



The Real Estate Informer

From Bernard Gibbons, "The English Agent"
J Rockcliff Realtors, 15 Railroad Avenue, Danville, CA 94526

February 2008



Whole Ownership Opportunity at Lake Tahoe's Heavenly Village



This is Not A Timeshare!

Now Under Construction - Easy Mountain Living Includes:

Central Location: At the heart of The New Tahoe. The Chateau is walking distance to world-class gaming, Lakeside Beach & Marina, Heavenly Village and Gondola.

Casual Elegance: A selection of studio-, one-, two- and three-bedroom suites, all elegantly furnished with kitchens.

Four Star Service & Amenities: Operated by RockResorts, 24 hour in room dining, concierge and owner's free valet parking.

Luxury & Excitement: Owners will enjoy a sumptuous RockResorts Spa™, a state-of-the-art fitness center, and the largest Conference and Event center in Lake Tahoe.

Pre-construction prices start below \$500,000 and go up to over \$3 million.

For a complete information pack, visit www.BernardGibbons.com and click on the *Chateau at Heavenly* link, send an email to heavenly@bernardgibbons.com with your name, address and phone number or call Bernard Gibbons at (925) 997-1585.

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.

Restaurant Review:

Café Esin, 2416 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Suite 140, San Ramon, CA 94583



Tucked away in a strip mall across from the San Ramon Safeway shopping center, Café Esin is not particularly impressive from the outside, seeming very much like a run of the mill eating place, typical of the San Ramon Valley. As soon as you walk through the door though, you are in for a big surprise.

First of all, the small front entrance conceals a spacious interior with multiple eating areas, all extremely tastefully decorated in pleasing earth tones and with attractive art work adorning the walls.

Whenever you go, it will most likely have many of the tables occupied, for this is a restaurant that is well known to San Ramon residents and one that has one countless awards. Reservations here really are a must!

Chef-owner run restaurants often impress more than others and this is no exception. The brainchild of husband and wife team Curtis and Esin deCarion, Café Esin consistently delivers the highest quality food at reasonable prices in one of the most inviting restaurant locations in the San Ramon Valley.

On a recent visit in January, Sylvia and I braved torrential rain to dine here and we anticipated a low attendance due to the weather. This was not the case. During the

course of our meal, every table was occupied.

The menu here seems typically Californian style cuisine with a subtle middle-Eastern influence. Appetizers include a selection of salads, a couple of soups, including an obviously popular caramelized onion soup and a meze platter including hummus, dolmas and tabbouleh. We decided to share a portion of crispy fried calamari and fennel that was served with a sherry-orange aioli. This was a generous portion and the calamari was fresh and fried in a light, crisp batter. Very tasty.

Moving on to the main course, our choices ranged from risotto and a couple of fish specials to a variety of different steak dishes, loin of lamb, roasted duck breast and one of the house specialties, a pot roast. It must be noted that all of the ingredients here are of the highest quality. Pork and lamb are Niman Ranch and the steaks are either Certified Angus or Niman Ranch.

Sylvia chose lamb for her entrée. This is certainly her favorite meat when it is of a high quality and properly cooked but one that she is often critical of in restaurants. In this case, there were two kinds of lamb, loin of lamb and lamb chops and they were served with roasted fingerling

potatoes and broccolini. Sylvia judged this to be an excellent, perfectly balanced meal with superb flavors.

For my main course, I went for one of the house specials, a chicken breast stuffed with spinach and a trio of cheeses (parmesan, feta cheese and goat cheese) which is then wrapped in filo pastry and baked in the oven. This was served with a roasted tomato coulis over a lemon couscous.

My judgment was very similar to Sylvia's. My chicken dish brought back memories of Morocco and yet this is a highly imaginative and very satisfying dish.

By now, we were already well-satisfied with our meal, sufficiently so to write an excellent review and typically, neither of us eat desserts. Knowing however that Café Esin has built an outstanding reputation for its desserts, all created by Esin deCarion herself, there was no way we were going to miss out on the dessert course.

Diablo Magazine voted Café Esin's desserts Best of The East Bay for every year since 2003. They are not wrong. The choice is overwhelming and they all sound wonderful from the bread pudding of the day (served with a brandy sauce), through classic

crème brulee to a black bottom white chocolate banana cream tart, baklava and more.

After much deliberation, we decided to share the cheesecake of the day, a chocolate cheesecake with peanut butter swirl. Not only was this phenomenal but the portion was generous enough for two people to enjoy fully.

