



OUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE BOROUGH OF KINGS

**Time travel**  
Holiday Nostalgia Rides return to the New York City subways!

BY JESSICA KAPLAN  
PHOTO BY JESSICA KAPLAN

For the first time in over a decade, the New York City subway is offering a special holiday-themed ride. The MTA has announced that it will be running a "Time Travel" service during the Christmas season. This service will allow passengers to board a specially decorated train that will take them on a journey through time, from the present to the past. The train will be decorated with festive lights and garlands, and the conductor will be dressed in a period costume. The ride will be available on the F train, running from 96th Street to Times Square. The MTA says that the ride is a "great way to celebrate the holidays and enjoy the city's rich history."

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Shinecraft technicians Konstantine and Aleksandr install a giant 'Merry Christmas' sign.

# Deck the halls

## Meet Shinecraft, the team illuminating Brooklyn

BY GABRIELE HOLTERMANN

'Tis the season to "deck the halls," but for Shinecraft, a holiday and lighting design company, it's more than a jingle. Shinecraft owners Aleksandr Slatvitskii and Aleksei Sinenkov are bringing holiday magic to life by transforming clients' homes into dazzling winter wonderlands.

Slatvitskii, a former air traffic controller, and Sinenkov, an airline pilot in their native Russia, moved to Brooklyn seeking asylum after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Both had run a similar business in Russia. Inspired by Brooklyn's extravagant holiday displays, particularly in Dyker Heights — a neighborhood that draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year — they saw a market for their expertise. They registered Shinecraft as an LLC in October 2022 and decorated their first homes that winter.

Every December, Dyker Heights residents deck out their homes with glamorous snowmen, decorative Santa Clauses and Nutcrackers, and millions of twinkling lights, inviting visitors from around the world to marvel at the festive displays.



The home of Lucy Spata on 84th Street in Dyker Heights, pictured in 2021, is credited as the originator of the Dyker Heights Christmas Lights.

File photo by Paul Frangipane

Lucy Spata, credited as the pioneer of the age-old tradition now known as Dyker Lights, began decorating her home in 1986 after her parents passed away, honoring her mother's love for the holidays. What started as a small tribute has become a Brooklyn must-see, with some

families choosing to decorate themselves and others enlisting the help of companies like Shinecraft to keep up with the ever-growing extravagance.

Brooklyn Paper caught up with Slatvitskii and his team on a recent Saturday morning as they worked on the Colletti

family's home in Bay Ridge — a nearby neighborhood with its own affinity for grandiose displays. Technicians Konstantin and Aleksandr were already hard at work installing decorations and lights along the rooflines and stair railings.

"In Moscow, Russia, we decorated mostly for New Year because for Russians, New Year is a little bit bigger than Christmas," Slatvitskii explained. "And we also decorated houses and other buildings."

This holiday season, Shinecraft is decorating nearly 100 homes. Their service begins with a free project estimate and includes design, measurements, renderings, decoration —





Shinecraft, a holiday and lighting design company founded by two asylum seekers from Russia, is transforming nearly 100 homes this season into dazzling winter wonderlands. Photos by Gabriele Holtermann

whether using their own materials or items provided by clients — installation, electrical hook-ups, and maintenance.

Shinecraft works closely with clients to realize their vision. “Some customers who bought a new house... need some ideas, and we come up with designs,” Slatvitskii said. “So we take a picture of the house and have a designer who [provides] two or three options with different types of lights.”

The team starts decorating homes in early November, wrapping up by mid-December. “We still have some customers who are still thinking about the design,” Slatvitskii said.

Depending on the size of the property, decorating can take anywhere from a few hours to a full day. The Colletti home, which featured three reindeer in the yard, a giant “Merry Christmas” sign, lights, and candy cane decorations, took about three hours.

This is the second year Carl Colletti, owner of Cobbler Express in the Financial District and a recipient of New York Magazine’s “Best Cobblers” recognition, has hired Shinecraft. He said he was “happy” with their work the first time.

Colletti, whose favorite holidays are Thanksgiving and Christmas, shared that he used to handle the decorating himself but no longer had the energy.

“If I had to do this, it would take me two days, and I’d be out of commission for a week,” Colletti said.



Aleksandr Slatvitskii, Konstantine, home owner Carl Colletti, and Aleksandr pose for a photo.