

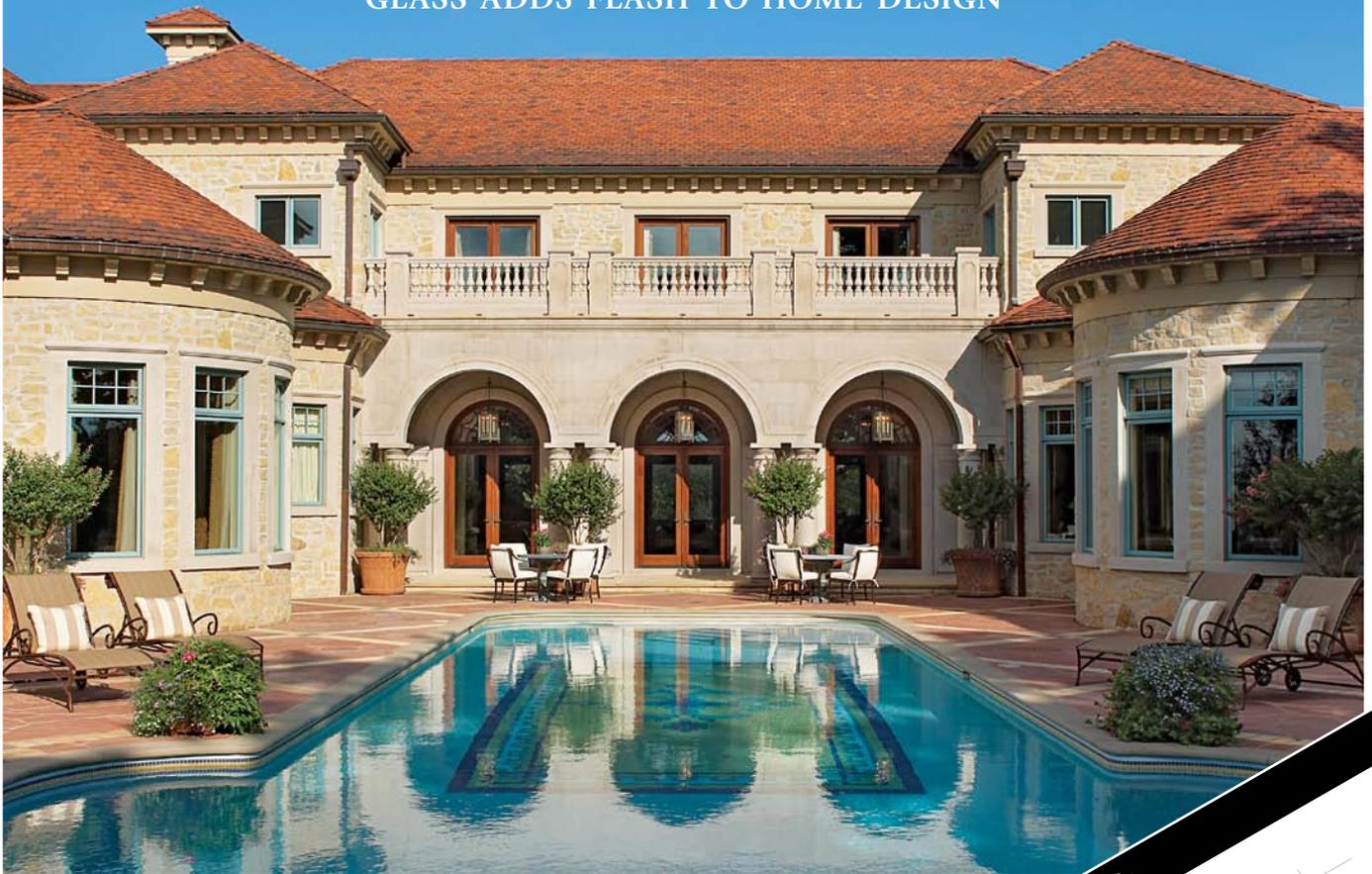
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Lords of the Manor Top Estate Architects

GLASS ADDS FLASH TO HOME DESIGN



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Basking in the Glow

LIGHTING DESIGNERS CREATE ART IN THE LANDSCAPE.



LANDSCAPE LIGHTING designers are akin to artists. Instead of canvases and paint, they create nightscapes with light and shadow, using architectural features and walls, foliage and flash to add depth, dimension, and dynamism to an otherwise black void. Their finished work can be as simple as a single strategically placed floodlight that casts a tapestry of plant shadows on a blank wall or as intricate as hundreds of lights that convey a mood or extend a homeowner's use of alfresco spaces long into the night.

Advances in outdoor lighting during the past few decades now allow designers to control beam diffusion, adding to their precision when painting a landscape scene with light. The

ultimate goal is to add light without it becoming the focal point or a distraction. And there's no one-size-fits-all formula for lighting design. Each client, each home, is unique.

Vernon Daniel Associates, based in Washington, D.C., has specialized exclusively in lighting design and installation for 40 years, working with clients from Maine to Florida. The company's projects range from intimate city and rooftop gardens in Georgetown and New York City to the Congressional Country Club and George Washington's Mount Vernon estate and carry price tags from "a few thousand dollars to over a hundred thousand dollars," says Tom DeMuth, the firm's president.

Proper lighting allows homeowners

to appreciate their home's surroundings and entertain long after sundown. Landscape lighting also improves security and safety and adds to a home's value, says DeMuth, whose clients often mention their home's Vernon Daniel-designed lighting in sales listings.

"The right lighting brings properties to life at night," he says. "It extends the use and enjoyment of outdoor areas and a home's landscaping. It enhances a home's curb appeal. Even during cold weather, you still enjoy your landscaping from inside. Instead of seeing yourself reflected in the window, the window becomes a picture frame for the landscaping."

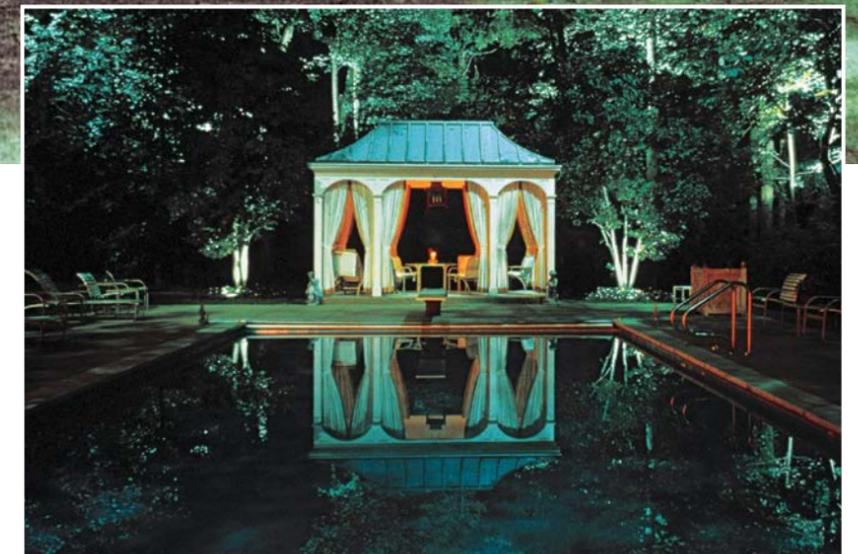
Light it right and an exterior can emulate the soft glow of a moonlit

night, add a touch of enchantment, or create sheer drama. Do it wrong, and that stately oak can take on an eerie edge straight out of *Sleepy Hollow*.

Colored lights, says West Coast lighting designer Mark Mullen, have limited use. The wrong shade or color "turns it into a Halloween concept."

Mullen, president of Artistic Illumination Landscape Lighting, often works with owners of Beverly Hills estates, many with long driveways that lend themselves to a lighting scheme that creates a grand sense of arrival. During a recent project, he illuminated a home's 200-foot driveway, which was lined with mature oak trees.

"We created patterns with light on the drive all the way to the front door,"



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: VERNON DANIEL ASSOCIATES LANDSCAPE ILLUMINATION

he says. "The entry is well lit but shadows add visual interest, a sculpturing effect up the wall to the roof line."

Often homeowners also want to showcase—or show off—what they have: tennis courts, sculpture gardens, or architectural elements like trellises

and gazebos, says Mullen, who added drama to a blank backyard by lighting up a redwood jungle gym and two-story playhouse. "By using lights, an object becomes a feature instead of something hidden in the pitch dark," he says. "For tennis courts, one or two

“LANDSCAPE LIGHTING IS OUR PASSION” - TOM DEMUTH, VERNON DANIEL ASSOCIATES.

soft lights across the net add depth to the backyard.”

The experts agree that LED lighting, which uses less energy and lasts 25 times longer than traditional bulbs, is the wave of the future.

Once LED is perfected, DeMuth says improvements in solar lighting are the next logical progression, a breakthrough that will allow lighting designers to use the energy source to illuminate distant landscapes, currently cost-prohibitive because of the necessity for hard wiring.

Whether the illumination creates a subtle look or a dramatic one—as when a fixture is placed 60 feet high in a tree to cast beautiful shadows—landscape lighting is an investment that enhances a home’s appeal. —NANCI THEORET

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