

Holiday Home Tour provides a seasonal cavalcade while supporting community

Homes in Aurora, Newmarket, King and Stouffville are in the midst of being transformed into winter wonderlands ahead of next weekend's Holiday Home Tour and Seasonal Boutique, hosted by Pickering College.

The Holiday Home Tour runs Friday, November 17 and Saturday, November 18, throughout all four communities, with the seasonal boutique set for the Saturday at the Newmarket-based independent school.

Tickets for the tour are on sale now at www.pickeringcollege.on.ca/community/events/holiday-home-tour and proceeds will benefit Blue Door Shelters and their Leeder Place family shelter.

The 2023 Holiday Home Tour is a return to form for Pickering College after a few years off and a few virtual pivots due to the global pandemic.

Now that they are able to return full-force, organizers are eager for the public to see how leading interior designers in northern York Region have come together to transform a variety of homes ? rural and suburban, newly-built and historic.

?Between 2005 and 2019, we had the same format, striving for six homes,? says event co-chair Susan Cooper. ?During COVID, in the first year, we weren't able to pull anything together in time. In 2021, we had a virtual home tour and the whole process of putting it together was different ? making it viable, vibrant and exciting so people watched. But it is the in-person tour where people get to interact with the teams that are in each home. It's not only what you're looking at; it's the smells, the feelings the camaraderie, so for the first time in four years, we're back with the full tour and we're very excited about that.?

Each of the six homes on this year's tour will have its own unique ambiance, tailored by several local interior designers and design firms. They include Andrea McMullen of ADM Design Inc., Linda Mazur of Linda Mazur Design, John McFee of McFee Maintenance and Construction; Carol Ann Horvat of Peacock & Owl; Catherine-Lucie Horber of Royal Interior Design Ltd., and STILE Contracting + Design.

?We want a variety not only in architecture but location ? some rural, some suburban,? says Cooper. ?The homes are not just current, we love to have a historic home where possible and we have two this year, so we're very fortunate. Historic homes lend a whole other viewpoint to the tour. It's about being able to showcase not just what is most current in colours and decorations. It's being able to provide a seasonal home for everybody. Everybody can find something that is applicable to their situations. We have a variety of ages of home, location, design style, and décor. Each home has its own theme title, its own colour palate, and method of decorating. There are some commonalities ? everybody always has to have some glitter and sparkly stuff and everybody has trees, but each home is uniquely themed!?

Each home will also have unique elements courtesy of the Pickering College community, including a student jazz combo at one home, choir singers at another, and, of course, a few surprises along the way.

Outside of the tour itself, the fun continues over at Pickering College where their large gymnasium will be transformed into a seasonal boutique featuring a wide variety of local vendors.

?The two events really work hand in hand together and it is a great way to be connected with the community that we receive students from,? says Marlin Gold, Manager, Parent Engagement & Strategic Events, for Pickering College. ?It will have about 50 vendors, all local, selling great products. We want to make sure we're covering a whole bunch of different areas, so you can get candles, clothes, soaps, lotions, even hot sauces and food samples. We're also bringing in food trucks so guests can get a bite while we're there.

?We're exciting to welcome people to Pickering. It's a beautiful gem in York Region. We're really looking forward to welcoming so many different vendors, some that have been coming for years and years and years [and] many that are new to the show.?

Blue Door Shelter, adds Gold, has "been fantastic" since they were announced as the charity partner of this year's Home Tour and will be represented prominently at the Boutique so they can raise awareness of what they do and the housing challenges that face so many in the York Region community.

"It's nice for our community, our students and our families to see those connections and we will look for opportunities once the event is concluded to try and tie the educational elements to it, wherever possible, including students volunteering and parents getting involved," he says. "There are lots of opportunities to keep that learning going forward."

Tickets for Pickering College's 2023 Holiday Home Tour are on sale now through www.pickeringcollege.on.ca/community/events/holiday-home-tour at a variety of price points. The site also includes a full roster of local vendors that will be featured at the Boutique.

Readers of The Auroran can receive a \$5 discount on their purchase by entering the discount code AURORA5.

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