

The dining room is aglow with soft lighting and the glimmer of gold. **OPPOSITE, TOP & BOTTOM LEFT:** The porch is draped with greenery and incorporates plenty of natural, organic elements. **TOP RIGHT:** The Pickering College Holiday Home Tour team: (standing) Pamela Byer and Darlene Rupke, (sitting) Shelley Frank and Julie Cochrane. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The addition of feathers adds a playful touch.



# HOMESPUN *holiday*

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How many houses resonate with more than a hundred years of holiday memories? This home on Botsworth Street in Newmarket is one! Built circa 1906 for local businessman and member of town council George Binns, it's designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Beautifully maintained, it sits on a slight elevation, catching the eye of those driving by, but never more so than in December when it's decked out for the holidays, in this case, the **12th Annual Pickering College Holiday Home Tour**. *Continued on page 56*



**LEFT:** The addition of greenery in the kitchen adds a simple holiday touch. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A window seat is made cosy with a faux fur throw. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The sun-filled enclosed porch is dressed up with sweet animal printed pillows. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Donald Chrétien's bold artwork makes a statement in the living room. **BOTTOM:** Mixed metal hues paired with earthy elements like burlap create holiday magic in the living room.

A two-and-a-half storey red brick Edwardian with a cut-stone foundation and numerous Queen Anne elements – wide bracketed eaves, a wraparound veranda, fish-scale pediment with fan motif and stained-glass windows and transom – the home is already a showstopper by virtue of its architecture. Dressing it for the holidays demands just the right touch.

“When we start developing a theme for a home on the Holiday Home Tour, it’s a group effort,” says **Pamela Byer**, General Manager and Senior Decorating Consultant of **Design Line Studio** who was asked to decorate the home – her third time on the tour. She teamed up with homeowner **Julie Cochrane**, **Darlene Rupke**, owner and principal designer at **Seasons Floral Studio** in Schomberg and **Shelley Frank**, Manager of Special Events at the Newmarket independent school **Pickering College**, who shepherds the tour each year. “Pamela is a veteran on our tour – we could not do it without her support and Darlene’s dazzling floral designs speak for themselves,” Frank says.

The exterior palette – red clay brick, a 1900s hunter green front door and trim and creamy veranda railings – lends itself to holiday decorating. Flocked trees from Design Line Studio flank the front door. Byer and Rupke wrapped them with burlap, and added pine cones and twinkle lights. Polar bear pillows grace Muskoka chairs. Natural grass rushes, birch logs and branches and cedar and wicker balls are cleverly incorporated.

Cochrane’s partner is Canadian Aboriginal artist Donald Chrétien. Some of you may remember his work showcased at the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver. “Between the colours and lines of Donald’s artwork and the elegant antiques the couple have collected over the years, we intentionally downplayed the holiday decorating, allowing the house to tell its own story,” says Byer. The neutral palette included light metals, paper and burlap and live materials such as leaves, birch,

feathers and pine cones. All of this tied in beautifully with the artwork’s indigenous nature. Cedar and pine added a fresh, earthy scent throughout the house.

The interior reflects a respect for history. Original mouldings and trim were refinished. The tin ceiling’s patterned 18-by-18-inch panels lend a rustic touch. The past is revisited with antique hardware. A farmhouse sink is paired with a high-end faucet and modern appliances were given vintage fronting. Floral



wreaths, silvery cushions and a faux-fur throw add seasonal touches.

Embellish means to “make more beautiful” and that’s what the design does. In the living room, greenery jazzes up the live edge table and slim brass wall sconces. “Too much colour in the design would have been chaotic, fighting for prominence with Donald’s art,” says Byer. The tree is a bit of a throwback to the Edwardian era. It didn’t start that way, but as Byer and Rupke moved along, historical influences were at play. Ribbons and bows, the show-stopping feather topper and ceramic ornaments echo tones from the kingston valance and drapery panels. “I could not have done this without Darlene,” Byer is quick to point out, “she was visionary when it came to floral effects.” Feather boas grace newel posts and mixed-material clusters add interest.

In the dining room, burlap bows wrap the antique ash dining chairs. Instead of stockings, burlap bags lie beside the tree. Despite their modern lines, three “twiggy trees” – Byer’s quirky name for them – play beautifully with the room. Creamy antlers in the table’s centerpiece were a one-off find. Place settings are layered, bringing together wood placemats, jute and yarn, silver serving plates, napkin holders and pretty silver reindeer napkins. *Continued on page 58*



feature

Lighting is key in any design. Functional lighting was already in place in the house, so the addition of seasonal lighting was purely for effect. “What you see in the day is beautiful, but at night it’s magical,” says Byer. Hundreds of twinkle lights add holiday magic, reflecting off walls and ceilings.

While decorating for the tour, Cochrane asked Pamela to work her design magic on the master bedroom. Canopy bed, draperies and bedding were in place, so Byer added a tufted indigo blue velvet window bench with crystal nailhead trim, toss pillows in blues and creams, a cable knit throw and elegant gold mirrored bed tray. Since the bedroom would be part of the holiday home tour, Rupke added an elegant blue glass vase filled with hydrangeas, white roses, magnolia leaves and pine boughs.

The hallway ceiling is ornate, with a painting of an iridescent blue sky with puffy clouds. Chrétien’s artwork lines the walls and purple drapery panels hang on windows. “We kept the design slightly subdued here using texture instead of colour to complement rather than compete with everything else going on,” says Byer.

Cascade lights are still a relatively new addition to holiday decorating. “They’re energy-saving LED and super versatile – drape them, use them in a ribbon effect, or pull them apart,” says Byer who used them in hallways.

Some houses just belong on a holiday home tour and a heritage home dressed up for the season is a door on the past we’re eager to open. The only thing missing in this home is “chestnuts roasting on an open fire,” something we’re sure George Binns was doing during Christmas, 1906. **OH**

*“Each year the committee endeavors to highlight homes in different communities. This year’s tour showcased homes in Aurora, Newmarket and Sharon. As a unique feature of the 2017 tour, we introduced a concert series at the Sharon Temple. Through the tour we make every effort to provide exposure to local businesses and support local charities. A portion of this year’s proceeds were directed to Doane House Hospice. The concert series was a fun and festive stop on the tour, while introducing guests to a beautiful and important historic aspect of East Gwillimbury.”*  
– Shelley Frank, Manager, Special Events, Pickering College.



**LEFT:** The stairwell is high on style with a show stopping ceiling, original artwork and the addition of holiday florals. **BELOW LEFT:** The office is a haven in which to get things done. **BELOW:** Brilliant blue enlivens the master bedroom.



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