Driving up Page Mill Road, past HP, Theranos and Stanford University, the road toward Portola Vineyards begins to curve, slowly snaking through the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. An unassuming gravel road leads into the property where, amid the redwoods and grape vines it’s easy to forget you’re in Silicon Valley. Portola Vineyards, situated within Palo Alto’s city limits, is the only remaining winery in Palo Alto.

Indeed, Len Lehmann, owner and winemaker of Portola Vineyards, takes pleasure in recounting how, once upon a time, Palo Alto and the surrounding area was known for its vineyards and its wine. He says it like it’s a bit of unknown history — so few people associate Palo Alto with winemaking.

“There’s a heavy tradition of winemaking in this area which has been forgotten, but this was the epicenter of winemaking in the Americas,” Lehmann said. “The French and Italians came to the Bay Area with the Gold Rush and noted that the climate was perfect for winemaking, and so they imported European vines.”

Lehmann noted that a tour bus full of visitors wanting to see Silicon Valley occasionally makes its first stop just outside the vineyard. The tour guide makes the point that this is the “antithesis of Silicon Valley,” Lehmann said. Or, maybe just a relic of what it used to be.

Portola Vineyards' Danusia Szumowski holds pinot noir grapes grown in Palo Alto’s only winery.
On a warm afternoon, Lehmann sat in a grove of trees on a shaded, wooden picnic table overlooking rows of his grapevines and recalled that wine-making was never something he had deliberately planned to do. In fact, like many in the Bay Area, Lehmann has a background in tech. Before he began to dabble in wine-making, he either founded or cofounded three companies.

In the interview, he spoke of the differences between the “ag economy and the tech economy,” describing agriculture as humbling, especially in light of the challenges nature throws at you. Lehmann noted that the timeline in tech is very compressed, calling it a “game of survival.” Planting a vineyard has a high capital cost, one that slowly yields fruit over time — a business model that generally goes against the tech world’s tendencies.

“The original plan was to grow fruit and use the land productively, but then my wife bought me a small press and de-stemmer,” he recalled with amusement, referring to a device used to separate grapes from their stems.

He began planting in 2003. Today, Lehmann’s certified organic vineyard and micro-winery is a small-scale operation, producing around 1,000 cases a year. The winery’s distribution is hyper-local, selling at various points over the course of the season.”

This kind of attention is not something every vineyard can afford to do. In fact, like many in the Bay Area, Lehmann has a background in tech. Before he began to dabble in wine-making, he either founded or cofounded three companies.

On a recent afternoon, Lehmann said he was coming up on one of the most difficult decisions a winemaker makes: when to harvest the grapes. “Unlike oranges or apples that can be on the tree for a long time, wine grapes are at their prime for only about three or four days,” he said.

“It picked too early, the flavor isn’t fully expressed and tannins can be harsh, but if picked too late, the taste can become jammy,” he said.

He and Anthony Triolo, Portola Vineyards’ assistant winemaker, were keeping a close eye on the weather, which plays a central role in the process.

They were also anticipating calling their 200 members, many of whom pitch in on the major harvest day every year.
Lehmann described the harvest as a “celebration” during which there’s a potluck lunch, people bring their children and members hand-harvest the grapes allotted for that day. After this, grapes are transferred to a crush pad where members can take off their shoes and help with the crushing.

“(Foot-crushing) is considered a high-end technique... The proponents say that the foot is the perfect instrument for crushing grapes. It’s soft enough that it doesn’t damage the seeds, and damaged seeds release an objectionable tannin,” Lehmann said.

The bins of crushed grapes are then moved into the sun for about a week to begin native fermentation, during which the native yeasts on the skins of the grapes begin the fermentation process. Lehmann then presses the grapes by employing a hand-actuated basket press, an ancient technology, after which he allows malolactic or bacterial fermentation to take place over the winter months.

At the conclusion of this carefully monitored process, the barrels of wine will be cooled, stabilized and held for another one or two years before bottling. Once it’s bottled, it’s held for another one or two years before release.

For white wine, the process is slightly different. In order to achieve a fruitier wine, the fermentation is kept cool by circulating propylene glycol. It’s then kept in oak barrels for about four months before it finishes aging in stainless steel. Throughout the year, Lehmann and Triolo’s time is characterized by monitoring and maintaining the vineyard and the wines, from pruning to shoot-thinning to canopy management to placing bird nets over the vines, and finally to bottling in February.

“Our members — to the extent they’re interested — have the opportunity to help tend the vines, participate in the harvest and crush and make the wine... many of our members choose to get pretty involved,” Lehmann said.

