

WOOD BURNING FIREPLACES

The look, smell and feel of a wood burning fireplace can soothe the soul while generating a deep, penetrating and relaxing warmth within a home. And, thanks to more than a decade of research and development by the hearth industry, there are now wood burning fireplaces that offer benefits well beyond just ambiance. These benefits include heat, convenience, energy independence, security and a cost-effective way to control fluctuating energy bills, not to mention reduced emissions that can help people burn wood responsibly to help protect winter air quality.

Three Types From Which to Choose

Adding a fireplace is an easy way to add value to a home and increase resale potential. To help in this goal, the hearth industry offers three types of wood burning fireplaces: Traditional, Clean Burning and EPA-certified. A Traditional wood burning fireplace, whether factory-built or masonry, is the type currently found in many homes throughout North America and is most frequently associated with the concept of a wood burning fireplace. The two newer, high-efficiency fireplaces, Clean Burning and EPA-certified (certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to produce less than 7.5 grams of particulates per hour), are more technologically advanced and offer more benefits to the user.

Choosing the Right Option

Because fireplaces are often a gathering place within a home, it's important to spend the time to choose the right wood burning fireplace based on expectations about performance. If the fireplace needs to provide a substantial amount of heat, the best choices are EPA-certified or Clean Burning. These fireplaces are insulated, closed combustion systems (glass doors need to be closed for proper operation) that burn

wood more efficiently and generate a substantial amount of heat. Due to the economics of firewood, these fireplaces are also good choices in areas with frequent or sporadic power outages, or where the cost of home heating is an issue. In contrast, Traditional fireplaces are open combustion systems (no glass doors needed for operation) and are perfect for occasional fires that produce ambiance, warmth and a little snap, crackle and pop!

Certified to Protect Air Quality

EPA-certified and Clean Burning fireplaces are designed to increase combustion efficiency and therefore reduce wood smoke emissions. In some areas where wood burning is regulated, either an EPA-certified or Clean Burning fireplace can be installed and burned all season long. In these same areas, Traditional fireplaces can sometimes be installed but require that people take the personal responsibility to limit wood smoke emissions by using seasoned firewood or manufactured firelogs.

Selecting a Wood Fireplace

Much like any other appliance, it is important to spend the time to choose the right wood burning fireplace. Before you make your final decision, visit a specialty retailer in your area for expert advice. A specialty retailer is a trained wood burning fireplace expert. He or she can help determine what type of fireplace to purchase. They can also arrange for professional fireplace installation, as well as provide advice about available firewood. Specialty retailers are also the best source of information on how to correctly operate a wood burning fireplace and what is required for proper maintenance.

For a list of specialty retailers, visit www.hpba.org.



WOOD BURNING FIREPLACE CHECKLIST

Information to consider when selecting a wood burning fireplace

TYPE: There are three types of wood burning fireplaces: Traditional, Clean Burning and EPA-certified. Traditional fireplaces can be either masonry or factory-built. EPA-certified fireplaces are constructed much like wood stoves and are factory-built, while Clean Burning fireplaces are either factory-built or masonry.

SIZE: Wood burning fireplaces can range from small to extremely large. Choosing a size is based on aesthetic interests, heat requirements and the sizes available in each type.

LOCATION: A wood burning fireplace can be installed in most homes throughout North America. In some locations there are air quality restrictions that dictate the need for EPA-certified or Clean Burning fireplaces. For all fireplaces, the most common installation location within a home is against an outside wall, although the HPBA recommends installation within the interior of a home, away from an outside wall, to improve draft and performance.

VENTING: Wood burning fireplaces are naturally vented three feet above the roof of a house or a minimum of two feet above any point of the structure within a ten foot radius. Depending on the fireplace selected, this venting can occur through a masonry or stainless steel, Class A type all-fuel chimney system.

FEATURES: Wood burning fireplace features vary based on the type of fireplace selected. Traditional fireplaces are available with glass doors (not necessary for operation), unique firebacks, and optional fans to circulate the warmth. EPA-certified and Clean Burning fireplaces come with large, self-cleaning glass doors, heat circulation systems, grates, and ash dump access. Gas log lighters are also options with some wood burning fireplaces.

STYLE: The new breed of wood burning fireplaces includes many styles, including two-, three- and even four-sided fire views. There are arch-shaped fireplaces and one-panel glass doors that allow full fire views. The long list of finishing options includes a wide range of mantels and facings made from of brick, stone or tile.

INSTALLATION: To ensure the safe and reliable installation of a wood burning fireplace, the HPBA recommends that people use a specialty retailer and a certified professional installer. In addition to assessing the construction of a house, the professional will obtain the necessary building permits and make sure that the installation meets all local and state codes.

MAINTENANCE: While wood burning fireplaces are very user-friendly and easy to operate, they do require routine maintenance. The HPBA recommends that fireplaces and chimneys be inspected annually, and cleaned as necessary, by a chimney sweep certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America.

FUEL REQUIREMENTS: The best fuel for wood fireplaces is firewood that has been split and dried for more than six months ("seasoned" firewood). Manufactured firelogs can be used instead of seasoned firewood and can reduce emissions by more than two-thirds (sawdust-only firelogs in all fireplaces and wax/sawdust firelogs in Traditional and Clean Burning only).

AVERAGE COST: The price of the fireplace is only part of the total cost of owning a wood burning fireplace. Other requirements include the cost of the chimney, installation, delivery, annual fuel costs and annual maintenance.

COST CHECKLIST:

- Wood Burning Fireplace _____
- Chimney _____
- Installation/Delivery _____
- Mantel _____
- Hearth _____
- Annual Fuel Costs _____
- Annual Maintenance _____

Wood Burning Fireplace Benefits

- Ambiance or zone heat, depending on type chosen
- Provides heat when the power goes out
- Cost-effective control over heating bills
- Use of a renewable fuel
- Minimal emissions to protect winter air quality

This information brought to you by this specialty retailer: