

NEWS > VANCOUVER OLYMPICS > STORIES & PHOTOS BY MIKE COHEN

Vancouver Jewish community gears up for 2010 Olympics

VANCOUVER — With the 2010 Winter Olympic Games a year and a half away, Vancouver's Jewish community is preparing to showcase itself to the world.

The Winter Olympic Games will take place here and in Whistler from Feb. 12 to 28, 2010, followed by the Paralympic Winter Games for athletes with disabilities March 12 to 21, 2010.

It is estimated that the games will be attended by 2.3 million people and include 5,000 athletes and officials, 10,000 media and 14,000 volunteers.

Mark Gurvis, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, said his group is starting to think, along with the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver, about what they will want to do as a Jewish community to prepare for the Olympics.

"There are really two things that we need to be thinking about," he said.

"What will be possible to do to welcome the Israeli athletes who are here to compete in the Games? Ideally we will want to create some kind of opportunity for our community members to meet them and celebrate the moment with them. Secondly, how can we welcome other Jewish visitors who will be visiting our area for the games?"

"Vancouver is a wonderful city and the Olympics is a wonderful opportunity to showcase that. We look forward to joining together with all the many people and groups in our region to welcome the many visitors who will be coming here for the Games."

Gerry Zipursky, who retired last year after 25 years as executive director of the community centre, noted that in 1986 Vancouver hosted the world for Expo '86.

"At that time the community centre, as well as some other organizations, planned a number of special events to welcome visiting members of the Jewish community," he recalled. "We were proud of our city as well as our Jewish community and warmly received the thousands of visitors to our community. I am sure the same reception will be due in 2010."

Rick Nelson, who succeeded Zipursky at the helm of the community centre, envisions a variety of ways to link to the 2010 games. In addition to welcoming the Jewish community to Vancouver, they will be co-hosting a significant exhibit related to the 1936 Berlin Olympics. In fact, over the next year and a bit leading to the games, the JCC will be presenting programs funded by the Cultural Olympiad. Nelson said they are in discussions with a variety of Olympic committees and they anticipate other building uses related to the Olympics.

Vancouver area synagogues are preparing for thousands of visitors from around the world to attend services during the Olympics.

Shannon Etkin, executive director of Congregation Beth Israel on Oak Street, believes it will be very important to "encourage" international visitors to come join local services.

"We certainly expect to have more visitors to our services," she acknowledged. "Synagogues and other Jewish organizations are working independently and collaboratively on various ideas. The Olympics will certainly mark an excellent opportunity to show what a fabulous Jewish community we have."

Vancouver is home to Canada's third largest Jewish community, some 25,000 strong. That is up from 19,375 in 1991 and 7,310 in 1961. There are some 15 Jewish congregations in the Greater Vancouver area representing all Jewish movements, with the Conservative congregations boasting the largest number of members. Reform congregations follow in second place, with the Orthodox and Chabad congregations attended by a dedicated minority. However, approximately half of the Jews living in the Vancouver metropolitan area are not affiliated.

While there are more than 24,000 rooms in Greater Vancouver, with more than 13,000 in the downtown core, they will be hard to come by when the games come to town.

Jodi Sprackman, director of community relations for the all-suite Rosedale on Robson Hotel (www.rosedaleonrobson.com) and the daughter of famous Canadian Jewish cookbook author Noreen Gilletz, notes that Olympic fever has already hit Vancouver.

The Rosedale on Robson is two blocks away from BC Place, the home of the opening and closing ceremonies for the Olympics, and GM Place, where hockey and figure skating will take place. Noting its sponsorship of last year's presentation of *Hana's Suitcase* and the 2008 *Chutzpah! Festival*, the Rosedale on Robson booked the last of its 219 rooms in mid-July for the Olympic period.

"We are excited about what the Olympics will do for the city in terms of tourism after they are over," she said.

Restaurants will also cash in.

Peter Horwood, CEO of the Jewish-owned Bridges Restaurant in trendy Granville Island, said, "We are looking forward to the challenge of 2010. Labour will be tight, prices will go 'international,' neighbours will complain about the noise and we plan to make lots of money."

Daniel Frankel, the 34-year-old Jewish restaurateur who owns and operates half a dozen dining establishments, notes that his Mill Marine Bistro and Bar is right next to the convention centre, which will serve as a major Olympic headquarters. He is looking at the possibility of installing a large awning to increase his winter dining capacity.

Daniel Frankel takes a break at his Mill Marine Bistro and Bar.



Haifa-born restaurateur makes his mark in Vancouver

By Mike Cohen
Tribune Correspondent

VANCOUVER — Only 34 years of age, Daniel Frankel is already a veteran in the Vancouver hospitality business. As president, CEO and founder of the Daniel Hospitality Group, he and his management company oversee a growing number of operations, including the Stanley Park Pavilion, Stanley's Parks Bar and Grill, the Prospect Point Lookout Complex in Stanley Park, the Mill Marine Bistro and Bar, the Mill Dock, Delilah's Restaurant and Martini Bar, the Coal Harbour Café & Catering Operations and Danny's Dogs & Shakes.

