

Christmas Market gears up for third year of shopping, crafts and live entertainment

If you're looking for some unique gifts for that special someone on your holiday list, come out this weekend for the Town of Aurora's third-annual Christmas Market.

Taking over Town Hall and the Aurora Seniors' Centre from Friday, November 29 through Sunday, December 1, it is a three-day Christmas cavalcade, kicking off on the Friday night with the Town's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in Town Hall's forecourt at 6 p.m.

The fun continues on November 30 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with the Aurora Farmers' Market, which will take place in Town Hall, followed from 1 to 7.30 p.m. with performances from the Borealis Big Band, Marquee Theatrical Productions with their Frozen-inspired performance entitled 'Frigid?', buskers, and crafting workshops.

Closing out the festivities on December 1 from 1 to 6 p.m. will be a pancake brunch, a concert courtesy of the Aurora Community Band and more festive workshops.

'We have only been fortunate before to have Santa on the Friday, but he has enjoyed the market and the growth of it for so long that he has decided to commit to being in Town for the entire weekend, along with his reindeer,' says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. 'Santa and his reindeer will be available to meet families in Petch House throughout the entire weekend of the market. Additionally, the Market is full of different vendors each day and we have expanded the number of vendors each year. We have also moved into an additional room inside the Seniors' Centre with two full rooms of vendors inside, as well as a full captivating market outside and the vendors will change each day.'

'We're also fortunate that the Niagara College's Canadian Food & Wine Institute will be participating in the Market as well on Friday night, operating from an inflatable igloo, and anyone who has ever tasted their food would certainly agree it is an instant party in your mouth. We can't wait to see what they're serving up.'

For many years, the traditional lighting of Aurora's Christmas Tree was something the Town served up as a standalone event, but since incorporating it into the kick-off of the Christmas Market, they have seen both events only grow together.

'Having the tree as the kickoff to the entire weekend actually starts the season really right with a festive step,' says Ms. Ware, noting that additional entertainment at the Tree Lighting will include buskers, including the popular Fire Guy. 'The trees, the lights, the glitter everything that sparkles and glitters is what Markets are all about and we start it off with our beautiful tree being lit. It's a natural progression to go right into a weekend fully focused on the festivities. Having everyone

gather at the tree, see it being lit, and participate in the carolling procession, is where you truly get the feeling of the season but you also get the strong sense and reminder of how connected this community truly is.?

The morning following the tree lighting, Ms. Ware encourages festive families to come out early for the Aurora Farmers' Market, encouraging people to check out Caterina's Kitchen in particular for a ?spectacular array of chilli, soups and everything to keep you warm? as you venture outside the indoor Farmers' Market at 1 p.m. to visit the outdoor market vendors.

?We worked really hard to ensure that all our vendors are bringing in something unique and something that will make you be able to provide that unique gift that certainly isn't easily replicated,? says Ms. Ware. ?Throughout the weekend, we'll have back-to-back buskers and on Saturday we'll have five different busker shows, all unique and very captivating entertainers. On Sunday, we have lots of baton and fire baton twirling shoes, as well as our hands-on festive workshops.?

In addition to workshops on how to build your own gingerbread house, the Town's Parks Manager and Horticulturalist will be on hand leading a workshop on ?festive swag? where you can make wreaths and other decorations for your front door ? leaving the mess with the Town. There will also be classes on decorating tabletops for the big day, as well as a seminar on ?Indulge? ? that is, tips on how not to overeat, over-shop and generally overdo during the Holiday season.

?Rather, it is about spending time and energy accordingly to get the maximum joy out of the season,? explains Ms. Ware.

For more information on the Aurora Christmas Market, visit aurora.ca/christmasmarket or call 905-726-4762.

By Brock Weir