

Aurorans show off the spirit of the season in Deck the Halls Tour



They've hauled out the holly and evergreen boughs, found the perfect places to hang twinkling lights, and festooned their fences with ribbons and ornaments ? now local residents who are bubbling over with the spirit of the season are ready to flip on the switch for the annual Aurora Deck the Halls Tour.

Hosted by the Town of Aurora, the Deck the Halls Tour of spectacularly-decorated local homes was initially conceived at the height of the global pandemic as a way to bring the community together while still allowing residents to stay in their ?bubbles? as they drove from sight to sight and site to site.

But the Tour itself proved so popular it's been brought back for each successive Holiday Season.

Launched on Monday, December 12 and running each evening from 5 ? 9 p.m. through December 23, more than 25 homes and attractions are on this year's tour with special attractions planned throughout the length of the self-guided party.

?The appreciation for the magic of the season, the lights and displays, have only become more popular since we had that time for a pause in 2020 and 2021,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. ?The tour has only grown in momentum and has become a total feel-good experience that has been created by the community for the community.?

Many of the participants past and present already went all out on their festive decorations, says Ms. Ware, but she suspects the idea of being on the tour has only helped homeowners ?up the ante? on their dazzling displays.

Case in point: five homes on Lougheed Court near Sisman Avenue and Timpson Drive coming together for a joint feast for the eyes.

?The tour really is a tour to help guide the families in how to find some of the most creative houses,? says Ms. Ware. ?Although they're looking specifically for the individual spots [on the tour] they're still seeing homes between those locations that are highly decorated and this gives them a route to follow and an evening out with the family ? the family they live with, or I do hear from several people it might be the case they're picking up their parent or a grandparent from a retirement home and taking them out for an evening. It's heartwarming to hear those stories when they come together.

?I have also heard from some residents that have done the tour in one direction and then reverse the direction and follow the map differently and saw different perspectives that way, which is also cool to hear how people are approaching the tour. We've also heard from some that split it up over a series of nights and it becomes their go-to: they have dinner, pack up the car, and this is part of their family time. It is also screen-free time.?

In addition to the 25 tour locations, this Friday, December 16 promises to be an extra-special night with ?special features and shenanigans along the tour route,? says Ms. Ware. Santa Claus and Ms. Claus, for instance, are set to be at the Joint Operations Centre on Industrial Parkway North that evening.

?He may also be coming with some mischievous elves who may be helping at some of the homes that evening,? says Ms. Ware. ?Even if you've seen the tour once, see it again. Even though you're looking for specific homes along the way, there will be other homes organically throughout those routes that will also be decorating. I'm a firm believer that no two tours will be the same. There will always be changes.

?I do feel personally this season is short, so this is a self-guided tour that leads you from one magical spot to another magical spot and I don't know anyone who can say that we have too much magic ? there's always room for more!?

For more, including tour locations, visit www.aurora.ca/en/recreation-arts-and-culture/deck-the-halls-tour.aspx.

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