

Fishing lodge will become a hotel for Games

Owner hopes to attract corporate client to floating accommodations at north end of the Granville Bridge

BY BRUCE CONSTANTINEAU, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE NOVEMBER 20, 2009



North Island Lodge's home is normally at Langara Island in the Queen Charlottes. It will be in False Creek as a floating hotel during the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

Photograph by: George Fischer photo, West Coast Fishing Club

A luxury Queen Charlotte Islands fishing lodge will become a False Creek floating hotel for up to 24 people during the 2010 Olympics.

West Coast Fishing Club announced Thursday the North Island Lodge based on Langara Island will become the 2010 Lodge, located directly under the north end of the Granville Bridge for the entire month of February. The 12-bedroom lodge is currently moored on the Fraser River, near the south terminal of Vancouver International Airport.

The fishing lodge operator hopes to attract a corporate client willing to pay \$177,100 for exclusive use of the lodge for 28 days, which works out to \$527 a night for each room. But company representative Annabel Hawksworth said it might also negotiate partial stays for private customers.

"We've had some interest already but it seems like people are still hesitant to lock down and make a commitment," she said. "I've found that with other restaurants and clients -- lots of things are discussed but nobody seems to be really firming up on things. I really thought things would start to get locked down in September and October but there still seems to be some hesitation out there."

West Coast Fishing Club had to receive approval from the RCMP Integrated Security Unit before it could proceed with its floating hotel proposal, because it will be located close to Olympic venues BC Place and GM Place.

The fishing lodge features a large dining room, a commercial kitchen and a lounge area with oversized windows.

The lodge won't be the only floating hotel trying to attract business during the Games; the 1,110-room cruise ship Norwegian Star will be based in North Vancouver for the duration. A Vancouver entrepreneur also proposes to provide Olympic accommodation by bringing Shuswap houseboats to Vancouver and putting them on land near False Creek.

Vancouver and Whistler tourism officials, meanwhile, announced an aggressive pricing strategy Thursday to lure visitors to the region before the 2010 Olympics. The Games often create an "aversion effect" among tourists who assume the host cities are sold out, too busy or too expensive before the competition begins.

Tourism Vancouver said tourists now can book a one-night stay at 19 city hotels for as low as \$75, including breakfast. The accommodation must be booked by Nov. 30 and is valid for stays until Jan. 30.

Tourism Whistler now offers two nights' accommodation and a two-day lift ticket from \$205 a person until Dec. 21.

"We're trying to remind people there are great deals out there before and after the Games," said Tourism Vancouver vice-president Stephen Pearce. "It's not uncommon for people to think there's no room left in Vancouver but there are all kinds of opportunities available."

He said some tourists are feeling more confident about travelling again; the number of U.S. visitors to Metro Vancouver rose by seven per cent in September when compared with the same month last year. But the number of European visitors fell by 12 per cent and Asian visitation dropped by 16 per cent.