

Around Livermore: Best Christmas displays listed on local man's website

how-doug-lee-martin-shelley-pays-2? source=most_viewed&source=most_viewed)

» [More most-popular entertainment stories \(/popular#popularbysection_entertainment\)](#)

By *Nora Heston Tarte* Columnist

POSTED: 12/08/2015 02:52:46 PM PST | UPDATED: 4 DAYS AGO

0 COMMENTS

Christmas is my favorite time of year and some of my fondest holiday memories include driving from house to house to glimpse glowing light displays and watch synchronized musical shows complete with life-size blow-up reindeer and more twinkling lights than you can count.

While finding these neighborhood treasures is part of the fun, it is also a lengthy process. But thanks to Alex Dourov, I'm able to save a little time in my holiday light hunt. His website, CaliforniaChristmasLights.com (<http://CaliforniaChristmasLights.com>) (nee lightsofthevalley.com (<http://lightsofthevalley.com>)) keeps a list of the most impressively decorated homes in California, many of which are right here in the Tri-Valley, where he trims his own Livermore abode.

...

"We love to get submissions of, you know, really over the top ... houses," Dourov said of his nonprofit website that started in 1999. "It's a labor of love, and it's my yearly community service project."

While the online database that has racked up nearly 3 million unique users covers counties across California, it started with just the Tri-Valley. At the time, Dourov said there wasn't a credible listing of great lights. So, he took a pre-existing list of addresses published in the Tri-Valley Herald (now part of the Tri-Valley Times) and snapped photos of the ones he deemed worthy. Then he put those online. After KQIQ picked up the story, Dourov's noncommercial venture became a go-to place for holiday light enthusiasts like myself.

Advertisement



The online venture led Dourov to start creating his own over-the-top display (at 467 Knottingham Circle). In the mid- to late 2000s he added a synchronized light show and installed an FM broadcast station (107.9). "I started putting more and more features on the house," he shared, including interactive components to get people out of their cars and walking around. At his front door, near the 6-foot tall wooden Santa, there's an electronic photo album filled with addresses of other decked out Livermore homes.

While local residences have served as inspiration for Dourov, his wife is responsible for one of 2015's additions--a nativity scene. "After 15 years of procrastination I have finally finished the entire nativity scene that I promised to my wife 15 years ago," Dourov admitted. "When the wife is happy, the husband is happy."

Ray Fassett is the mastermind behind another Livermore home offering extravagant holiday visuals (2789 Kennedy St.). As a registered pyrotechnician with a technical theater background, decorating fills the gap left by the annual slowdown in his field.

Fassett too was inspired by other local homes, but he really kicked his ornamentation into overdrive in 2009 after a new neighbor moved in with a barrage of holiday decor.

"I call my display 'Reverence and Whimsy,' giving the nativity (scene) center stage and using (the area) below the roofline to display the whimsical side of Christmas with bright lights, comic page characters, Santa, etc.," Fassett said.

Though he's upped the ante this year with a computer control system and music, Fassett is still keeping with tradition, using classic spiritual songs.

Looking for other notable lights nearby? Peep a parade of festive homes on the Livermore Wine Trolley's Lights of Livermore Holiday Tour (Dourov and Fassett's homes are both stops) or check out CaliforniaChristmasLights.com (<http://CaliforniaChristmasLights.com>) for more.

Contact Nora Heston Tarte at nora.tarte@gmail.com (<mailto:nora.tarte@gmail.com>).

If you go: What: Lights of Livermore Holiday Tour
When: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. through Dec. 23
Where: Departing from Concannon Vineyard, 4590 Tesla Road
Cost: \$60 per person
Info: Livermorewinetrolley.com (<http://Livermorewinetrolley.com>)