

# HOME IS WHERE THE HEARTH IS

FIREPLACES

Homeowners can enjoy a warm fire from the inside and outside of the home simultaneously – without having to invest in two separate fireplaces, with Heat & Glo's Twilight™ II.

photo courtesy of Heat & Glo

## The Newest Directions in FIREPLACES

by Linda Anderson

Nothing says “welcome home” like a fire crackling in the fireplace. Today's homeowners are installing prefabricated fireplaces everywhere – kitchens, master baths, bedrooms and even home offices.

## WOOD, GAS OR ELECTRIC – THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Fireplaces can burn wood, natural gas or propane. Electric units offer a realistic-looking “flame” at the flip of a switch. There’s even a fireplace that creates flame from water.

For the authentic crackle and smell of a fire, go for a wood-burning fireplace. It must be vented through the roof, which will limit where it can be installed, however. And be prepared to schlep wood and deal

with smoke that may accumulate on walls and draperies. “The wood smell is part of having a wood fire,” says Leslie Wheeler with the Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association, in Arlington, Virginia. “The sounds, smells, sparks and necessary tinkering with the fire are all part of the ambience.”

New homeowners today are overwhelmingly choosing propane or natural gas fireplaces. With authentic looking logs, they offer ambience and convenience. New technology allows them to be direct vented through a wall, so they can be installed just about anywhere. “Direct vent gas fireplaces draw air for the combustion of the fire from outside, not from inside the home, and they expel the fire’s combustion exhaust to the outside,” says Vince Bossany, public relations manager, Hearth & Home Technologies in Lakeville, Minnesota. “This protects indoor air quality and ensures oxygen is not consumed from the indoor breathing environment.”

There are also unvented products available that draw combustion air from inside and are efficiently designed to deliver almost 100 percent of the fire’s heat into the home. However, homeowners concerned with indoor air quality should note that they also deliver 100 percent of combustion exhaust into the home because they do not have a vent to the outside.

According to Bossany, electric fireplaces are one of the fastest growing trends in the hearth industry – particularly popular where venting may be an issue. They can be installed anywhere and manufacturers continue to improve the flame’s appearance.

For a true wow factor, consider Heat & Glo’s Aqueon™ fireplace. It separates water into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen burns, creating a flame while fresh oxygen is expelled into your home. Each unit must be custom made and carries a price tag of about \$50,000.

## FIREPLACES OFFER ART AND AESTHETICS

Fireplace manufacturers continue to push the limits in creating exciting new looks for every home. Heat & Glo touts its Cyclone™ gas fireplace as “Fire Art.” Designed for smaller spaces, spinning gas flames burn within a vertical cylinder. The front of the unit is available in brushed nickel or copper to match a room’s décor. Available in a stand alone or wall mount version, the Cyclone ranges from about \$4,000 to \$8,000 depending on the installation. It is a real show stopper and adds pizzazz to any room.

Lennox offers the Reflections™ electric fireplace with High-Definition Fire Vision technology that displays a 3-D simulation of

a burning fire. It has a built-in DVD player to replicate the sight and sounds of a fire. Homeowners can control the “flame” and crackling sounds with a remote control.

The Fire Orb™ is a ceiling-suspended, wood burning hearth with a firebox that can be rotated 360 degrees. It can hang from virtually any ceiling since its flue can be up to 40 feet long.

The Hearthfall™ mixes the power of fire with the serenity of water for a dramatic effect. Turn it on and water cascades in front of burning flames. It is available in numerous stone surrounds including travertine, marble, granite and lapis.

## STYLES VARY BY ROOM, FUNCTION

“Outdoor fireplaces are being used to expand a home’s living space,” Bossany says, “because they can add a month to spring or fall. Of course, in warmer climates outdoor living spaces are a year-round extension of the home at less cost per square foot.”

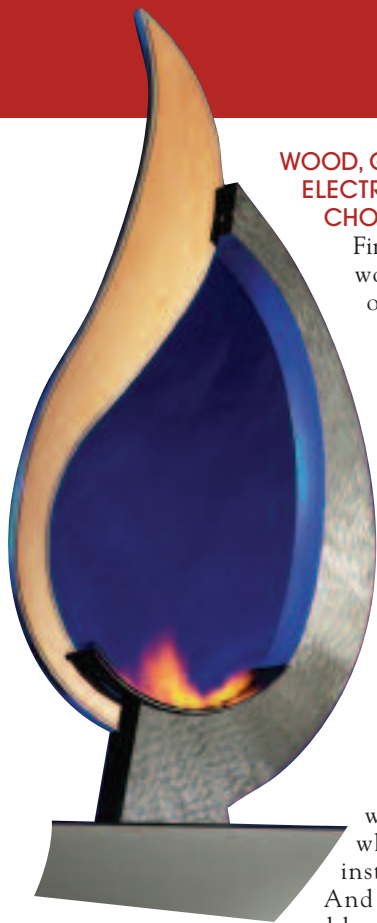
See-through fireplaces are growing in popularity because they serve two rooms at once. “We’ve done a bedroom/bath shared fireplace,” says architect Bruce Lyon, from San Ramon, California. “It added comfort and a cozy feeling to both spaces.”

