

SMITHWOOD
BUILDERS

A ROOM with a view



Smithwoods Builders Owner



JIM SMITH

Smithwood Builders: “Where the Heart Is” in Delta, British Columbia

History

Jim Smith is the award-winning owner and operator of Smithwood Builders, a custom home and renovation company, operating out of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. Jim had worked for other builders for many years before starting his own business six years ago. He recounts: “I learned a lot from other builders – both the good and the bad things to do. The companies I worked for had been in business for 30+ years, so they had much to teach me. I’d also seen the perils of this industry when one of the companies went bankrupt after only eight years in operation.”

It was while building his own home that Jim and his wife decided to start their own business. That’s how Smithwood Builders came to be. “We decided to specialize in building custom homes and doing renovations. Smithwood’s custom homes are high-end and built with high performance in mind.”



Steps in Preparation

Jim walks us through his usual process when working with a client: "Often an architect or designer will recommend Smithwood to a client/potential homeowner. The client may have heard of us in some other way or may have not, but either way, they choose us because they liked our project management technique and the quality of our projects. We sit down with the client, who gives us a detailed vision of what he or she wants their home to be like. Then, we try to educate the client on all that we expect to accomplish."

Jim continues: "We also discuss the budget and what to expect in this regard. If they want something that is too expensive, we tell them so right at the beginning, so there won't be any surprises. Next, we make sure that we have all the necessary trade partners onboard. These include plumbers, electricians, drywall workers, etc. We've been working primarily with the same group of partners over the years.

They have similar expectations to ours, so we can work together as a team. We rely on them as an extension of our team."

A Shout to Our Contractors

Smithwood's beautiful projects would not be possible without their key partners and subcontractors. While there are too many to name all of them, some of Smithwood's closest partners are: Monarch Flooring, who does their hardwood flooring; Ingrain Millwork and Quality Cabinets, who build their cabinetry; Midland Appliances, who supply the various appliances required; Pacific Peak to Peak, who does their plumbing and heating; Nickel Heating, who does their air-conditioning and HVAC systems; Will's Wall & Ceiling, who specialize in doing drywall; and finally, Pure Image, who supply Home Automation.



Tips to Stay Within a Budget

Of course, budgeting is an integral aspect of the construction industry. Jim recounts some of the budgetary knowledge he's acquired over the years: "The pandemic knocked us out somewhat and the prices then fluctuated a lot. We ordered supplies, such as windows, before construction started in case the prices were to increase. The suppliers held these items for us to avoid uncertainty in prices. So, buy out the project as soon as possible. Of course, pre-planning is extremely important. Educate yourself. Learn about what is available, such as what sort of heating you want. For example, you may want radiant flooring or forced air; there's a big difference and, of course, both have their pros and cons."

"Right now, more people are opting for the modern look in homes as opposed to the traditional. In the last few years, most of our clients prefer the modern clean look. A lot of our award nominations have been for our modern designs. However, we still enjoy working on offer the traditional designs for those who prefer that aesthetic."

Where the Heart Is

Smithwood's 2022 Georgie finalist for Best Kitchen Renovation Under \$150,000, titled "Where the Heart Is," is a beautiful Cape Cod-style home. Greys, whites, and hints of blue give the house a warm, welcoming feel throughout. The bi-folding accordion doors in the kitchen and dining room open onto a large, covered patio, outdoor kitchen, dining area and swimming pool; when the doors are fully open, the exterior and interior spaces bleed together to give a seamless feel between what are normally seen as two bifurcated realms.



One Great Construction Tip

When asked for one great tip for homeowners looking to build or renovate, Jim states: "Try to get an architect and designer right away," Jim advises. "Next get a builder as soon as possible.

A builder will have realistic costs based on past projects and firsthand experience. If the builder and designer are on the same page, it's easier to plan your budget. As a builder, we give guidance to our clients. Let clients know the prices of things beforehand. For example, share with them the cost of the countertops, roofing, fixtures, etc. Educate your client as much as possible so that they feel they're getting good value and they're getting what they want."

New Projects

"Recently we finished a custom home which helped us win HAVAN's awards of excellence for 'Custom Home Builder of the Year.' We were also nominated eight times in the Georgies this year, including for Custom Home Builder of the Year.

"Recently, we built two Laneway Homes, which are smaller, but we make them as efficient as possible. Many people in Vancouver like smaller homes now from an environmental standpoint."

"In addition to our custom homes, we also do renovations and have been nominated for multiple awards in this area."

Smithwood were also finalists in the 2023 Geogies for Best New Small-Scale Home up to 1000sq. ft for two separate projects: In Standing Order and Modern Flair. They were also a finalist in the category Best Single-Family Kitchen – Up to \$200,000 for their Black Is the New Black project. They also had projects as finalists in the Best Kitchen Renovation under \$150,000 category: East Van Special and Industrial Modern. In addition, Decked Out Studio was nominated in the Best Outdoor Living Space – New or Renovation category. Finally, Black is the New Black was also nominated for Best Innovative Feature – New or Renovation.

We will be running an article on some of these projects in a coming issue. We would also like to congratulate Smithwood Builders on their win in the 2023 CHBA National Awards for Housing Excellence for Best Detached Custom Home and Best Custom Kitchen for the Black is the New Black project!



**For more information on
Smithwood Builders, visit
<http://www.smithwood.ca/>**



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