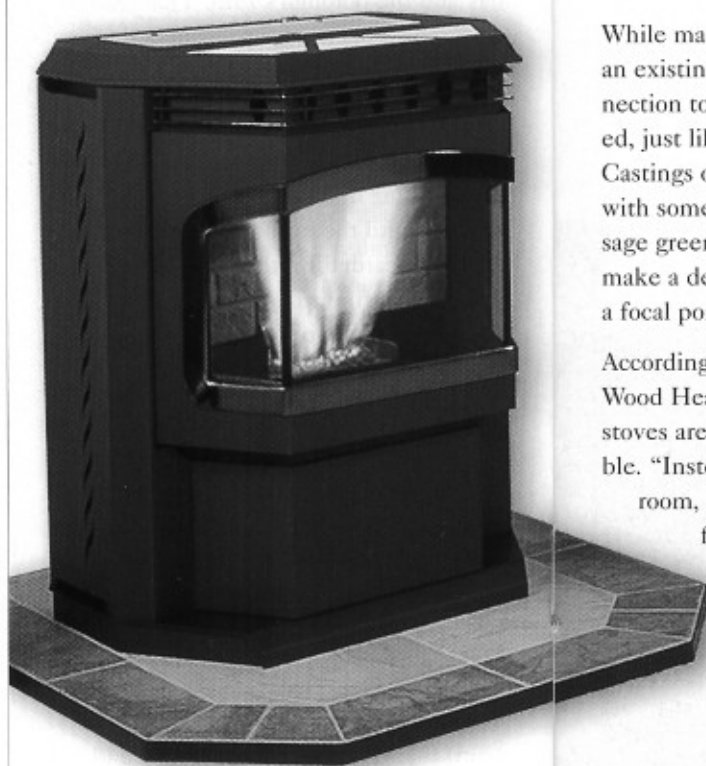


Stay Warm & Wonderful This Winter

Alternatives to wood-burning fireplaces add warmth and romance to any room.

Brrrrr! Winter has us firmly in its grip. Days are short and darkness descends early. You find yourself spending evenings in your "den"...if you were a bear you'd be hibernating.

There's a way for anyone, including apartment and condo dwellers, to add the warmth and comfort that a fire in our cave has always brought...not to mention the romantic "cuddling" factor it adds. Today's alternatives to the traditional wood-burning fireplace offer the opportunity to add warmth to any room.



Gas Stoves

A myriad of stand-alone, gas-fired stoves easily add heat and ambiance to a family room, kitchen, bedroom, living room or even a bathroom. They come in many styles, sizes, colors and materials, while costs range from about \$1,000 to \$3,000. For instance, Quadra-Fire has six lines of stand-alone stoves in styles from traditional to contemporary. Their Garnet T is small, but would fit perfectly in a bedroom or den. Heat & Glo also has a full line, including the sleek, European-style Paloma, with its tall firebox, for a hot contemporary look. Sizes for stand-alones range from 31 to 15 inches wide.

While many stoves require venting (using an existing chimney or creating a new connection to the outside), others are un-vented, just like a gas kitchen range. Vermont Castings offers several un-vented styles with some available in 11 colors—such as sage green, biscuit and brick blue—that make a decorating statement as well as add a focal point to the room.

According to Howard Wiard, manager of Wood Heat in Pleasant Valley, direct vent stoves are the better choice wherever possible. "Instead of venting gases into the room, a direct vent gives you a room free of gas and doesn't take air out."

Not only are today's gas stoves efficient, but

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they're also versatile—with variable fan speeds, programmable thermostat or remote control—and burn either natural gas or propane. Wiard notes they save on fuel by heating areas where you spend the most time. "Instead of running the house furnace, using up to 120,000 BTUs per hour, the typical gas stove runs on about 30,000 BTUs. Depending on the unit and how you use it, you can save up to 75 percent on fuel." And the realistic-looking ceramic coal beds and logs give the illusion and warmth of a wood fire without the hassle of wood.



Resources for Gas and Electric Fireplaces, Stoves and Propane:

The Cozy Barn

630 Washington Street, Wind Gap
610-863-8182
www.thecozybarn.com

Grates & Grills Inc.

105 S. Main St., Rte. 313, Dublin
215-249-0182
www.gratesandgrills.com

Stoves n Stuff Ltd.

683 State Ave., Emmaus
(Across from South Mall)
610-966-2271
www.stovesnstuff.com

Trexler Haines Gas Inc.

6635 Tilghman St., Allentown
1-877-TREXLER
www.trexlerhaines.com

Wood Heat

1924 Rte. 212, Pleasant Valley
610-346-7894
www.woodheat.com

Electric Fireplaces and Stoves

So maybe you don't want to invest in a propane tank or your home lacks a natural gas connection. What else will give you the ambiance and romance of a flame? Check out electric stoves and fireplaces. From compact stove models for as little as \$200 to large fireplace models with mantels and hearths—\$350 to \$1,800—they're a new twist on the tried-and-true space heater.

The units look like traditional wood-burners and come in a variety of finishes and styles. Fireplaces have mantels and screens with fireboxes that mimic flickering flames. Wall-mounted units fit into small spaces, while some offer a remote to control flame intensity, heat and power.

Ed Wise, assistant manager at Stoves 'n Stuff in Emmaus, says electric units are mostly for ambiance—giving you a warm, fuzzy feeling. "They look pretty and can take the dampness out of a small room, but they only produce 5,000 to 6,000 BTUs, so you won't get a lot of heat from them." But they can be plugged in anywhere and taken with you if you move.

So, no matter where you live, picture yourself and your loved one snuggling in front of a warm fire. What better way to fend off the cold, dark nights of winter? ■

