

LIGHT TOUR XII

Picture Perfect

Dave Jensen, in just his second year entering Escape's holiday lights contest, brings home first prize and a perfect score

By Tim Whyte

SIGNAL HOLIDAY LIGHT BOY

Millions of lights. Thousands of dollars' worth of electricity. Five and a half hours touring the Santa Clarita Valley. Nine limousine-hopping judges, consuming gallons of chili, soup, hot cocoa and cider.

Two new champions.

Having completed Escape's 12th annual holiday light tour — judging the World Championship of Holiday Lights — we are proud to crown Dave Jensen as the winner of the “just best” individual home award, and Ash Court/Deodar Place as the winner of the best street award for 2005.

The following pages contain highlights of the light tour, along with information on where to find the best and brightest lights. And now, without further ado, here are the Top 20 houses from Light Tour XII:

No. 1

Dave Jensen



BRYAN KNEIDING/The Signal

The home of Dave Jensen, at 25129 Hazel Crest Lane, earned top honors and a perfect score of 100.

do something that's at once different, bold, balanced and effective.

Dave Jensen has achieved it.

We had one of those “Olympic Perfect 10” moments when we got to Jensen's house: For the first time (after we dropped the low and high scores to eliminate undue influence from the East German judges), we

enough to add charm.

Judge Daneen noted that Jensen's creation was two and a half months in the making, an effort that resulted in, according to the judges' scores, perfection.

Other judges' notes:

■ Judge Grant: “They got my vote last year and didn't win. They got it again this year.”

friendly crew on Angelica Place/Chervil Court, and they throw great block parties.

■ Judge Daneen: “This house blew me away this year.”

■ Judge Boston: “Nice touch with the brazen Tim Whyte kissy points, having a hockey rink AND a Signal tribute weaved into the design.”

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No. 1

Dave Jensen

25129 Hazelcrest Lane, Sunset Pointe
Judges' Average Score: 100 (record)

Perfection. It's elusive. It's just the right stroke — not too much, not too little, not overdone, not underdone. It can take creativity, originality, the ability and vision to

The Judges

Tim Whyte (Signal General Manager), **Luc Whyte** (age 10), **John Boston** (two-time award-winning columnist), **Grant Parpan** (Signal Sports Editor), **Melissa Parpan** (Grant's wife, a very tolerant young lady), **Daneen Dickey** (Signal Classified Manager), **Jennifer Mathias** (Signal Special Sections Editor), **Stacey Klein** (Signal Assistant City Editor), **Gaby Valentin** (Stacey's pal).
Absent: Features Writer **Stephen K. Peeples** (overslept).



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We had one of those “Olympic Perfect 10” moments when we got to Jensen's house: For the first time (after we dropped the low and high scores to eliminate undue influence from the East German judges), we had a house *average* a perfect score of 100. These scores were earned on just our fourth stop. The judges were so impressed, they didn't leave room to score anything higher. The LOW score we dropped was a 98, and that judge is a notoriously grinchy scorer.

We've seen decorative, motorized teeter totters, ferris wheels and carousels on lawns before. But the thing with Jensen's place is, he's built a carousel on his driveway that's big enough for an 8-year-old to RIDE.

I was also glad to see a few familiar elves on the scene: My son's former hockey teammate Cody Foster, and his younger brothers Garrett and Dillon, are Jensen's grandsons, and they were helping manage the crowd and demonstrate the carousel.

Jensen has the lights computer-synchronized with the music. Other houses have done similar synchronization, but Jensen has done the best job of it. It's subtle enough not to be overwhelming, but evident

enough to add charm.

Judge Daneen noted that Jensen's creation was two and a half months in the making, an effort that resulted in, according to the judges' scores, perfection.

Other judges' notes:

■ Judge Grant: “They got my vote last year and didn't win. They got it again this year, and if they don't win, I'll seriously question the validity of this contest.”

■ Judge Gaby: “There are no words. Wow! I could spend hours here. There is so much to look at and enjoy.”

■ Judge Boston: “The King Kong of houses. In all my years (127) of judging, the made-from-scratch merry-go-round is the single most boffo article I've ever seen on the tour. Along with the kids (live) in elf suits riding the merry-go-round, this was clearly the class of the field for 2005.”

No. 2

Karen and Thad Kleszcz

23258 Chervil Court, Valencia (2002 Champ)
Judges' Average Score: 98.0

The Kleszcz home, boasting 40,000 lights, has been consistently among the top homes over the past few years, and won the title in 2002. Karen and Thad are part of the

friendly crew on Angelica Place/Chervil Court, and they throw great block parties.

■ Judge Daneen: “This house blew me away this year.”

■ Judge Boston: “Nice touch with the brazen Tim Whyte kissy points, having a hockey rink AND a Signal tribute weaved into the decor.”

No. 3

John Fosterling

22514 Ash Court, Saugus
Judges' Average Score: 95.3

The Fosterling house — part of the winning street, Ash Court — is a stirring tribute to The Simpsons, complete with Homer ogling a tree made of Duff beer cans.

■ Judge Boston: “If you're a ‘Simpsons’ fan, you cannot let the holidays go by without seeing this one. D'OH!! EVERYTHING is a Simpson-based theme.”

No. 4

The Plasschaert Family

19634 Edgehurst Lane
Judges' Average Score: 95.2

Gavin Plasschaert not only wins our

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