

# Finishing touches put on Hockey House

By Gregory Strong, *The Canadian Press*, [thecanadianpress.com](http://thecanadianpress.com), Updated: 10/02/2010

VANCOUVER - On the outside, Molson Canadian Hockey House looks like a giant white tent in a parking lot by the side of a highway.

Walk inside though and it's like Studio 54 meets the [Hockey Hall](#) of Fame.

Flashing lights, a concert stage and loads of colourful leather couches create an energetic nightclub vibe inside the 6,000-square metre venue. Throw in large video screens, framed jerseys and vintage photos, and you've got a hockey fan's paradise.

"Welcome to the cathedral to hockey," Hockey House creator [Jordan Bitove](#) told reporters after they toured the venue Wednesday.

The Hockey House is a stone's throw from [GM Place](#), which will be known as Canada Hockey Place once the Winter Olympics begin Friday. However, it's not a cheap ticket. Fan zone passes cost \$99 and they're almost sold out. Pricier VIP passes are still available for those looking for the all-inclusive food and drinks treatment.

Hockey fans will find it hard not to get pumped up when they take a walk inside.

There are pictures from the 2002 [Salt Lake Games](#) gold medal wins, banners featuring players competing in Vancouver, trophies and old skates and sticks. Giant 2010 hockey jerseys are stretched out near the ceiling.

Tyler Stewart, drummer for the [Barenaked Ladies](#) and the venue's executive director for entertainment, said he was blown away when he walked in the doors.

"It's absolutely exceeded my expectations," Stewart said. "This is a shrine to hockey."

The real action will be near the concert stage, which is flanked by large video screens and a bar that oozes Canadiana. Servers pour beer with decorative birch branches lined up behind them, with an impressive water tank — complete with pebbles and floating Maple Leafs — built right into the bar.

Lounges are set up at the far end of the tent for Canadian team family members, International Ice Hockey Federation delegates and VIPs.

Stewart's band is part of the entertainment lineup, along with fellow Canadian musicians Sam Roberts, Tom Cochrane, Colin James, and others.

Over 3,000 people are expected to pack the tent daily once it opens Friday. Olympic athletes are tabbed to drop in, there will be live radio broadcasts, and the Great One himself will be joined by former teammates on Wayne Gretzky Tribute Day on Feb. 19.

Event producer Jared Florence said the excitement inside should build to an exciting climax on the Games' final day of Feb. 28, when he's hoping Canada is playing for gold in men's hockey.

"I think we've already accomplished that — in terms of what people feel," Florence said. "Now it's just a matter of making sure they win the gold so they blow the roof off the place."

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