



BUILDING THE GAMES

The athletes may be the stars of the 2010 Winter Games, but the backdrops for their amazing feats are these equally impressive venues

BY SHERI RADFORD // PHOTOS BY KK LAW

CANADA HOCKEY PLACE

Ice Hockey

Though it has a new moniker during the Games, GM Place is still the same arena Vancouverites know and love. Completed in 1995, downtown's 19,300-seat venue serves as home ice for the Vancouver Canucks during hockey season and hosts big-name concerts ranging from Britney Spears to The Police. Its NHL-sized ice, which is smaller than international-sized ice, is being used during the 2010 Winter Games, marking a first in Olympic history.

UBC THUNDERBIRD ARENA

Ice Hockey, Ice Sledge Hockey

This 6,800-seat arena on the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus opened in 2008. You might call UBC the birthplace of Canada's Olympic hockey dreams: in 1963 at UBC, in preparation for the 1964 Olympic

Winter Games in Austria, Bob Hindmarch and Rev. Father David Bauer established Canada's first national hockey team. The newborn team almost scored bronze.

VANCOUVER OLYMPIC/ PARALYMPIC CENTRE

Curling, Wheelchair Curling

This eco-friendly building, completed in 2009, recycles energy and minimizes water use. Post-Games, it will become a community centre housing a curling rink, ice arena, aquatic centre and library.

PACIFIC COLISEUM

Figure Skating, Short Track Speed Skating

The newly renovated home of the Vancouver Giants hockey team has been used for everything from concerts and basketball

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The twin domes of BC Place (left) and Canada Hockey Place (right)



RICHMOND OLYMPIC OVAL

Speed Skating

Named the 2010 Winter Games's "sexiest" venue by *Omega Lifetime* magazine, this new building on the Fraser River keeps racking up awards for its stunning design and eco-friendly building practices. The extraordinary 2.6-hectare (6.5-acre) roof, made from pine-beetle-damaged wood, collects and funnels rainwater, while energy required to make the speed-skating ice is captured and used elsewhere in the building. During the Games, you might notice 13 million cranberries floating in the shapes of a maple leaf and the Olympic rings in the river outside the Oval; this is a tribute to Richmond's iconic berry. Post-Games, the Oval will house fitness and sports medicine centres, as well as ice rinks, hardwood courts and running tracks.





The Olympic and Paralympic Village Vancouver, on False Creek

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games to ice shows and circuses. Opened in 1968, this 14,200-seat arena was home ice for the Vancouver Canucks until GM Place was completed in 1995.

WHISTLER CREEKSIDE

Alpine Skiing

After several unsuccessful attempts over four decades, Whistler (in partnership with Vancouver) finally won the bid to host the Winter Games. Now Whistler Mountain's original base, which opened in 1966, has undergone more than \$30 million in upgrades to prepare for the monumental event. Men's alpine skiing events take place on the black-diamond Dave Murray Downhill, the world's second-longest downhill course, while Franz's Run hosts the women's Olympic and all Paralympic alpine events.

WHISTLER OLYMPIC/ PARALYMPIC PARK

Biathlon, Cross-Country Skiing, Nordic Combined, Ski Jumping

Opened in 2008, after years of work and \$120 million spent, this sprawling park in the picturesque Callaghan Valley hosts a third of all the Olympic events and half of all the Paralympic events. The park's elevation ranges between 840 and 930 m (2,756 and 3,051 ft).

THE WHISTLER SLIDING CENTRE

Bobsleigh, Luge, Skeleton

Completed in 2007, this slick new venue is part of an extremely elite club: there are just 15 international-competition sliding tracks in the world. And if the secret to a building's success is location, location, location, then it has a bright future, indeed. It sits on an area of Blackcomb Mountain called Wild Spirit Place (*Kwekwayex Kwelh7aynexw*) by the Squamish people and Spirited Ground (*A7x7ulmecw*) by the Lil'wat people.

CYPRESS MOUNTAIN

Freestyle Skiing, Snowboard

A 30-minute drive from downtown Vancouver, this area is popular with locals for skiing, snowboarding, tubing and snowshoeing. In case of mild weather, a snow-making system (complete with 35 snow guns) guarantees a winter wonderland.

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC VILLAGE VANCOUVER

Forget about the cost overruns and financing snafus: this billion-dollar village is a wonder to behold. Located on the waterfront in False Creek, with a view of downtown, the low- and mid-rise apartment buildings are housing 3,000 athletes and officials in style during the Games. After, they will be sold as eco-friendly condos.

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC VILLAGE WHISTLER

In the gorgeous Cheakamus Valley, bordered by forests and the Cheakamus River, this mix of apartments, townhomes and hostels comprises the home-away-from-home for more than 4,000 athletes and officials during the Games.

BC PLACE

For the first time ever, the Winter Games's opening and closing ceremonies are being held indoors. The nightly victory ceremonies, featuring a stellar line-up of musical acts, also take place inside downtown Vancouver's 55,000-seat domed stadium, which opened in 1983. Better take a snapshot of the venue's marshmallow-like roof, since it won't be around much longer: a state-of-the-art retractable roof will replace it next year.

WHISTLER MEDALS PLAZA

After the Games's medal presentations and nightly concerts are a mere memory, this outdoor venue's amphitheatre, chil-

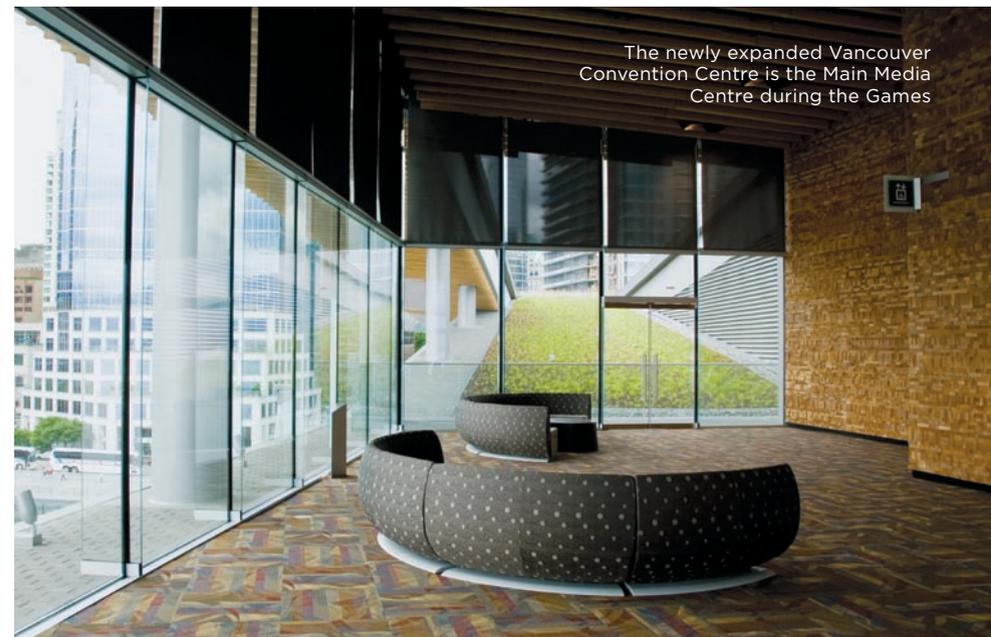
dren's play area and performance spaces will still attract locals.

WHISTLER MEDIA CENTRE

Journalists lucky enough to be assigned to Whistler are headquartered in the Whistler Conference Centre, which underwent a huge renovation in 2003. The building is now larger—and kinder to the environment.

MAIN MEDIA CENTRE

Media assigned to Vancouver are in for a treat at the newly expanded Vancouver Convention Centre. Its east building, which showed off the city to the world during the Expo '86 World's Fair, and its brand new west building now cover 111,500 sq m (1.2 million sq ft), or four city blocks. Approximately 40% of the west building juts out over the ocean. Its interior walls, made from renewable Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast hemlock, resemble artfully stacked lumber. And its 2.5-hectare (6-acre) living roof—complete with four beehives, a bee-keeper and 400,000 plants—helps the environment. **W**



The newly expanded Vancouver Convention Centre is the Main Media Centre during the Games