

Businesses 'Paint the Town Red' for Rogers Hometown Hockey



By Brock Weir

Shane Goudreau has experienced an iconic Canadian moment.

The Kingston-based artist was tasked with painting a mural for Canada 150, depicting, among other things, iconic hockey coach Don Cherry, when word got back to the subject.

Once the mural was finished, Goudreau found himself sitting on a deck under the summer sun with 'Grapes' himself downing a few beers.

'I had this great Canadian moment of sitting and having beers with Don Cherry, talking about hockey and things like that,' he says. 'That was probably my greatest hockey-related experience.'

Goudreau's latest painting of Don Cherry is now in Aurora for all to see, set up on the west side of Yonge Street just south of Wellington Street in front of Aw, Shucks as part of the Paint the Town Red contest hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce to mark the Aurora arrival of Rogers Hometown Hockey this weekend.

The Chamber's Paint the Town Red social media contest, which closed Friday, encouraged local businesses to register and decorate their windows and storefronts with a red 'Hometown Hockey' theme. Participants were encouraged to snap a photo of their efforts and share on social media tagged to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Winning participants will receive an exclusive Rogers Hometown Hockey on-site experience, a prize pack, and a social media boost courtesy of Hometown Hockey on their various social media platforms.

Aw, Shucks was among the first businesses to brainstorm ideas and happened upon the work of Goudreau almost by chance; he was right over their heads transforming the event space formally known as the Pearl Room into a new business 'Trust Hookah Lounge' by creating evocative murals on their walls.

'I was brainstorming with Stewart McLaren (of McLaren Doors) and thought about hanging stuff from the top of the storefront coming down to the bottom, but he thought that might be dangerous,' jokes Mary Georgopoulos of Aw, Shucks. 'Then we decided with this we wanted to turn our Yonge Street [frontage] almost into an ice rink and Shane brought this to life.'

Adds Goudreau: 'Mary mentioned she had an idea of guys sitting at their railing looking like they were ready to jump over the railing and we came up with the idea of painting it onto board and making it one big piece. I originally thought we were just going to have a couple of players doing it, but we had so much space we thought we might as well add in a couple of more guys and Don Charry.'

Goudreau says he played a lot of hockey growing up and has a true love of the sport. He is immersed in its history and wanted to turn back the clock on some of its imagery, going with an 'old 1970s vintage look' for the players with wild facial hair popping out from underneath their helmets and missing teeth.

'I want people to look at this and smile,' he says. 'It's a playful piece. There is nothing serious about this. I would like people to take pictures with it and have fun with it. A lot of art is made to make people think and feel emotions, but I just want this to trigger fun.'

Aw, Shucks will be one of the hotspots for Hometown Hockey outside of the nerve centre that is the Aurora Community Centre. Special guests the Humboldt Broncos will be starting the weekend with a breakfast at the restaurant on Saturday morning, an opportunity which is an 'honour' for the eatery, according to Ms. Georgopoulos.

'We're excited and touched to host them,' she says. 'I feel it is going to be an emotional opening, but also very cheerful because it is going to be for a good cause. We're especially happy because this is happening in our downtown core.'