

Popular Christmas Home Tour returns to Aurora this week for second year



By Brock Weir

Aurora's Gowan Court will be hopping this week as two local homes join five others here and in King as part of the second annual Aurora Christmas Home Tour.

Homeowners Christine and Charles Doke are putting the finishing touches on their home this week with designer Mary Klein of Aurora Paint and Decorating, to create that perfect blend of 'glam' and tradition, all in the name of raising money for children's charities.

'I have to dust!' said Ms. Doke with a laugh on what's left on her to-do list, as Ms. Klein and designers from Bradford Greenhouses scurried around the home finding last-minute inspiration for their final game plan.

'I think these ladies are going to take over and just come through like a whirlwind. I will come through the door here one day and it will all be done!'

Ms. Doke said it was the combination of being able to open her home and contribute to charity which sealed the deal to offer her home as part of the tour. Mary approached her, and while they have been working together on their vision, Ms. Doke says she's very much let Mary take the lead.

'We want to create a warm and inviting space,' said Ms. Klein. 'Growing up, we would decorate our house as a family and we would always have great big family events leading up to Christmas.'

'I thought this was a very doable space. Her exterior is very beautiful and I thought we could really work with a great colour scheme and an idea of what we're trying to portray. It's what we're all about at Aurora Paint and Decorating and we hope people coming through will see that.'

While they are working on creating and recreating the traditions of yore, Ms. Klein has coaxed the Dokes into foregoing their regular colour schemes into something a little more adventurous and trendy.

'We're definitely doing a completely different colour scheme than what they were used to,' says Ms. Klein. 'They have done golds and reds in the past, and now we're incorporating plumbs, pewters and soft greys, so it will be a big switch from what they are used to. She has a lot of other holiday décor that will work nicely with what we're doing, so we're incorporating both.'

'We took the lead, I made sure she was okay with plumbs. It would be terrible if you were walking around your home and you just had these colours that are not to your style!'

Although she says she has a few surprises left up her sleeve for the family, the Dokes are content to sit back and let it all unfold in the lead-up to Friday. It is also very much a family affair and while Christine and Charles are intent on seeing the finished result, their son is also looking forward to being an active volunteer on the evening, one of many selected to fan out among the homes to welcome and guide people around the home.

"This is definitely about holiday glam," says Ms. Doke. "The house has a casual elegance about it and we want to make sure it has a nice elegance to it, but also a casual feeling while [at the same time] looking like Christmas. I am hoping that some people come into the home and go away with something. There is always one little thing you pick up here and there that you incorporate into your own home.

"This gives people a chance to go around their community, get different ideas, and I am sure they are curious to see some of the interiors of some of their neighbours' homes as well. There is also some curiosity from neighbours on, "Why the heck would you want to do something like this!?"

For tickets, scheduling information, and more information on charities benefiting from the second annual Aurora Christmas Home Tour, visit www.aurorahometour.com. Tickets are also on sale at Niche Décor (242 Earl Stewart Drive), Aurora Paint and Decorating (15216 Yonge Street), or Jonathan's Restaurant (14845 Yonge Street).