

Gardening: Gifts to gladden the heart, D7

HOMES

AND REAL ESTATE

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Editor: Liz Pogue • Telephone

Mike and Shellie Gudgeon have taken care to give their 1891 Vic West home a decorating touch that captures the spirit of its time

Old world ambience

By JOANNE HATHERLY
PHOTOS BY RAY SMITH
Times Colonist staff

Brown and russet hues do not a Christmas colour scheme make, but tour-goers on the upcoming 8th Annual Holiday House Tour will see that this rule can be broken and with wonderful results.

A visit to the Vic West home of Mike and Shellie Gudgeon while it was still being decorated reveals cantaloup-sized globes and russet-hued jingle bells atop a sideboard in the foyer. Over-sized nutcracker soldiers, some stretching to eight feet in height, and a pair of six-foot tall reindeer, wait to be placed at their stations around the home's interior and wrap-around porch.

Most homes would be overwhelmed by the sheer size of the Gudgeons' ornaments, but not this four-storey, Queen Anne-style home of soaring ceilings and expansive rooms.

"When you put normal-sized ornaments in that house, they just get lost," says the Gudgeons' decorator Cory Hewko.

The Gudgeon house is one of two Vic West homes making their debut on this year's tour, which is being put on by the Needs of Victorians Society (NOVS).

"It's the first time the tour will cross the bridge," says Shellie Gudgeon, who is delighted to throw open her doors for the event, which helps to fund breakfast programs in the Greater Victoria School District.

Past NOVS holiday house tours have provided tour-goers with a treasure trove of unique decorating ideas, but anyone strolling through the Gudgeon home will be inspired by more than the holiday baubles in this fabulous heritage home.

The house was once known as "Maplewood." Built in 1891, it nestles into a steep, landscaped slope overlooking the Selkirk Trestle. Like so many elegant Vic West homes, Maplewood had fallen into serious disrepair by the 1980s.

"There were lean-to's built against it," says Shellie. "And unbelievably, renters built open fires right inside the house." The house was purchased and restored by Martin Whitehead and Hugh Peet in the 1980s, earning a Hallmark Society President's Award in 1986.

When the Gudgeons bought the home in 1992, it had been divided into suites. They've spent the past 13 years slowly reclaiming the house so that now it is a single family home.

"It's an evolution," says Shellie of the massive undertaking. "We just go year by year."

Muted brown, chestnut, mint greens and dusky yellows dominate the Gudgeons' ornaments.

"The house is already filled with strong colours," says Hewko, explaining the unusual holiday colour scheme. The home is drenched in rich navy, paprika, burgundy, sunflower, red and tobacco hues. "Traditional reds and greens would create confusion."

Please see GUDGEON, D2



The Queen Anne-style home of Mike and Shellie Gudgeon soars four stories above their Vic West lot.



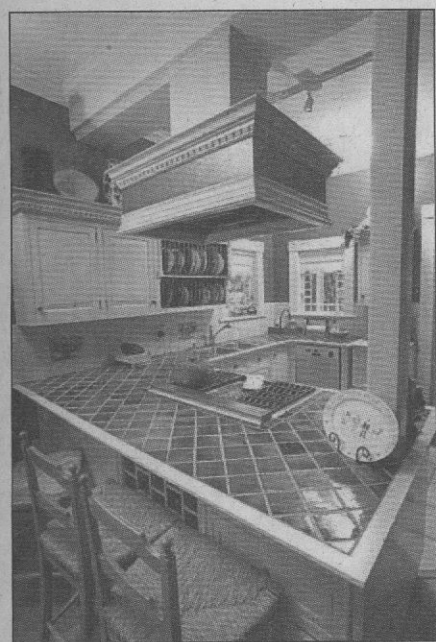
The master bedroom welcomes with rich fir floors and a view of the Gorge waterway.

NOVS 8TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR DETAILS

The Holiday House Tour features eight houses decorated by Laurie McKay from Better Gnomes & Gardens, Cory Hewko from Cory's Designs, Michelle Bond, Mara Lee, Kerry Poulsen, Sharon Sinclair and Graham Smyth from The Bungalow, and decorators at Dig This, Chintz & Company, and Craigdarroch Castle. When: Monday, December 6 from 4 to 9 p.m. Price: \$20

\$2 raffle tickets available for a number of prizes including a day cruise to Pender Island to the new Poet's Cove Resort with lunch included, and two nights' accommodation at Coast Discovery Inn and Marina in Campbell River

Tickets are available at all Victoria branches of TD Canada Trust, The Shieling, The Bungalow, LA-Z-BOY Furniture Galleries, Sawyer Sewing Centre, Insideout Home & Garden and Nicholas Randall Limited.



Cobalt-blue ceramic tiles add zest to antique cabinets in the kitchen.



The dining room is perfectly suited for family meal-time gathering.



The library is adjacent to the sitting room, which is a handy arrangement for the voracious reader.

Gudgeon: Home is big enough to decorate on a grand scale

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Hewko uses red, gold and royal blues as an accent to the Gudgeon's Tuscan-coloured holiday decor, starting in the dining room with red-tinted hurricane lamps bedded amid earthy, round-cor-

nered square Italian dinnerware.

When you arrive, flagstone steps lead up to the covered wrap-around porch bordered in gingerbread spindles and furnished with comfortable wickers.

Miniature square window panes edge the white-mullioned windows. The fish-

scale and shiplap siding set into the asymmetrical design are painted in soft heritage greens and yellows. Pediments and gables are cloaked in deep navy, bordered with crisp white trims. The red brick chimney is exposed on the interior and culminates in a star-shaped corbel visible through a fourth-floor skylight.

Inside, the Gudgeons set their Christmas tree in the arc made by the curving staircase.

"We go out to a friend's property and look for the spindliest, tallest 'Charlie Brown' tree we can find," says Shellie. "We don't look for pruned and pretty."

Standing in this central spot, the tree seems to stretch beyond its borders so that it can be viewed from nearly every room in the main level and even into the second storey.

The main floor bath does not escape the festive ambience. Painted in a deep green, the room's highback soaker tub will be filled with floating red rose petals and candles during four hours.

Cobalt-blue ceramic tiles add pizzazz to antique white panelled cabinets in the kitchen. A zero-clearance fridge nests into the wall beneath a dentil-and-rope crown moulding.

The house is replete with old-world ambience in rich fir flooring, deep fluted mouldings and Quebec pine armoires and sideboards. A gallery of the Gudgeon children's artwork fills a wall in the music room and library, introducing energy and life to a home that could easily be overrun with its own grandeur.

"This is a family home. It's very much lived in," says Shellie. "We don't try to make it a showhome. There's too much action in here to allow that."



Candles in red glass holders, adorned with scarlet beads, make a festive table.