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Big Lights Without The Work



A company out there offers to put holiday lights on your home for you, but it's not cheap.

CLEARWATER - Now that Thanksgiving's over, Christmas lights are going up all over the Bay area. And if you dread breaking out the ladder to decorate your home, there are alternatives, but they aren't cheap.

Professional lighting and decor companies charge rates starting at about \$800 and they go up from there. The Decorating Elves say their most expensive project was \$11,500.

"A traditional home will have between eight and 18,000 lights," says Jay Bordelon, a franchise owner with Decorating Elves. "We have some homes that have 30,000 lights on them."

Clearwater resident Maria Kastrenakes hired Decorating Elves to create an extra-festive look for her home, with a Nutcracker theme. Kastrenakes specially ordered decorations, and then called in The Decorating Elves, to add a little something extra.

"What we're trying to do is accentuate the features of the home with different colors of lights," Bordelon explains. "And trying to expose the texture of the homes by doing a lot of layering and things like that. Just to make them pop."

For holiday lighting and decor companies, winter is the hot season and many work seven days a week from the beginning of November through the weeks before Christmas.

Clients are usual homeowners with large properties, who want the ease of someone putting up the lights, and then, taking them down.

"Not everybody should be climbing a ladder," Bordelon says. "Not everybody should be climbing a tile roof. It can be a little bit tricky, but our guys are aces. They do a really good job."

The Kastrenakes have decorated their home themselves in the past, but this year there was no question about hiring a professional.

"My husband is afraid of heights," Maria Kastrenakes says. "My sons I worry about, it certainly can be hazardous. And the level of professionalism is a little different."

That doesn't mean do-it-yourself homes don't also have Christmas charm. After all, they say part of the fun, is in the effort.