

LAMORINDA

Seller's Prep Guide

How to Maximize the Sale of Your Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda Home

Spring is the strongest selling season in Lamorinda, driven by school-aligned moves. A second window opens late summer / early fall.

Pick a target list date 6–8 weeks out for prep runway

Aim for March–May or late August–October if possible

- Coordinate with your buy-side timeline if also buying
- Avoid listing the week of major holidays
- Check upcoming open-house competition in your immediate area

Lamorinda-Specific Timing Notes

- School calendar drives demand: most family buyers want to close by July to enroll.
- Lafayette downtown condos peak with the spring BART commuter shopping window.
- Hillside homes show better when fire-zone visibility is best — spring or late fall.
- Country-club neighborhoods often coordinate among neighbors; ask before listing.

%¶ STEP 2: PRE-LIST PREP

In Lamorinda, presentation pays back multiples. Buyers compare your home directly against the freshest, best-staged listings in town.

Documents to Gather

- Original purchase documents and any permits on file
- Recent utility bills (PG&E, EBMUD, sewer or septic service)
- Septic service history (if applicable) — critical for resale
- Solar lease or PPA contracts (if applicable)
- HOA or country-club documents (if applicable)
- Roof, HVAC, and water-heater install dates and warranties
- Wildfire mitigation receipts (defensible space, vent screens, roof)

Inspections to Order Before Listing

Pre-listing inspections are now standard in Lamorinda. Buyers expect a clean package. Plan for:

- General home inspection
- Pest/termite (WDI/WDO) inspection
- Roof inspection
- Sewer lateral camera (private sewer lateral compliance: critical)
- Septic inspection (if applicable)
- Chimney inspection (if wood-burning fireplace)
- Pool/spa inspection (if applicable)
- Natural Hazard Disclosure (NHD) report

Physical Prep

- Declutter and depersonalize — buyers want to project themselves in
- Paint touch-ups in neutral tones
- Deep clean carpets, windows, and grout
- Power-wash exterior, walkways, and decks
- Refresh landscaping — first impression matters
- Defensible space cleanup (CAL FIRE 100-ft zone)
- Stage — even occupied homes benefit from a stager's eye

%¶ STEP 3: PRICING STRATEGY

In Lamorinda, pricing is a tactical choice, not a guess. The right list price drives traffic, momentum, and multiple offers. The wrong one stalls the listing and prints a permanent mark on Days on Market.

Two viable strategies

- Price-to-market: list at honest fair value with a 7–10 day offer review window. Works when the market is hot enough to draw a strong buyer pool.
- Price-to-create-competition: list slightly below comps to drive a deeper buyer pool and let bidding find true value. Common in spring, riskier in soft markets.

Pricing red flags to avoid

- Pricing to your mortgage balance, not the market.
- Pricing high to "test" and lower later — the data trail kills future offers.
- Ignoring the most recent 60 days of closed comps in the exact school boundary.

%¶ STEP 4: MARKETING

Lamorinda buyers research deeply before stepping inside. The marketing package needs to answer their questions before they ask.

- Professional photography (daylight + twilight where it helps)
- Drone / aerial imagery (especially for hillsides and lots)
- Floor plan with dimensions (now a buyer expectation)
- 3D tour (Matterport or equivalent)
- Property website with disclosure package downloadable
- Multi-channel: MLS, Coldwell Banker network, local print, social
- Coordinated open house schedule (weekend + broker tour)
- Neighbor outreach — great buyers often live one street away

%¶ STEP 5: OFFER REVIEW & ESCROW

- Set a clear offer review date in the listing
- Pre-screen buyer financing strength with their lender
- Evaluate price AND terms (contingencies, close timing, rent-back)
- Counter strategically — sometimes the best deal is not the highest
- Track inspection negotiations carefully — re-trades are common

SELLER QUICK FACTS

Typical timeline

6–8 weeks prep
7–14 days on market
30-day escrow

Sewer lateral

Compliance certificate
often required at sale.
Verify your district.

Closing costs

~5–6% of price
Includes commissions,
transfer tax, fees

Fire mitigation

Defensible space matters
for buyer insurance
and appraisal.

%¶ YOUR NOTES

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22+ years selling Lamorinda homes

250+ homes sold across Lafayette, Moraga & Orinda

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