

\$4.95

DESIGN • ARCHITECTURE • DÉCOR

WINTER 2009

HOME

SASKATOON

**INSIDE:
CUSTOMIZED KITCHENS,
TRANSFORMED LIVINGROOMS
& MORE INSPIRING INTERIORS**

STYLE

Have a Hearth: Make a Fireplace the Focus

The hearth was once the functional heart of the home. It was a less-than-efficient source of heat that came with its charm—but also dirt, soot, smoke, wood chopping, chimney cleaning, and hauling ash. Now the modern fireplace is reclaiming its place. Developments in technology and design have renewed the reasons for keeping the home fires burning.

“The choice of fireplace is such a personal preference,” says Leah, showroom consultant with Gregg’s Plumbing and Heating. “Mantle, no mantle, glass, granite. Newer trends see clear or coloured glass beads, a single torch flame or rock instead of log sets. You still want it to look like a natural fire; there’s something very relaxing about glowing embers.”

While the fireplace isn’t the source of home heating it once was, energy efficiency is still a consideration. Ten years ago, 80 per cent of heat could be lost up the flue. Today, ceramic glass draws that 80 per cent into the room. Radiant heat technology eases concerns about power outages since an electric fan is not necessary for operation. Pellet stoves—multi-fuel units—are also emerging as alternatives.



Photo: Courtesy Studio 2.0 Interior Design Consultants

An attractive fireplace can be an integral part of a room’s décor.

Homeowners today steer away from the traditional fireplace, moving toward a beautiful focal point, says designer Tara Lefebvre of Studio 2.0 Interior Design Consultants. “Everyone wants something customized and different. The shape has changed from the traditional square to long and narrow, circular or even freestanding. Mantels are slowly starting to disappear for a clean, minimalist look. On the surrounds, we see stone, tile, quartz, granite, or simply painted drywall or wood paneling.”

Thinking about where the fireplace goes in the home has changed, too. “People want it in different areas, not just the living and formal seating rooms. You now see fireplaces in the master bedroom and ensuite to create a relaxing and romantic mood.” Lefebvre notes another trend is integrating the fireplace with the large screen TV. There are challenges, including the need to direct heat away from the television. Mount the fireplace at a height that doesn’t create neck strain and in a locale to avoid the disquiet of competing focal points.

“I’m trying to discourage people from putting their TVs above their fireplace,” adds Leah of Gregg’s Plumbing and Heating.

Homeowners desire a soothing atmosphere, a focal point for relaxing conversation, says Lefebvre. But the simplicity, low maintenance and safety of gas or electric also fits a modern lifestyle. Leah agrees. “People used to feel a little trapped by a traditional wood-burning fireplace. You had to wait until the fire had gone out before going to bed or leaving the house. There was always a concern about a spark. Now you just flip the switch.”

The fireplace has evolved from a functional source of heat to a detail that showcases personal style. Whether you curl up in front of it with a good book, enjoy a glass of Chenin Blanc and some warm brie with friends, or play Uno with your children in its glow, the fireplace is again the heart of the home.

KARIN MELBERG SCWHIER

Information

Gregg’s Plumbing & Heating Ltd

503 51st Street East,
Saskatoon
306.373.4664
www.greggs.ca

Studio 2.0 Interior Design Consultants

418 Pobran Court,
Saskatoon
306.262.6884
www.studio2point0.ca