

## HIINSDALE RESIDENCE

### *Lighten Up a Landscape*

Hinsdale, by day, is a charming western suburb where tall, leafy trees arch gracefully over beautifully landscaped yards. By night, Hinsdale is, well, dark. Much of the lovely landscaping is lost amidst the quiet shadows of the night.

Suzan and Jim Hallene had just renovated the gardens around their elegant two-story home when they realized something was missing. The night was swallowing the landscape, and visiting friends couldn't find the driveway, "People coming over at night were running over our landscaping," Suzan recalls with a laugh.

The landscaping had been done by Steve Boese of Hinsbrook Landscaping after the Hallenes finished rehabbing their 1930's Colonial-style home. Previous owners over the years had made minor changes in a somewhat hodgepodge fashion. The Hallenes wanted to tie the landscape together aesthetically and pragmatically. "We have young children and wanted a yard that was not only pretty, but functional as well," Suzan says.

Steve Boese noted that a key objective was to make the approach to the home more welcoming. The original landscape had mature shrubs and trees clustered close to the house, with a long expanse of lawn between the street and home. "By moving the beds and shrubs out, we began a welcoming statement much earlier," says Steve.

Now, the front yard is a simple tapestry of graceful, curved beds of perennials and groundcovers. The beds wrap around key anchor trees that were either transplanted or remained from the original yard.

Providing variety in height and texture, the beds are punctuated with groupings of shrub roses, 'Annabelle' hydrangea and transplanted yews. To help with the lighting challenge, Steve then called on fellow landscape architect, Dean MacMorris of Night Light, Inc. Dean specializes in landscape lighting and has even devised a unique lighting system suitable for our climate and seasons.

Solving the driveway lighting problem was a priority. Instead of using a harsh "airplane runway" line of lights, Dean installed soft path lighting in the curved beds. Since the beds start at the driveway and gently lead towards the home, the lighting accentuates the visitors' welcome from the moment they turn onto the property

A stately old honey locust tree in front of the home was a prime candidate for moonlighting, in which a soft light placed high overhead suggests the glow of moonlight through the branches and reveals interesting patterns. The pool of light also illuminates the curved entryway. Other trees in the front yard were either uplit or downlit, depending on their growth habit, texture, size and location. Dean says one of the special benefits of night lighting is its ability to add depth of field to the evening view. By selecting certain trees or structures to illuminate, the flat plane of darkness is dispelled, and the garden comes to life. Choosing what to illuminate requires artistry. "I try to pick neat-looking elements that draw your eye," Dean explains. He avoids making straight lines and selects interesting features that lead the eye through the space.

*Continued...*

*For those who appreciate the difference*

CASE STUDY

### *...Continued*

The Hallenes' back yard is a real family affair that does triple duty as a basketball court, playground area and dining patio. Lighting is efficiently and aesthetically used throughout. The basketball court has sufficient light to permit nighttime games. Accent lighting on backyard shrubs and trees draws attention away from the children's play equipment after the wee ones' curfew.

Adults enjoy the beautiful stone patio with curved wall and built-in barbeque. Path lights lead from the house to the patio, and a powerful light shines down from a huge old elm tree onto the dining area. "We needed something so people could enjoy eating outdoors, and still see each other," says Suzan.

The lighting system Dean installs is of his own specifications and a favorite with landscape architects like Steve Boese because of its durability and low maintenance. The cables are thicker than those of many systems, which makes it a helpful feature for anyone who has inadvertently dug into lighting wires.

By day, the Hallene's lighting is unobtrusive, but by night, its best qualities really shine.

*For those who appreciate the difference*

CASE STUDY