Triolo, a member-turned-employee, recently moved to Portola Valley from France. He had an interest in wine and asked Lehmann if he could take a look at the winery. The amount of involvement Lehmann encourages in his vineyard harkens to an age-old tradition in Europe of community involvement in winemaking.

“I actually have memories — not only with grape harvest, but also with olives. Kids from school would take class trips to go harvest, you know, work the fields. And, I was kinda looking for a setting like this — a nice, relaxing way to learn about winemaking,” Triolo said.

This is part of the culture of the winery, which Lehmann describes as a “community-supported winery,” modeled after Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs. CSAs provide subscribers regular shipments of produce and oftentimes, opportunities for members to work at the farm and follow what’s happening in the fields. It’s an educational experience as well as a way to closely connect the farm to its consumers.

Since planting these first vines in 2003, Lehmann’s life has taken on a different tenor. “Life has a peace now. It’s measured. There’s something to do each season,” he said, adding that there’s something spiritual and grounding about making wine.

After all, he noted, even in the heart of Silicon Valley, the winemaking technology hasn’t changed.

Email Anna Medina at amedina@paweekly.com.
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**MOVIE TIMES**

**Bad Moms (R)**

Century 20: 5:35 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 12:20 p.m. Sun. 11:10 a.m.

**Blair Witch (R)**

Century 16: 10:15 a.m., 12:40, 2:40, 3:15, 5:40, 8:15 & 10:45 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11:30 a.m. Sun. 11 p.m.

**Century 20:** 12:30, 2:55, 5:30, 8:10, 9:50 & 10:30 p.m.

**Bridge Jones’s Baby (R) ★★★ 1/2**

Century 16: 9 & 10:20 a.m., 1:20, 4:15, 5:05, 7:15, 8 & 10:10 p.m.

**Century 20:** 10:50 & 11:55 a.m., 1:40, 3, 4:35, 6:10, 7:55, 9:10 & 10:35 p.m.

**The Devil is a Woman (1935) (Not Rated)**

Stanford Theatre: Fri. 5:35 & 8:55 p.m.

**Don’t Breathe (R) ★★★**

Century 16: 10:05 a.m., 12:25, 2:55, 5:25, 7:45 & 10:25 p.m.

Century 20: 8:05 & 10:35 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 2:50 p.m.

**The Dressmaker (R) ★★★**

Guild Theatre: 1:45, 4:30, 7:15 & 10 p.m.

**Equity (R) Palo Alto Square: 1:55, 4:30 & 7:15 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 9:40 p.m.

**Hell or High Water (R) ★★★ Aquarius Theatre: 2:20, 4:45 & 7:10 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 9:35 p.m.**

Century 16: 11:35 a.m., 2:10, 4:50, 7:25 & 10:25 p.m.

Century 20: 11:20 a.m., 4, 7:10 & 9:35 p.m.

**HillSong: Let Hope Rise (PG)**

Century 16: 9:05 & 10:45 a.m., 12:20, 7:05 & 11:45 a.m. 2:40, 4:30, 7:35 & 10:10 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11:30 p.m.

Century 20: 11:05 a.m., noon, 2:10, 3:10, 5:20, 6:20, 8:25 & 9:35 p.m. In X-D at 1, 4:15, 7:30 & 10:40 p.m. In DBOX at 11 a.m., noon, 2:10, 3:10, 5:20, 6:20, 8:25 & 9:35 p.m.

**The Merry Widow (1925) (Not Rated) Stanley Theatre: Sun. 7:30 p.m.**

**The Merry Widow (1934) (Not Rated)**

Stanford Theatre: Sun. 5:40 & 10 p.m.

**National Theatre Live: A View from the Bridge (Not Rated) Aquarius Theatre: Sun. 11 a.m.**

**No Man’s Frida (PG-13)**

Century 20: 11:25 a.m., 2:20, 5:05, 8 & 10:45 p.m.

**Pandora’s Box (1929) (Not Rated) Stanford Theatre: Fri. 7:30 p.m.**

**Pete’s Dragon (PG)**

Century 16: 9 & 11:40 a.m., 2:25 p.m.

Century 20: 3:40 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 12:40 p.m. Sun. 12:50 p.m.

**Queen Kelly (1929) (Not Rated) Stanford Theatre: Sat. 7:30 p.m.**

**The Secret Life of Pets (PG)**

Century 20: 11:15 a.m., 1:55, 4:30 & 7:15 p.m.

**Snowden (R) ★★★ 1/2**

Century 20: 12:25, 3:55, 7:10 & 10:20 p.m.

Palo Alto Square: 1: & 4 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 10 p.m.

**Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (PG)**

Century 20: Sun. 2 p.m.

