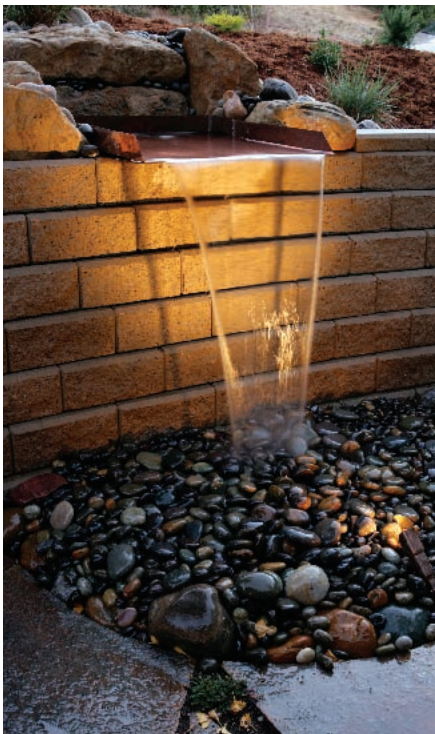




Enlightened Landscapes

Bright Ideas Design Group



Sage Ecological Landscapes

Autumn. Sweet autumn. Falling in love with autumn is easy after the sizzling summer releases its scorching grip. This romantic obsession with autumn begins with the crisp, cool evenings that perfectly exemplify how pleasantly livable and comfortable our Mediterranean climate can be. I guess my only complaint with autumn is the shorter day-length. Suddenly, I find myself without the late evening light I grew so accustomed to in the summer. Now, I'm left to languish only in the sun's hastily waning light. These earlier sunsets obviously impede outdoor evening endeavors in the fall. Luckily, there is an equally beautiful and illuminating substitute for natural twilight that adds hours of outdoor light and enjoyment while enhancing your property: landscape lighting!

Like any endeavor we embark upon with our living spaces, adding landscape lighting to

the home and garden should not be pursued lightly. There are far more sophisticated and tasteful approaches to illuminating your property than simply installing massive beacon-like floodlights to bear down on your garden. These annoying miniature lighthouses can rapidly contract the pupils of any eyes within a quarter-mile to a painfully squinting speck. And the days of creating a "runway" or "landing strip" with multi-colored cheap plastic Malibu® lights are thankfully over. Fortunately for our generation, far more elegant and durable fixtures of brass, copper, and bronze are available to add grace while creating that evening-light magic in the garden.

A truly tasteful arrangement of lights, however, requires a robust lighting design and successful use of lighting techniques. For example, to up-light specimen trees,

fountains, urns, and garden art, it is essential to select the proper fixtures and placement. Try a tasteful silhouette-lighting application on architectural shrubs against garden walls to create a sculptural shadow effect. Simply placing path lights evenly throughout an entire curving garden path make an evening stroll

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idyllic. This fall, be daring and request delicate back-lighting to accentuate flowering plumes of billowing ornamental grass inflorescence. For true mood-enhancement, hang a special frosted lens from a tall tree to create an irresistible, soft lunar glow on a garden subject.

Many local qualified professionals—landscape contractors, designers, or architects—can help you achieve such an artful landscape lighting design. Some contractors even focus exclusively on installing landscape lighting, such as a new local branch of Outdoor Lighting Perspectives (OLP). Sarene Chapman of OLP celebrates the magic created by landscape lighting and explains that “an even wash of light needs to cover an entire oak tree canopy to light it effectively.” Sarene’s franchise offers an exceptional service of routine lighting maintenance as well as warranties on an exclusive product line.

Another local business is taking outdoor landscape lighting to a whole new dimension. Bright Ideas Design Group, out of Baywood Park, readily employs fiber optics in landscape garden features. If this sounds to you like it is right out of a movie set, you are spot on. Darren Marsan considers himself an “illumineer” because he incorporates methods learned in his ten years as a Disney Imagineer (production designer for Disney theme parks), along with a stint as a touring lighting technician for the late rock and roll concert promoter, Bill Graham.

Backed with a degree from San Francisco State University in theatrical lighting, Marsan takes custom projects into uncharted territories. Marsan’s approach to lighting design is to create both mood and spatial clarity by defining vignettes in the evening garden and by creating focal points, subtleties, and, of

course, the unexpected detail. There are far too many important technical points involved to adequately explain the method behind the intricate art of great lighting design, but Marsan stresses the importance of the basic key points: correct bulb use, protection and stealth placement of the bulb, decorative appeal of the fixture, and pedestrian safety. Bright Ideas’ work is commissioned all over California to beautifully illuminate the inside and outside of homes.

Whether you employ a local landscape contractor, architect, lighting technician, or illumineer, landscape lighting will transform your garden into a magical space beyond your wildest imagination. Most importantly, landscape lighting will help you comfortably enjoy fun outdoor get-togethers on the Central Coast late into autumn evenings.

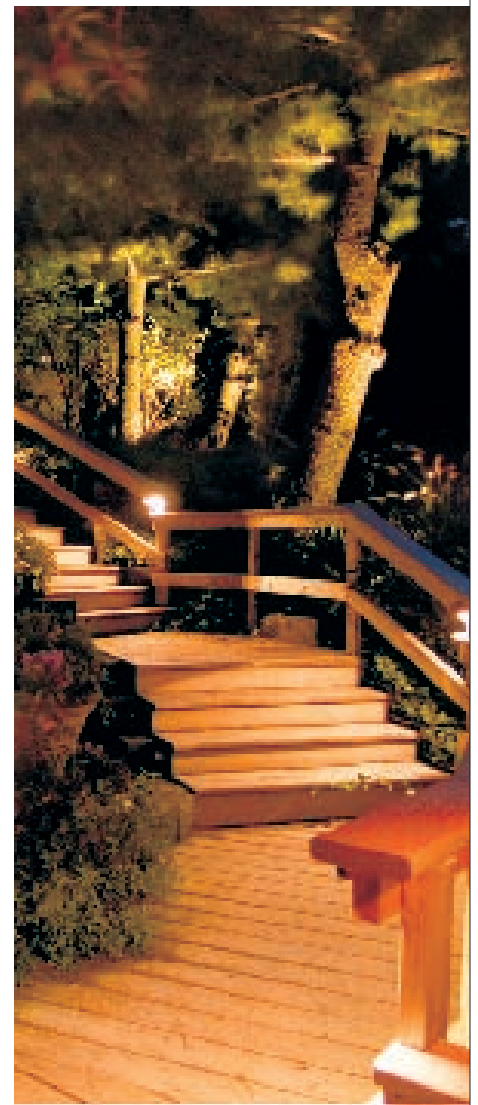
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Resources:

Bright Ideas Design Group
1212 2nd St., Baywood Park
(805) 528-0982; www.brightideasdesigngroup.net

Outdoor Lighting Perspectives: Central Coast
589 Cuesta Dr., San Luis Obispo
(805) 237-3733; www.outdoorlights.com

Todd M. Davidson owns Sage Ecological Landscapes



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Outdoor Lighting Perspectives