it is marketed correctly, is very much related to the number of homes on the market. There is some good news here at last. Look at the following table:

Numbers of Homes Listed For Sale on Contra Costa MLS (Single Family and Condominiums)

START OF	YEAR	San Ramon	Danville	Blackhawk	Alamo	Walnut Creek	Lafayette	Moraga	Orinda	TOTAL
August	2006	420	250	54	91	330	94	48	57	1344
September	2006	440	270	57	85	311	96	47	56	1362
October	2006	442	268	59	87	336	88	42	59	1381
November	2006	385	256	60	80	314	90	34	54	1273

Since the beginning of November, the total has reduced further to 1,234 at November 10th so this looks like a promising trend.

Now on to price. Let us consider the average sales price of a 4 bedroom single family home from 2,000 to 3,000 square feet, with a 2 car garage.

Average home sales prices - Single Family Homes

San Ramon, Danville, Blackhawk, Alamo, Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
\$,000 Sale Price 2006	1,043	1,154	1,073	1,134	1,095	1,144	1,140	1,027	1,023	1,008	1,054

So as we can see, the average home price fell from a peak of \$1,154,000 in February to \$1,008,000 in October - a drop of over 12%. November's figures, shown here in the shaded cells, represent slightly less than one half-month of sales figures but obviously the signs are very encouraging. This is exactly the kind of pattern we expect to see at some point but it is a little early to confidently say that the downward trend has been halted.

So how does it look for home sellers?

With reducing levels of inventory and (hopefully) a market decline that is starting to reverse, it is probably a better time to list your home for sale than any other time over the past few months. If you are moving to a higher priced home then this is a good time to sell and buy. If you are down-sizing, you may want to wait a little longer.

What about buyers?

Well there is still plenty of choice out there but if you believe that the November figure above is a true indicator, then average home sales prices have now bottomed out. If you are in a position to buy and you can find a home that meets your needs, buy now.

The above information is all based on figures provided by the Contra Costa / Alameda MAX Multiple Listing Service. Opinions and conclusions drawn are those of Bernard Gibbons.

If you are considering selling a home and/or you would like to get an opinion of your home's value, contact me anytime without obligation. I will happily prepare a Comparative Market Analysis for you. I can be reached on (925) 997-1585 or by email at bernard@bernardgibbons.com.

San Ramon Valley Market Update

The 40 most recently Closed Sales in Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, San Ramon,
Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda

(Sorted By City and Sold Price)

Address	City	Beds	Baths	Part Baths	SqFt	Lot Sq Ft	List Price	Sold Price
3154 Miranda Ave	Alamo	4	2	1	2707	20760	\$1,375,000	\$1,325,000
135 Wilson Rd	Alamo	4	3	1	3112	20259	\$1,499,000	\$1,450,000
41 Via Lucia S Ln	Alamo	3	2	1	2978	17600	\$1,595,000	\$1,550,000
3315 Quail Walk Lane	Blackhawk	4	3	0	2964	6700	\$1,349,000	\$1,327,000
137 Midland Way	Danville	2	2	0	1006	1632	\$439,000	\$430,000
1946 St George Rd	Danville	2	2	0	1459	3600	\$589,000	\$560,000
22 Rainbow Cir	Danville	2	2	0	1332	5175	\$599,000	\$585,000
81 Fawn Pl	Danville	3	2	1	1590	3008	\$699,000	\$715,000
55 Woodvalley Drive	Danville	3	2	1	2245	2745	\$720,000	\$716,000
226 Abigail Cir	Danville	4	2	1	2396	4000	\$799,950	\$799,950
147 Gerbera St	Danville	4	2	1	2311	0	\$899,000	\$860,000
200 Fairview St	Danville	4	2	1	2484	12600	\$1,099,900	\$1,099,000
7990 Camino Tassajara	Danville	4	3	1	4687	217800	\$2,498,000	\$2,100,000
3458 Monroe Ave	Lafayette	3	2	1	2027	6000	\$679,000	\$680,000
4117 Hidden Valley Rd	Lafayette	3	2	0	1378	9322	\$775,000	\$755,000
3353 Mildred Ln	Lafayette	3	2	0	1309	10800	\$850,000	\$815,000
2182 Hidden Pond Road	Lafayette	5	3	0	3207	26100	\$1,199,000	\$1,199,000
703 Los Palos Dr	Lafayette	4	2	1	2400	18321	\$1,350,000	\$1,625,000
1396 Camino Peral	Moraga	3	2	1	1440	3498	\$557,000	\$575,000
210 Paseo Bernal	Moraga	2	2	0	1354	0	\$725,000	\$707,000
11 Los Cerros	Orinda	4	2	1	3000	28314	\$1,499,000	\$1,435,000
705 Watson Canyon Court	San Ramon	0	1	0	530	0	\$239,900	\$215,000
785 Watson Canyon Court	San Ramon	1	1	0	777	0	\$380,900	\$365,000
405 Daybreak Ct	San Ramon	2	2	1	1188	0	\$518,888	\$510,000
7367 Briza Loop	San Ramon	3	2	1	1462	99	\$679,000	\$665,000
318 Langton Ct	San Ramon	5	3	1	2784	4183	\$929,950	\$910,000
122 Alisma Ct	San Ramon	4	3	0	2373	7800	\$1,009,000	\$996,000
2372 Keats Lane	San Ramon	4	3	0	3361	7349	\$1,199,900	\$1,064,956
824 Jade Crest Drive	San Ramon	4	2	1	2740	9520	\$1,150,000	\$1,100,000
624 Dromana Court	San Ramon	5	4	0	4013	6500	\$1,199,500	\$1,175,000
2108 Feathermint Dr	San Ramon	5	4	0	3850	9591	\$1,669,950	\$1,565,000
1722 S Villa Way	Walnut Creek	2	1	1	932	0	\$379,000	\$376,000
250 Northcreek Cir	Walnut Creek	2	2	0	1217	2025	\$545,000	\$545,000
1315 Alma Avenue	Walnut Creek	2	2	0	780	0	\$605,000	\$605,000
1146 Conejo Wy	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	1342	21375	\$669,000	\$655,000
3248 Hudson Ave.	Walnut Creek	3	1	0	1161	8000	\$659,000	\$659,000
200 San Antonio Way	Walnut Creek	3	2	0	1535	8000	\$699,000	\$699,000
1751 Magnolia Way	Walnut Creek	3	2	0	1593	8142	\$779,000	\$745,000
314 Fenway Dr	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	2032	10700	\$799,000	\$799,000
1420 Huston Rd	Walnut Creek	4	2	1	1948	15600	\$849,000	\$825,000
113 Arbolado Dr.	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	1715	16605	\$899,000	\$875,000
10 Jolie Lane	Walnut Creek	4	3	0	2152	10454	\$929,500	\$900,000
1111 Andrew Ln	Walnut Creek	5	3	0	2677	10411	\$995,000	\$955,000
2524 Fox Cir	Walnut Creek	5	3	1	2757	10000	\$929,000	\$959,000

All data supplied by the Contra Costa / Alameda Multiple Listing Service

Wondering what the home down the street sold 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.