Frankel was born in Haifa and raised in Tel Aviv. At five and a half the family moved to Vancouver. He attended the University of Western Ontario, where he obtained an honours BA in fine arts and business. In terms of a career choice, that was virtually a no brainer.

"I sold ice cream at Prospect Point in Stanley Park as a 14-year-old," he said. "At the time, Prospect Point was run by my dad, so I put together a 12-page proposal for the general manager. My father wanted me to do it that way — he set up the barrier, which was a great lesson for me. It was my first business plan. The only bumper was I made enough money to buy my own car, but had to wait until I turned 16."

After graduating university, Frankel opened his first restaurant in 2001 — the Coal Harbour Café & Catering Co. A year later he acquired the entire Prospect Point food services operation from his father.

Frankel donates regularly to the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, where he is part of the Ben Gurion Society. He is on the steering committee for an Israel at 60 Gala in September.

Now living in the suburbs with his wife and year-old daughter, Frankel still remembers with a smile his younger days living downtown. It is why he has played a supportive role towards the development of the Vancouver Downtown Jewish Community (VDJC).

"They don't have a home yet so I try to help by providing a venue whenever I can," he said.

Just a few years ago there was no Jewish identity in downtown Vancouver. Now, in addition to the VDJC, there is also Chabad of Downtown. This community is one of the fastest growing in BC, with approximately 2,000 Jewish people living downtown, and countless more working there, spending most of their waking hours as part of the downtown community. They represent all ages and lifestyles, come from many different countries and

represent the broadest possible religious denominations, including those with a secular, non-religious perspective. The VDJC is an all-inclusive organization, not affiliated with any religious group. They choose to partner with different Jewish organizations who share a common goal or interest depending on the event. For instance these two new organizations decided that Chanukah was a great Jewish holiday to show how different community groups could work and celebrate together by respecting their differences and concentrating on what all Jews have in common.

"Shabbat dinners were always big in my house growing up," said Frankel. "The Stanley Park Pavilion is used for Shabbat dinners, along with Chanukah parties the Jewish Book Fair and other Jewish events."

Frankel also works with the West End Community Centre Association and the Coal Harbour Community Centre. He is the benefactor of the Frankel Scholarship offered at King George Secondary in Vancouver, and is the founding director of the Coal Harbour Business Association.

The Daniel Group also supports community organizations by providing function space for events such as the YWCA Battered Women's and the Adoptive Families Association of BC's annual fundraisers.

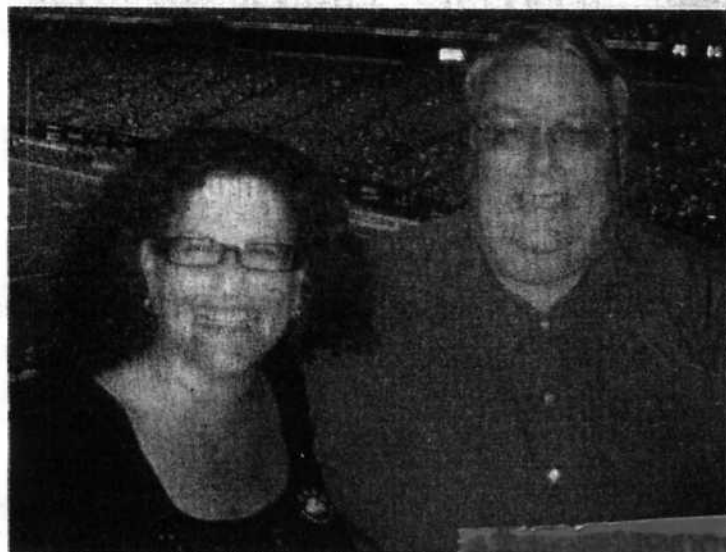
One of Frankel's flagship spots is the Mill Marine Bistro (www.millbistro.ca), which he designed and built from scratch in 2003. This place truly epitomizes the west coast casual dining scene, smack on the waterfront in Coal Harbour, overlooking the north shore mountains.

While confessing that he would love to convince his mother to help him add her famous matzah ball soup to the menu, he's particularly happy to have the Lotsa Lox pizza available. It features wild BC smoked salmon, pesto goat cream cheese, green onions and capers. They also include hummus and pita among the appetizers.

The Mill provides unobstructed views of the North Shore Mountains, the Burrard Inlet and Stanley Park. Its menu is inspired by fresh British Columbia produce and seasonal ingredients.

"We buy organic when we can," Frankel said. The Bistro & Bar seats 60, and the patio can accommodate 200. It also offers Vancouver's first and only boat-thru foodservice through its dock, The Mill Dock (Harbour Green).

Other items worth sampling include the original Mill nachos, edamame (Japanese soy beans in the pod with rock salt), their variety of big salads, the BC Salmon Burger and some superb pastas, notably the chicken linguini and the penne primavera.



Jodi Sprackman, seen here with her general manager James Miller, works on bringing a lot of Jewish content to the Rosedale on Robson.