Café Esin also has a full bar a good wine list from which we selected a bottle of Hess Chardonnay to accompany our meal.

Café Esin is one of the few restaurants in the San Ramon Valley that I recommend without reservation. If you have not been there, give it a try, but be sure to make a reservation. You can see more about them at their web site at www.cafeesin.com

Reviews such as the ones on this page 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. Any comments or feedback is welcomed 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.

The highest compliment you can pay me is to recommend my services to your friends and associates

Who do you know that may be thinking about buying or selling a home this year? Much of my real estate business comes to me as a result of referrals from people just like you. If you know of someone who would benefit from the services I provide, please call me with their name and number and I promise to treat them like family. Call me anytime on (925) 997-1585 or send an email to bernard@bernardgibbons.com.

Important Update: New Conforming Loan Limits Pending for California

Part of my commitment to my clients and prospective clients is to keep you informed of new information and changing conditions in the mortgage market.

Proposed legislation that could save you money.

Over the last few days, CNBC as well as many other financial news sources have published articles suggesting that the White House and Congress are no longer questioning whether or not to increase the conforming loan limits, but rather for how long. **As of right now, it is almost certain that conforming loan limits in high-cost areas will increase between 150-175% (from the current \$417,000 to as much as \$729,750).** As I write this, the bill has passed through the House of Representatives and is on it's way to the Senate, for the final stamp of approval.

How would this benefit you?

As an example, based on today's mortgage rates, you could save up to 1.00%, in comparison to today's Jumbo loan rates! The current debate is whether this increase will be temporary for one year, two years, or be permanent. The final decision may not come until March; however, I wanted to share this important news with you now because it could provide you an incredible opportunity, especially with the recent drop in rates.

Recent rate cuts from the Fed

Interest Rates are at the lowest they have been in years. Last week, the Federal Reserve made an historic 0.75% point cut, followed by an additional .50% this past week. That's 1.25% in 8 days!

The people who will benefit the most when this legislation passes are those who owe more than \$417,000 on their current mortgage and those looking to purchase a new home or investment property in California. Once the new conforming limits go into effect, I anticipate the housing market heat up, the stock market to improve, and there will be a huge refinance boom. Be prepared and plan ahead. Banks are going to be overwhelmed. The turn time's from application to close could become anywhere from 30 to 45 days.

Plan ahead

If you are planning to take advantage of the pending higher conforming loan limits and the historically low interest rates, I highly suggest you

Interest Rate Update:

30 Year Fixed (Conforming) - 5.5%

30 Year Fixed (Jumbo) - 6.625%

(Source: Wells-Fargo - February 4th 2007)

February Dates:

Feb 14 - St Valentine's Day

Feb 18 - Presidents Day

start getting your paperwork ready now. I will be happy to arrange for a complimentary mortgage evaluation from one of my trusted loan specialists to see how much money you will save as a result of this legislation.

Please start getting together the following items if you plan on refinancing or purchasing soon:

- Pay Stubs (most recent, 1 full month)
- W2's (most recent, 2 years)
- Bank Statements (most recent, 2 months, all account)
- Retirement and Portfolio Statements (most recent, 2 months, all accounts)
- If you are self-employed: Federal Tax Returns (most recent, 2 years)

If you have any questions regarding these imminent changes or if you would like to investigate your financing or re-financing options, please contact Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585.

SHOULD YOU LIST YOUR HOME FOR SALE NOW OR WAIT UNTIL LATER?

This is a dilemma that many people wanting to move find themselves in. On the one hand, there is a feeling that many home buyers get serious once the weather improves, usually around Easter, and on the other hand, having decided to move, you probably want to do so as soon as you can.

The reality is that it makes no sense to wait until Easter. There are lots of serious buyers about right now - as witnessed by the fact that one of our recent Open Houses attracted over 100 people. Undoubtedly a lot of people will be putting their homes on the market after Easter. Do you really want to have that much competition? With a sound marketing plan and a pro-active approach, your home could be sold by the time others are just putting their homes on the market.

Call Bernard Gibbons any time on (925) 997-1585 and I'll show you what I can do to get your home sold fast. No gimmicks and no long listing agreements you can't get out of. Just Results!