**Storks (PG) ★★★**


Century 20: 10:55 a.m., 12:35, 2:45, 4:55, 7, 8:40 & 9:30 p.m. In-3-D at 11:45 a.m., 2:15, 3:05, 4:55, 7:55 & 9:25 p.m.

**Suicide Squad (PG-13) ★★★**

Century 20: 11:10 a.m., 2, 4:50, 7:50 & 10:40 p.m.

**Sully (PG-13) ★★★**

Century 16: 9, 10:15 & 11:30 a.m., 12:45, 2, 3:15, 4:30, 5:55, 7:05, 8, 8:50, 9:50 & 10:40 p.m.


**Sunset Boulevard (1950) (Not Rated)**

Stanford Theatre: Sat. 5:25 & 9:25 p.m.

**The Wild Life (PG)**

Century 16: 9 & 11:55 a.m. Century 20: 1:50 p.m.

**MOVIE OPENINGS**

**HOMETOWN REAPS WHAT THE DRESSMAKER SEWS ★★★ (The Guild)**

“The Dressmaker” begins with a homecoming. Kate Winslet’s titular couturier returns by dead of night, in 1951, to her small country town of Dungatar, Australia. Dressed up like 1940s movie star Veronica Lake, she sets down her weapon of choice, a Singer sewing machine. “I’m back, you bastards,” she intones, for her own satisfaction. And with that, we’re primed for a revenge tale.

But this isn’t “Kill Bill, Part 3,” and we can be thankful for that. In adapting Rosalie Ham’s debut novel, screenwriters P.J. Hogan (“Muriel’s Wedding”) and Jocelyn Moorhouse (“Proof”) aren’t after the usual bloody release but rather what Moorhouse has described as a more “feminine” form of “The Dressmaker” is about as tender as the revenge genre gets, though the fundamental thing applies: vengeance is a compulsion, not a recipe for happiness.

Winslet plays Myrtle “Tilly” Dunnage, who reinstalls herself in the remote town’s remotest home of her half-crazed, shit-in-mother Molly (Judy Davis). Tilly tosses clutter, cleans the house and opens for business as a dressmaker, but before not a bit of creative advertising distractingly wearing her wares at a rugby match. There, she drums up business and catches the eye of local hunk Teddy McSwiney (Liam Hemsworth). What follows is part slow-burn mother-daughter drama, part slow-burn suspense, and part slow-burn romance, with a few twists for good measure as the town begins to come apart at the seams.

That the incongruous parts function as well as they do is down mostly to the skill of Moorhouse and her actors. Winslet and Davis expertly portray Tilly and Molly’s relationship as a mousy shop clerk, and Barry Otto as a hunchbacked fundamentalist pharmacist) power the film’s uniquely Australian comic tone, and Hemsworth ups his game in the company of Winslet and Davis.

“The Dressmaker” also prods us to consider the value of “look good, feel good” ethic. Results are results, and there’s no harm in a bit of romantic idealism (represented by repeated spins of the “South Pacific” soundtrack album). But there’s also a willful delusion in how the townspeople think Tilly’s fashionably adjustments are making them “less like themselves and more like they want to be” (as if prove the point, Snook’s Gertrude happily reports, “Everyone calls me Trudy now”). Cosmetic makeovers to the dusty town and Molly’s house can serve as an allegory for our existential struggle against entropic rot, and a third-act dramatic costume competition underlines the role-playing aspect of dress-up (“Plays are such fun — they bring out the best and worst in people”).

A thirst for vengeance keeps Tilly trapped within Dungatar’s past-and-present maelstrom of gossip, lies and hate—and vice versa. Something’s gotta give, and waiting to find out what and how makes “The Dressmaker” compelling viewing.

Rated R for brief language and a scene of violence. One hour, 58 minutes.

— Peter Canavese

**continued on next page**
Weekend

‘STORKS’
Continued from previous page

writing and directing “Get Him to the Greek,” “The Five-Year Engagement,” and “Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising.” Perhaps excessively, as the sole credited screenwriter of “Storks,” Stoller takes responsibility for the raw comedic materials and plot of this animated comedy.

That plot concerns the mythical role of storks in human society: once responsible for the helment of babies, storks have gotten with the corporate times and turned their talents to drone-like delivery for an Amazon.com-esque company ironically called cornerstone.com, giving its headquarters precariously perched on a mountain peak above the clouds. Lording over the HQ is executive CEO Hunter (Kelsey Grammer), whose power hunger is about to leave a vacancy in the role of day-to-day “boss.” Hunter offers the job of boss to junior executive Junior (Andy Samberg), but first Junior must fire the company’s sole human employee, orphan gal Tulip (Katie Crown).

Instead, a farcical series of choices and accidents leads to the reactivation of the storks’ mothballed baby-making machine. To cover up the mistake, Junior and Tulip must eliminate the evidence by delivering the baby. Their adventure takes them through the proverbial “snow, rain, heat [and] gloom of night” of postal legend. Worse, the baby at one point runs the risk of being raised by wolves — specifically, a pack of wolves with Transformers-esque skills to create vehicular shapes (and with the voices of Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele). Meanwhile, a boy (Anton Starkman) dreaming on a baby brother prepares his home and his parents (Ty Burrell and Jennifer Aniston) for the special delivery (“I’m not a jerk yet,” he cajoles them. “Fleeting moments. Precious memories”)...

As that description suggests, “Storks” has the familiar manic action considered requisite of the genre (unless you’re Wes Anderson), but its slick dynamism meets with considerable humor and, specifically, proves its consistent adeptness with comic timing. Samberg’s jittery-nerdy energy comes through, and Stoller applies a level of taste and restraint to the film’s use of source music and amusingly awkward pauses. The plot and messages (of conscious priorities, number one being family) are refined enough that, were this released under the Pixar banner, it’s probable that no one would bat an eye, which is high praise for this Warner Animation Group project.

[Preceding the feature is the Lego short film “The Master,” featuring Jackie Chan and a pesky chicken.]

Rated PG for mild action and some thematic elements. One hour, 29 minutes.

— Peter Canavese

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**TheATER**

"Assassin" Los Altos Stage Company’s 2nd season opens with what’s thought to be one of the most controversial and emotionally charged Broadway shows. Music analysis by Stephen Sonheim, and the book is by John Wellman. It is directed by Lee Anne Leach, a local author and director. Sept. 1-25, Wednesday-Thursday, 8 p.m., Sunday, 3 p.m. $15-30. Bus Barn Theatre, 97 Hilmar Ave., Los Altos. info@mountainviewtheatrecompany.com

**THE WALLS OF JERICO**

The Pearl Theatre inaugurates its new space with a world premiere of “The Walls of Jericho,” a romantic comedy based on the story “Night Bus.” In this reverse Cinderella story, a couple of young lovers meet on a bus and, after many adventures and much witty sparring in the classic 1930s mode, the barriers between them begin to crumble. Sept. 17-Oct. 4; Thursday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. The Pearl Theatre, 1101 La Avenida, Mountain View. thepear.org

**TOURnoy RECREATION**

Embry Your Universal Soul Essence Workshop SuSan Taylor Shire, founder of Soul Mastery, will lead a workshop about how to access one’s soul gifts, strengths and purposes while deepening one’s self-awareness. Sept. 24, 7-9 p.m. Free. East West Book Store, 324 Castro St., Mountain View. eastwest.com

**HOME & GARDEN**

Install It Yourself Native Garden This workshop teaches the basics of native garden design and installation. The Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency provides free workshops on a variety of water-saving topics. Sept 26, 6-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. library.mtv.gov

**RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY**

Lifetrace: Hurt by Church This program features a filmed interview with a woman who suffered emotional wounds caused by the church during a difficult period in her life. This lifetrace program offers attendees an opportunity to discuss the wounds they’ve suffered at the hands of religious organizations. Sept. 26, 6:30-7 p.m. Free. Bethany, 1095 Cloud Ave., West Menlo Park. fittalpito.com

**COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Adult Book Discussion at Los Altos Library The book club will discuss Vanessa Nickerson’s book, “Eight Light refreshments will be provided, and a limited supply of books made possible by the Friends of the Los Altos Library. Sept. 26, 7-8 p.m. Free. Los Altos Library Desk at the Los Altos Library. Sept. 27, 7-8 p.m. Free. Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos.

Mountain View Unified High School “Eagle” Alumni Day Annual Picnic The Annual MVUHS “Eagle” Alumni Day Picnic is open to all alumni and friends from Mountain View (old and new) and all Los Altos High Schools. Oct. 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. donations accepted. Cuesta Park, 615 Cuesta Drive, Mountain View.
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115 Announcements
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TheAWTeam.com
Parkside Home in Immaculate Neighborhood

Bordering beautiful Sylvan Park, this 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home of over 2,100 sq. ft. (per county) blends easy, practical living with warmth and luxury on a property of over 7,300 sq. ft. (per county). Open gathering areas branch into sizable outdoor spaces that include a heated pool and spa, excellent for lounging or entertaining. Handsomely appointed rooms like the island kitchen and dreamy master suite are designed for optimal enjoyment. Additional highlights include immense storage, brand-new heating and cooling, and a posh, sky-lit master bathroom. Within steps of tennis courts, also enjoy close proximity to commuter routes and easy biking to fine schools and Stevens Creek Trail.