Terry Stork, an Omaha, Nebraska, real estate agent who specializes in new home construction, agrees. “In the past, two-sided fireplaces were often very plain units on the edge of a wall. But the folks who are using them today generally include full face mantles on both sides. In fact, they often create two very different treatments. On the great room side, the fireplace may have neutral tile and a very traditional white surround. On the kitchen side, it may have the same granite used on the countertops and a wood stained mantle and surround.”

A twist on the see-through model is the indoor/outdoor model. It is a cost-effective option for your deck or patio and adjacent indoor living area. Heat & Glo’s Twilight™ II is a popular two-sided fireplace that requires no additional venting and meets both gas fireplace and window standards. Homeowners can select separate surrounds for the inside and the outside, tailoring them to match each space’s décor.

## SMALLER FIREPLACES OFFER VERSATILITY

European style fireplaces offer a footprint for smaller living spaces. Taller than they are wide, Lyon says they work especially well with fireplaces without a raised hearth.







"If you push a smaller, traditional fireplace to the floor (with no raised hearth), it can look like a mouse hole," he says. "When you have a taller opening, it doesn't get lost in the wall."

Fireplace Xtrordinaire's Bed & Breakfast™ is designed for corner or limited space installations in small, intimate settings. It can be elevated well above the floor, ideal for viewing from bed or even be installed in the midst of kitchen cabinetry. With a variable heat output and remote control with automatic temperature control, the fireplace is the ultimate in convenience and romance.

For another romantic touch, tuck a small gas or electric fireplace in the wall next to your jetted bathtub. Install the Looking Glass™ portrait style gas fireplace by Lopi, which includes an aromatherapy feature, to waft subtle scents throughout the room, and you'll have your own day spa. Or create a refuge of health and relaxation with the Helo Sauna Flame™ – a soothing gas fireplace incorporated into a sauna room.

### SURROUNDS TO FIT ANY DÉCOR

Fireplace surrounds come in all types of materials – real and faux – to fit any décor and budget. Lyon says the most common fireplace surrounds in California are made of tile, stone or precast concrete. Marble is still "tops" with traditionalists – and brushed stainless steel is popular in the high-tech home. Faux adobe fits well in Southwestern architecture, especially in kitchens using lots of tile, while faux river rock may be right in a Northwestern cabin. Log mantles are particularly popular in homes that have rough beams on the ceilings.

Just as mixing woods in hardwood floors and kitchen cabinetry is popular, Stork notes

designers are also mixing woods on fireplace surrounds. "They may use less brick and more wood and combine hickory and oak or hickory and cherry, with one stained lighter and the other stained darker for contrast. Or, they may skip the wood and surround the fireplace with cultured stone that extends all the way to the ceiling."

Grant Gribble of Gribble Interior Group in Orlando, reports stacked stone is very popular for surrounds, as well as slate. "These are stones which, in contrast to marble or granite, can give a much less formal feel and offer a warm and cozy sense to the room. Cast stone surrounds (either forced 'crushed' stone or concrete) are also in demand. Their carved limestone look is particularly effective in Spanish and Italian architecture."

Wheeler says real stone was common in the past but was "heavier than all get out. Now faux marble, slate or granite is the ticket. You can dress it up or down, depending on the room," she says.

Fypon makes a lightweight, one-piece urethane mantle/surround which can be painted or stained to fit your décor. Fireside Furnishings offers a wide variety of surrounds in primed, medium density fiberboard and finished or unfinished oak, as well as cast surrounds that replicate real stone but are actually cement reinforced with fiberglass.

**BURN, BABY, BURN** Fireplaces increase the value, comfort and aesthetics of a home. They give an immediate feeling of being welcomed that is unmatched by any other home option. Given the number of styles and looks available today, there's no excuse not to light up your home with a fireplace. ■

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT: The Aqueon™ (from Heat & Glo) revolutionizes fireplace design by extracting and burning the hydrogen fuel found in water.

photo courtesy of Heat & Glo

OPPOSITE LEFT: The European style (having an opening that's taller than it is wide) of Heat & Glo's Everest™ offers a fresh, new look that's sure to add charm to any home.

photo courtesy of Heat & Glo

ABOVE LEFT: Fireplace Xtrordinaire's Bed & Breakfast™ fireplace is designed for corner or limited space installations in small, intimate settings such as bedrooms, baths and kitchens.

photo courtesy of Fireplace Xtrordinaire™

ABOVE CENTER: The Hearthfalls™ combines cascading water and burning flame – allowing homeowners to enjoy both in the winter and the waterfall by itself in the summer. Lenses change the illumination from red to blue or yellow to green.

photo courtesy of Hearthfalls™

ABOVE RIGHT: A unique whirling flame in Heat & Glo's Cyclone™ provides a dramatic focal point in any room. It's available as a standalone glass cylinder and as a wall mount.

photo courtesy of Heat & Glo



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