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 Sold Price)

Address	City	Beds	Baths	1/2 Baths	SqFt	Lot SqFt	List Price	Sold Price	Sale \$/SqFt
2458 Amy Way	Alamo	5	3	1	3640	43500	\$1,249,000	\$1,100,000	302
445 Oakshire Place	Alamo	4	3	1	4269	35162	\$1,749,500	\$1,454,428	341
196 Bolla Ave	Alamo	5	3	0	3179	20150	\$1,845,000	\$1,600,000	503
410 Old Orchard Ct	Danville	2	2	1	1166	0	\$459,000	\$459,000	394
1618 Brush Creek Pl	Danville	3	2	0	1620	3500	\$789,000	\$750,000	463
226 Abigail Cir	Danville	4	2	1	2396	4000	\$799,950	\$799,950	334
256 Jasmine Way	Danville	5	3	0	2402	5097	\$899,950	\$850,000	354
110 El Dorado Avenue	Danville	3	2	1	1904	4054	\$1,055,000	\$1,020,000	536
124 Benjamin Ln	Danville	4	3	1	2838	12400	\$1,249,000	\$1,160,000	409
686 Los Palos Dr	Lafayette	3	2	1	2515	14500	\$1,299,000	\$1,280,000	509
855 Hidden Pond Ct	Lafayette	4	3	0	3188	16000	\$1,365,000	\$1,340,000	420
68 Silverwood Dr	Lafayette	4	3	0	4213	20460	\$1,485,000	\$1,405,000	333
273 La Espiral	Orinda	3	2	0	1905	20000	\$869,000	\$775,000	407
9 Broadview Ter	Orinda	4	2	0	2318	27000	\$1,150,000	\$1,120,000	483
255 Reflections Drive	San Ramon	1	1	0	???	0	\$354,900	\$314,900	???
456 S Clovercrest Ln	San Ramon	3	2	1	1532	2350	\$580,000	\$580,000	379
704 Lakemont Pl	San Ramon	3	2	0	1932	0	\$659,000	\$585,000	303
5329 Sherwood	San Ramon	3	2	1	???	1998	\$639,900	\$640,000	???
1513 Craiglee Way	San Ramon	3	2	1	1859	2892	\$698,873	\$678,000	365
104 Castleton Ct	San Ramon	3	2	0	1534	5795	\$698,000	\$685,000	447
4053 W Lakeshore Dr	San Ramon	3	3	0	2114	5550	\$708,000	\$708,000	335
432 Fuchsia Ln	San Ramon	3	2	0	1638	5250	\$739,000	\$712,000	435
120 Woodcrest Drive	San Ramon	3	2	1	2045	4865	\$749,950	\$730,000	357
4321 Reedland Cir	San Ramon	4	3	0	2332	5838	\$759,000	\$732,000	314
3110 Pine Valley Road	San Ramon	4	2	0	1850	7500	\$739,000	\$739,000	399
2323 Magnolia Bridge Dr	San Ramon	4	3	0	2543	5767	\$793,900	\$775,000	305
2017 Wineberry Dr	San Ramon	3	2	1	1971	6048	\$835,500	\$815,000	413
548 Roubaud Ct	San Ramon	5	3	0	3282	6448	\$904,900	\$870,000	265
175 Woodview Terrace	San Ramon	4	2	1	2602	10000	\$995,000	\$950,000	365
7568 Balmoral Way	San Ramon	4	4	1	4202	8729	\$1,401,955	\$1,102,789	262
1278 Bellingham Sq	San Ramon	5	5	0	4237	6859	\$1,249,000	\$1,215,000	287
8 Westside Pl	San Ramon	4	4	0	4100	12000	\$1,499,000	\$1,400,000	341
1315 Alma Ave	Walnut Creek	1	1	0	681	0	\$235,000	\$235,000	345
1451 Marchbanks Dr	Walnut Creek	1	1	0	665	0	\$289,000	\$270,000	406
2912 Putnam Blvd	Walnut Creek	3	3	0	1248	10080	\$569,900	\$535,000	429
16 Oak Treat Court	Walnut Creek	3	3	0	1425	1270	\$615,000	\$590,000	414
1923 Stratton Cir	Walnut Creek	3	3	0	1884	0	\$619,000	\$600,000	318
1351 Springbrook Rd	Walnut Creek	3	2	0	1238	11108	\$675,000	\$648,000	523
10 Vista Hermosa	Walnut Creek	4	2	0	1763	7150	\$699,000	\$699,000	396
1473 Quail View Cir	Walnut Creek	3	3	1	2145	3360	\$754,500	\$730,000	340
2020 Strand Road	Walnut Creek	4	3	1	3650	16675	\$1,575,000	\$1,550,000	425
352 La Casa Via	Walnut Creek	5	5	2	5385	35719	\$2,769,000	\$2,500,000	464

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