

?Bring it home,? say organizers of Aurora Home Show



By Brock Weir

?We don't want to give away all our secrets,? says Robin Taylor-Smith, Chair of the Aurora Home Show organizing committee, as they put the finishing touches on next week's annual event.

While we know the annual extravaganza featuring hundreds of local businesses looking to spruce up your homes and properties, new products created by local inventors, innovators, and artisans, and myriad community groups, opens at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC) next Friday, April 15, both Ms. Taylor-Smith and co-organizer Sandra Watson are reluctant to play their hand.

?Let's just say when people come into the Show, it will be a whole new experience, visually, and our feature area will be much larger than last year and way more exciting,? says Ms. Taylor-Smith. ?It is going to be quite fabulous ? and I think we're almost doing it too grandiose for a three day show, but it will be quite extraordinary.?

Regular visitors to last year's Home Show were already treated to a ?whole new experience? as organizers had to move the three-day exhibition from the Aurora Community Centre to the SARC due to a scheduling conflict with the Aurora Tigers Junior A hockey team.

The move forced a re-think of the tried and true plan which brought both challenges and rewards.

Evaluating what worked and didn't work last year, they learned from the experience and will soon be ready to welcome the first members of the public.

?Last year was our first year at the new venue and we just took what we learned from last year and improved upon it,? says Ms. Taylor-Smith. ?We made changes from the good, the bad and the ugly of last year, so that is why it will be improved and better this year ? we've overcome the major stumbling blocks.?

One particular improvement, notes Ms. Watson, is the flow of traffic within the Home Show itself.

?Last year we kind of forced people to go in one arena and out the other,? she says. ?This year, we are giving them the option of going left or right. The other thing that was kind of confusing to some of the attendees last year was the location of the marketplace tables in the middle of the west arena. We have taken those and placed them in the walkway between the arenas, which we are making a much brighter space, making it very obvious that it is a walkthrough.

?Last year, we found it was a little dark as the landscapers used their landscape lighting [in their displays] and some were a little apprehensive about going in.?

Ms. Taylor-Smith agrees, noting some didn't feel it was a continuation of the show and despite signage and young volunteers helping to direct traffic, it was ?cumbersome? and a bit muddled.

With the marketplace taking over the pathway between the arenas, the landscapers and decorators have much more elbow room to create their show-stopping feature areas.

While Ms. Watson jokes that ?panic? is just about to set in as crunch time approaches, there is excitement in the air as the Home Show gets ready to welcome many new faces to the floor, including Hunter's Woodworks, a local company which makes home-built wooden furniture with trendy ?live? edges, as well as Windfall Ecology Centre, which will be on hand to promote the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, as well as Hydroxyl Environmental, new to the Home Show, providing air purification systems.

?It's a good mix of exhibitors,? says Ms. Watson. ?They seem to really outdo themselves. Each and every one of the booths are incredible.?

Visitors, they note, come for many different reasons, whether it is to improve their homes, get new decorating and landscaping ideas for the year ahead, or simply to find new resources in the community. Some landscaping and decorating companies, as well as those providing services, often book up a full season's worth of work at this event alone, they add.

For more on what's in store at the 2016 Aurora Home Show, please see the special supplement in this week's Auroran.