

Deck the Halls across Aurora: Decorating contest spreads holiday cheer, community pride

Have an eye for the Christmas spirit?

Think you have what it takes to put the Griswolds to shame?

Step up and help Deck the Halls across Aurora as the Town launches the new Deck the Halls Tour.

Running from December 12 to 19, Aurora's Deck the Halls tour is an opportunity for residents to flex their creative muscles and for holiday revellers to get out in their cars and into the community for a self-guided tour of holiday homes ? with a top prize up for grabs for the Best Decorated house in Aurora.

?We wanted to come up with an extension unto the festive season because know how magnetic all those lights are and Aurorans really put a lot of effort into their home décor,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. ?We thought we would celebrate this by putting together a formal tour which stretches out eight nights so families at their leisure can safely tour around Aurora, possibly discover a new neighbourhood or a new street, and see what kind of energy is out there this season.?

Nearly 20 homes had already registered to be a part of the tour by press time this week, and the deadline to register is this Friday, November 27.

?We do hope more will come on board,? says Ms. Ware. ?This is going to be a community competition whereby those who go on the tour can vote for their favourite or most decorated location and the winner and honourable mentions will receive gift cards to local Aurora businesses. Our entries have been all over the map. Some have been rustic, some are doing the old-town country look. Some are doing a modern colour scheme, some doing a Winter Wonderland all-white scheme. We have seen a really nice variety, which really adds for a lot of fruitful discussion for cars as they seek out different places on the actual tour.

?This is a great opportunity people can do at home with the supplies they have or even to enhance them. By preparing and decorating your own home, it is going to add more to your sense of satisfaction. Personally, as soon as one dwelling in your area decorates, you tend to see a domino affect. If your street isn't lit up yet, be a pioneer and add the festivities.?

For those more content to see what their neighbours are cooking up, families heading out on the self-guided tour will be provided with a map indicating all the holiday hotspots that will be illuminated between 5 ? 9.30 p.m. Some homes might even have a special guest outside to greet visitors from a safe distance ? maybe even Mrs. Claus or the Grinch! ? on December 12 and December 19.

?Those are our special nights,? says Ms. Ware, noting that those who find these special guests can snap some pictures and upload them to social media using special hashtags that will be provided.

?There could be a few surprises along the way on those special evenings,? she says. ?On any of the nights, this is also a chance to get out and support local eateries. Maybe this can be the night you pick up some takeout as you go for a tour around the Town, whether it is a meal or even just a cup of hot chocolate or a snack.?

For more on Aurora's Deck the Halls Tour, including how to register, visit aurora.ca/deckthehalls. Prizes for Best Decorated and Honourable Mentions will support local businesses. Both residences and businesses are welcome to register for the tour.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter