



Sitka Log Homes photos

The attention to detail is one of the reasons this company is sought after.

## Known around the world

Sitka Log Homes has put Prince George on the log-home map

We live in an age where the term “value added” has come to mean anything from adding grooves to a piece of wood to the production of fine instruments. This term has also become a political football as some companies are moving into the sector in an effort to defeat current countervailing duties with the U.S.

But for John Johnson of Sitka Log Homes, this phrase means very little. One of B.C.’s most famous builders of log homes, for more than 30 years now he has built these beautiful works of skill and substance and has left the politics to others.

“I’ve been around forever,” laughed Johnson. “I’ve been doing this for 33 years, with the company, Sitka, being around for 10 years. I see the industry only getting stronger.”

And while this company has been producing quality log homes for many years now, it was the work done for the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City that has garnered international attention to



this company. This was not an easy job either. Three lodges were built, with one at around the 6,000 foot elevation mark and the other two at the top of the mountain.

It should be mentioned that this company has experience building in semi-inaccessible places. Sitka builds the structures at a 10,000-square-foot enclosure near Prince George and then numbers and codes every piece before disassembling the building for shipping. The structure is then rebuilt at the site using cranes. The mountain-top building at Salt Lake required a little extra work however.

“Down there, everything had to be off-loaded at the bottom and pulled up on wagons behind D-7 Cats,” said John-



son. “At only 20,000 pounds per load, we were up and down the mountain for months.”

Add to that the organizational problems behind overseeing a local workforce and working around the numerous other contractors at the site and the experience was definitely a test of the Sitka system.

“We do this kind of thing on a weekly basis, but typically we send two to three trailer loads and a supervisor. In this case we hired other crews, companies and machinery. I was there all summer. I didn’t sleep much, but I slept well when I could.”

And the result of this expertise and willingness to overcome problems was a spectacular lasting legacy of log facilities that enhance the look of the entire ski area.

Another interesting aspect about this company is the use of “denim” wood. This is wood that has been attacked by the mountain pine beetle, which leaves behind a light blue stain that runs through the veins of the log.

“People are after more character than in the past,” explained Johnson. “It used to be only white, straight logs—now knots, bumps and colour are highlighted and are a choice of architects and homeowners.”

Working closely with the buyers and providing a fine product have allowed Sitka to furnish structures in Asia, the U.S. and Australia as well as around Canada.

“In Australia we had to go through bureaucracy and quarantine, but it was ground-breaking.”

So with a go-anywhere attitude and the skill to build what the customer wants, this company has definitely carved a niche for itself in the industry.

