

## Aurora homeowners gear up for this week's Holiday Home Tour



**By Brock Weir**

Aurora interior designer Wendy Neal only has a few last-minute touches to make before she opens up her Highland Court home to visitors this week as part of Pickering College's Holiday Home Tour.

Ms. Neal's home is one of three Aurora homes participating on the seven-home tour, which gets underway this Friday at the Newmarket private school.

When Ms. Neal hears the word "Christmas", she is a traditionalist at heart with visions of red and white dancing in her head. But, a few splashes of purple here and there reveal the designer's touch.

"It's all about the sparkling lights," she says. "I have been working as a decorator for 16 or 17 years and I have always loved putting colours together."

Ms. Neal started in the business working alongside her father in Montreal's fabric and textile industry, but she was pulled to the home décor end of the business rather than the fashion side fairly early on.

"When the opportunity presented itself, I took some courses and I confirmed I knew what I wanted to do," she explains. "I am a believer that you either have a knack for style, décor and putting things together, or you don't. The door opened for me to do a consult job and that led into a bigger job, and word of mouth got my business going. I feel fortunate to be able to do something I absolutely love."

It is clear that this love extends to her Aurora home, which is situated just off Kennedy Street West. Glittering lights abounded when The Auroran visited last week, and now it is just a matter of minor tweaks before show time.

"It is rewarding to see your ideas, and your clients ideas, come into fruition," she says.

The 10th Annual Pickering College Holiday Home Tour gets underway this Friday, November 21 at 5.30 p.m., going to 9.30 p.m. The tour resumes Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are still available for the tour itself by calling 905-895-1120 x360.

Friday's highlight, a VIP Design Tour with Cobi Ladner is now sold out, but ticketholders can take part in a design talk and book signing with Frankie Flowers on Saturday, which will be held in conjunction with a Seasonal Boutique and Café held at Pickering College itself. Admission to the Boutique is free, and it runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Each participating home in Aurora and Newmarket will be paired with local musicians, and sponsors which will provide a flavour of local dishes and products to tour-goers.

Ms. Neal's home will host a cheese tasting courtesy of Nature's Emporium with Friday's music provided by musicians from The Piano Studio, and Saturday's entertainment by woodwind musicians from Pickering College.

'I hope when people come through here on Saturday and Sunday, they feel a sense of comfort, welcoming, and a sense of Christmas,' says Ms. Neal. 'That is what I have tried to achieve in this house. You are welcome everywhere. There isn't one room that you can't go in, or a place where you can't sit. I hope our house says, 'Welcome, enjoy, and Merry Christmas.'