



# Creativity in Lighting

Great lighting can add to a house's beauty

By Cecily Hastings

**M**ichael Sestak has proven that a truly creative person can find success in more than one field. He ended a successful 20-year culinary career as a pastry chef at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, Sacramento's Hyatt Regency and Ettore's after a kitchen accident seven years ago. "I needed a career change, and the accident was the catalyst," says Sestak, who started Sestak Lighting Design in 2001.

"I earned my California contractor's license as a C-10 electrician and applied my creativity to the field of lighting design, which has really taken off in recent years in terms of design options, materials and new technologies," says Sestak, who sees the lighting designer as an integral part of the design team for new home or a remodel. "I work with the client, but also as part of the team that includes the architect, interior designer and contractors. Too often lighting is just an afterthought.

"Lighting design is about far more than the selecting the fixtures. It's about the type of lighting, be it ambient, task or lighting to feature art or architectural features, where it is located and how it is controlled," he explains. "The best time to incorporate these specific needs is in the early planning stages of a project."

Sestak, who works out of his Carmichael home, describes himself as the alternative to driving to lighting stores all over town in search of perfect fixtures. "I'm a full-service, one-stop shop. I bring the best lighting fixtures for your project right to your home. I have literally thou-



sands of fixtures available in catalogs." He says clients are amazed to discover there is a whole world of great lighting fixtures beyond what's available at Home Depot.

After installation of the light fixtures, a client can be overwhelmed by the number of light bulb options. "Controlling the light is also key to creating a certain ambiance in each room," he says. "It pays to have good quality dimmers."

"Shortly after purchasing our new home, we decided to upgrade the exterior lighting," says client Diane Mizell. "It was

hard to find someone who really specialized in this area. Michael knows what he is doing and is creative, artistic and practical. It was a wonderful experience."

Sestak charges a nominal fee for an initial consultation, then creates a fee schedule after evaluating the scope of the project. "My design services range from formal drawing and plans to as little as a sketch to describe how something should look," says Sestak. He also can purchase and install fixtures.

"Sometimes a new piece of art brought into a home can create a lighting dilemma. They discover it doesn't look nearly as good as when it was displayed in the gallery," he explains. Sestak then designs lighting to properly feature the new work.

Despite the abundance of fixtures on the market, sometimes a space needs a custom fixture. "I call them custom light sculptures, which are for situations that need something very special," he says. Using custom fabricated glass, acrylic and stainless steel components, Sestak has created custom fixtures in many styles. "The design flows collaboratively from the client's input through the filter of my own experience and artistic instincts."

**Sestak Lighting Design creates custom creations as well as lighting for commercial and residential spaces, both interior and exterior.**

**For more information, contact Michael Sestak at 916.482.2350 or 916.769.6909.**