For video tour & more photos, please visit: www.720Glenborough.com

OPEN HOUSE
Saturday & Sunday, 1-5 pm
Complimentary Lunch & Lattes
Upgraded Home Enjoys Prime Location

Complemented by a serene neighborhood setting, this updated 3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom detached home of approx. 1,300 sq. ft. (per county) stands within easy proximity of local amenities. The breezy interior offers high ceilings, a gas fireplace, and upgrades including energy-efficient features and Milgard windows. Stainless-steel appliances and granite countertops are showcased in the kitchen, while the master suite enjoys vaulted ceilings. Other highlights include central cooling and a newly landscaped outdoor retreat. The Crossings community boasts parks and a swimming pool, and you will be within strolling distance of the Village at San Antonio Center and Caltrain, and near excellent Los Altos schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

For video tour & more photos, please visit: www.131Concord.com
Featured Listings by Pam Blackman

New construction, golf course views
6 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, elevator, approx. 3,952 sq. ft.
NEW PRICE $4,500,000
1611Shirley.com

Primary residence or 2nd home
Approx. 17 acres, less than 1 hour from Silicon Valley
OFFERED AT $2,495,000
240LightSprings.com

Downtown penthouse
One-of-a-kind floor plan, 2 beds, office, family room
OFFERED AT $2,698,000
38Third300-302.com

Best 4-bedroom value in Los Altos
Corner lot of approx. 10,208 sq. ft., minutes to top-rated schools
OFFERED AT $2,298,000
1715Hawkins.com

My listings are selling in today’s market.
Let’s talk about getting your home sold too!

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21111 Red Fir Court
CUPERTINO

Beautifully updated 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath condominium conveniently located near Apple, De Anza College, Whole Foods, 99 Ranch Market, Jollyman Park and other attractions.

Offered at $897,000

Open Sat & Sun, Sept 24 & 25
12:00 – 5:00pm

- Top-rated Lincoln, Kennedy and Monta Vista schools
- New countertops, flooring and fresh paint
- New LED lighting
- New range and microwave
- In-unit washer and dryer
- Two private patios
- Covered parking
- Community pool and spa

MICHAEL GALLI

President's Club
650.248.3076 | Michael@apr.com
BRE# 01852633

Named one of the Best Realtors in the United States by Real Trends

Square footage and/or acreage information contained herein has been received from seller, existing reports, appraisals, public records and/or other sources deemed reliable. However, neither seller nor listing agent has verified this information. If this information is important to buyer in determining whether to buy or determining the purchase price, buyer should conduct buyer's own investigation.
127 Pinon Drive, Portola Valley

Lavish Woodland Sanctuary
Flaunting elevated views of the Santa Cruz Mountains, this trophy residence of approx. 6,800 sq. ft. (per town) designed by Michael Moyer celebrates natural privacy and one-of-a-kind amenities. Holding 3 bedrooms and 3 full and 3 half baths, the home also offers a 2 bedroom, 2 bath guesthouse and an interior clad with walnut and French limestone. Extraordinary highlights include a tri-stop elevator, a jaw-dropping wine cellar, and a palatial master retreat. A floating staircase leads to gardens offering waterfalls, a spa, and the fully functional guesthouse. Undevelopable open space surrounds the two parcels of nearly 18 acres (per county) that form this property, ensuring continuous privacy and unspoiled panoramas.

For video tour & more photos, please visit:
www.127Pinon.com
Offered at $19,988,000
Ideally Located and Inviting

Alongside a calm cul-de-sac, this appealing 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath home of approx. 2,200 sq. ft. (per county) occupies a centrally located lot of approx. 0.29 acres (per county). The fine interior accented with crown molding, hardwood floors, and oversized picture windows offers a versatile home office and comfortable gathering areas, and the bedrooms are sized for flexibility. Outdoors await fruit trees, an inviting front porch, and a spacious backyard with patios. Within moments of downtown Los Altos, you can stroll to Covington Elementary (API 975), and quickly access Pinewood School campuses, Blach Intermediate (API 958), and Los Altos High (API 895) (buyer to verify eligibility).

For video tour & more photos, please visit: www.881University.com
138 AZALEA DRIVE
MOUNTAIN VIEW

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SATURDAY & SUNDAY, 1:00 – 5:00 PM
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DOWNTOWN    WALK TO CASTRO STREET RESTAURANTS & SHOPS, PARKS    CLOSE TO COMMUTE ROUTES

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