



"I've been to other cities in Canada and in the United States but no city has this — they are just totally unique and there are so many. There are more than 100 confirmed heritage structures downtown. They are so colourful

plus the Victorian architecture is well loved. But I think it's the way they are painted that stands out the most."

And that's definitely what the pieces in the Jellybean Row series capture.

The original series is bold and vibrant, while the Christmas line is warm and inviting, yet both represent the unique look of the downtown homes like no other folk art can.

"For the Christmas ones we've gone with a dusk light — around 4 p.m. — it's not dark yet but the windows inside are glowing and you can see people doing things inside," says Meeker. "They almost tell a story and people talk about how they get drawn into the windows and what's going on inside."

The original series is so bright, says Meeker, that they almost "smack you in the face when you walk into a room."

JELLYBEAN ROW AROUND THE WORLD

It seems that there is a real universal quality to the pieces as people from around the world love the unique homes, as pieces from Jellybean Row are shipped around the globe.

"About half of the sales so far are being sent away," he explains. "They go to Qatar, Scotland and New Zealand and I hear about them going to these countries and I love it because they are hanging on walls around the world. I get such a sense of pride knowing that a piece of Newfoundland is everywhere."

The fact that is Jellybean Row is something that is designed and manufactured here is another reason people love it.

"It's so Newfoundland," adds Meeker, "and people say it's a convenient gift they get a loved one each year. They never have to worry about if it will fit or if the colour is right. Some buy them to match while others like a contrast."

It's something that can certainly cater to each individual's taste, and so far, it seems that buyers especially love the homes with the Victorian elements. Meeker anticipates they will do more pieces in that style in the future.

So how exactly do they choose what homes to recreate? Well just like when you're walking around downtown, it's usually that special home that catches his eye.

"We keep an eye out and if we see something we take

pictures. When we do a house we do change some details but now we even have people calling us and inviting us to do their homes."

Although they change some details of each home to make them generic and fit into the series, Meeker says on more than one occasion people still recognize them.

"One person came up to me and said, 'I grew up in that house — I was born in that room and my grandmother died in that room.' It was quite amazing to hear."



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— Geoff Meeker

Whether or not you've lived in a home downtown or have spent a lot of time around the rows of houses, there is something about those bold, whimsical, yet beautiful homes that many locals, and visitors, love. They are a part of our heritage and are definitely a very unique part of Newfoundland. ▲