

Home and Lifestyle show puts green living, sustainability in the spotlight

By Brock Weir

The countdown is on to Caledon's 2024 Home & Lifestyle Show, set for April 12 ? 14 at the Albion Bolton Community Centre.

Built around the traditional themes of Renovate, Decorate, and Landscape, this year's event will feature everything you've come to love about the annual spring mainstay, but with a new and growing emphasis on sustainable and green living.

Among the features this year will be a Green Living section presented by EcoCaledon, a chance to get up close and personal with electric vehicles through Electric Vehicle Evolution, presented by Fines Ford Lincoln, and the opportunity to explore a tiny home right there in the Community Centre, hosted by Caledon's Resort HQ.

This renewed focus on green and sustainable living was inspired by ?huge feedback? from the public, says producer Liz Shaughnessy.

?People often ask me what our objective is in producing the show,? she says. ?The one rule of thumb you learn when you have done this many shows for this many decades is quality exhibitors attract quality visitors. People who come to the Home & Lifestyle Show are coming because they have the intention to do something with their home, inside or out. This show has curated its exhibitors and curated them under the categories of Renovate, Decorate, Landscape. Visitors want to know more about home maintenance certainly today more so than ever.

?The home is a huge asset that needs to be protected. Home maintenance updates with eco-friendly options and energy savings is on everybody's minds and we have found exhibitors who speak to that directly. A lot of people are saying, ?Okay, my home is now worth more than 300 per cent what I paid for it ten years ago; I'm prepared to do the interior facelift it needs.' Whether it is taking the basement and making it into a home theatre, taking one of the bedrooms you don't need and making it into a remote office, people are willing to invest in their houses now because it is such an important financial asset and probably increasing more in value than their stock portfolio!?

With that in mind, Shaughnessy says keeping an eye on things like energy efficiency ? whether through the installation of new windows and doors, and heat pumps ? is a win-win for all.

?Showcasing a tiny home on the show floor courtesy of Resort HQ is very exciting,? she says. ?I have personally visited their homes and they're exquisite. These homes are so beautifully done and fully-furnished that you could just pack your clothes and dishes and basically just move in. There's a tremendous amount of interest in this for a lot of reasons: an aging generation, a younger generation that can't afford the down-payment much less the mortgage, and people are using it as a second cottage ? but it is turnkey, like having a condo in a resort area?. It's a lifestyle consideration; some people are downsizing and these tiny homes are becoming popular.?

Your vehicle is also a lifestyle consideration, she adds, and it's important to consider all the options, including electric vehicles (EVs).

?Your car is part of your lifestyle and if you choose to go EV, you have some considerations to make,? she says of the presentation, which will include EV expert and podcaster Kenneth Bokor on the evolution of EVs.

?I'm also excited about the Green Living component. I'm excited about having exhibitors at this show who support that [element] because half the exhibitors of the show are the solution to green living. It wasn't deliberate, it just happened ? it all comes down to windows, doors, roof, insulation, geothermal heating, heat pumps ? and all those exhibitors are on the show floor, which can make each household decrease their carbon footprint, and if they choose to sell, it makes their home more valuable.

?We, as residents and homeowners, can take responsibility [in sustainability] by making changes in our homes inside and out. As consumers, we're not aware enough on what we can do to minimize our own carbon footprint and support Canada's Climate Action Plan.?

The 2024 Home & Lifestyle Show will fill the Albion Bolton Community Centre (150 Queen Street South, Bolton) the weekend of April 12 ? 14 and will feature an array of events throughout the run, including the popular Ask the Experts stage, which will take place April 13 and April 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

All, notes Shaughnessy, has been organized with a keen focus on local business.

?The quality and diversity of the exhibitors on the show floor is more exceptional than it has ever been. We work very adamantly to support local businesses ? that's the first objective. We vigorously sought out quality exhibitors within a local market. That doesn't mean every exhibitor is from Caledon, because that wouldn't be possible, but we go when there is no exhibitor that fits roofing, for example, we'll go to King, Vaughan and Orangeville. We heavily source local, buy local.?

This year's event will once again support Caledon Meals on Wheels.

Caledon Meals on Wheels Executive Director Kim Rodrigues says the last seven years of support from the Home & Lifestyle Show has allowed the organization to raise funds, awareness, build their volunteer base, all in ?aid of our mission of providing nutritious meals to those most in need in our community.?

?The platform offered by the Home and Lifestyle Show has not only allowed us to spotlight the essential services we provide but has also facilitated meaningful connections with attendees who have transformed into vital supporters ? be it as donors, volunteers or advocates. Moreover, the generosity of providing us with complimentary space at the event holds immense significance for our small non-profit, alleviating the financial burden associated with participation and enabling us to allocate more resources toward our cause.?

For more information about the upcoming event, visit homeandlifestyleshow.ca. While there, subscribe to their mailing list for free admission to the show. Tickets will also be available at the door, cash only, for \$5. Admission for kids 12 and under is free. The venue is pet-friendly and offers free parking.