

# Illuminating accents

*Susie Zeitner's glass creations can transform a home with their fusion of color, creativity and joy.*

By Joel Gorthy  
Photos by Collin Andrew  
Special Publications

Many of the visitors on last July's Lane County Tour of Homes would stop mid-step in their protective booties, captivated by what they saw in the elegant foyer of DC Fine Homes' "Serenity" home in southwest Eugene.

"Fountain" does not adequately describe the seemingly magical package of fused art glass, copper, light, rock and water that is set into the wall. Sure, water does course down the front and back of the tall piece of fused glass hanging within the copper-surrounded enclosure. But the elegant glass panel, lit at the top and bottom, steals the water's show. The burbling liquid creates a gentle soundtrack in tune with the home's name, yet physically it merely accentuates the fluid shapes and organic color gradations within the glass.

"We had a ton of people who would just stand there mesmerized," says builder Dan Cooper, who engineered the water feature. "I wanted it to look like a piece of glass was just floating, suspended in space."



Fused glass highlights dramatic entryway water feature at DC Fine Homes house.

To turn his idea into reality, he turned to artisans including Randy Deering of Cottage Grove, who created the copper surround. But it is the glass work of Susie Zeitner of Eugene that brought the project into colorful focus. Cooper, acquainted with Zeitner from earlier projects at his high-end custom homes,



Builder Dan Cooper added drama to a powder room with Susie Zeitner's lighted sink.

hired her once again to infuse his tour showcase with artful ambiance.

And, as many of the estimated 6,000 people who toured the house in July attested, the glass is a show-stopper.

#### Powerful decor element

Eventually, visitors to Cooper's home make it past the grand entry with its fountain and inlaid marble floor mosaic. Just beyond, a peek into a small powder room reveals another of Zeitner's dynamic creations. A bowl-style sink, a mélange of earthen red and amber hues, sits atop a metal base — with a light projecting up from beneath that makes the glass literally radiate color.

Upstairs is a home theater with an

adjacent bar and entertainment room. These rooms also feature Zeitner's fused and slumped glass, with amber-hued pendant lights hanging over the bar and multi-colored sconce lights casting moody reddish light along the theater's dark walls.

In each room adorned with Zeitner's work, the colors of the decor are reflected and complemented by the hues of the layered, textured glass. Cooper says artists like Zeitner have added a powerful decor element to the arsenal of style-savvy homeowners and decorators.

"People are used to doing it with faux painting," Cooper says of the desire to incorporate complementary colors in as many places as possible throughout a



Photo courtesy Susie Zeitner

Matching glass lights in a Eugene home.

room. "Now, with glass, they can add that one more part of the decor that ties the whole scheme together."

Zeitner, who operates as Z Glass Act out of her south Eugene home, also sees burgeoning demand among homeowners for her kind of custom glass. "Glass is so popular right now," she says. "Architectural glass is so interesting to people because they are starting to realize they can use it as another design element. A lot of times, people want something that's unique to them."

In addition to Cooper's tour home, Zeitner has completed many commissions for homeowners who wanted one-of-a-kind pendants, chandeliers, sconces, sinks — sometimes matching sets — and other architectural glass pieces. Her lighting also appears at commercial venues, including Cafe Zenon in Eugene.

She also creates fused and slumped glass bowls, plates and platters, which sell locally at Reed & Cross and in about a dozen California showrooms. Thanks to her Web site, [www.zglassact.com](http://www.zglassact.com), Zeitner recently filled an order for three bowls from a customer in Malta.

#### An art without boundaries

The demand for her glass is somewhat unexpected, but completely thrilling, says Zeitner.

"I never thought it would be a business," admits Zeitner, a Eugene native who spent 27 years as an illustrator, graphic designer and commercial photo director. She and her husband, Dan, started the glass business in 1998 and it gained momentum after Susie's long-