

Calling All Griswolds: Aurora wants to see your Christmas Creativity on Deck the Halls tour

If you deck your halls with something just a little bit flashier than boughs of holly, consider putting your home on Aurora's upcoming Deck the Halls Tour.

Now in its fourth season, the Town's Deck the Halls tour brings together spectacularly decorated homes across the community for self-directed driving tours that showcase the best seasonal spectacles Aurora has to offer.

The tour was born out of the global pandemic as a way to create a holiday event that residents could enjoy safely in their pods from the comforts of their own vehicles. Despite our pod days being behind us, the tour endures and has become a popular annual attraction.

House tours, light tours, have been ongoing for decades and I think with how things just got so busy prior to COVID that more efforts got concentrated on things like parades," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "During COVID it became so much more important to really bring the light back to the community as well as people at that time had more flexible schedules to do the tour. Coming out of COVID, the feedback we got from the community was 'do not stop, keep going,' so it has been a tour that has continued and I hope it will still continue for years to come."

It endures, she adds, because of "appreciation for the season." The feedback homeowners get for their efforts "not to mention the gift card prizes that could come their way" is just the icing on the yule log.

"It is kind of like a personal invitation to share your work with the community," says Ware. "Prior to the tour, this would happen just through word-of-mouth."

The Deck the Halls Tour will take place Monday, December 11 through Saturday, December 23 from 5 to 9 p.m. All homes and businesses are invited to join the tour and can do so online through aurora.ca/deckthehalls, where the tour map will also be available in early December.

Prizes will be available for first place and honourable mentions, with gift cards highlighting local business.

"We're still in the very, very early stages and we still need more houses to join the tour. There will never be enough houses, personally, because there are so many houses out there, there is so much cheer being spread, but we need people to register their house so we can put it on the tour and help guide people's travels so they truly have a great experience," says Ware. "Each home or business is so unique, some have landscaping out front, some have big windows, some have decks. I say, work with what you've got. Lights are always great, so are characters, so are inflatables, but really take advantage of the terrain and landscape you're starting with. It is almost like art in that your canvas is there, your paints are in the garage, and now is your chance to really gussy up the canvas and get it up to what it really can become."

"While it is a tour, it is also a competition and the community gets to vote on their favourite stops along the way. There is community spirit and a bit of friendly competition to up the ante."

By Brock Weir
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