

WINTER 2015 | VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

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MUST-GIVE
GIFTS
(THIS HOLIDAY)

EXCLUSIVE:

*Hello,
vacay!*

OUR TOP
PICKS FOR
WINTER
ESCAPES

Jamie
Oliver

EVERYDAY
SUPER CHEF

RECIPES
YOU
WON'T
WANT
TO LIVE
WITHOUT

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TURN UP THE HEAT



BY LINDA MAZUR

@LindaMazurGroup   

Designer **Linda Mazur** is the Principal Designer of Linda Mazur Design Group. With over a decade of experience, this sought-out multi-disciplinary interior design firm is known for providing innovative interior renovations and full scale build projects that reflect both timeless style and optimal functionality. The firm services Toronto, GTA and surrounding areas. LindaMazurDesign.com

As a designer I often say fireplaces are a great focal point in any room. It can instantly transform your space by adding not only design interest, but also creating a warm cozy atmosphere in your living spaces. Most new construction homes today are being outfitted with at least one fireplace, usually gas and most frequently in the living room, or master bedroom. But if your home does not have a fireplace – it can be simple enough to add one in.

Before you run out and purchase your new fireplace there is much to consider. Both the location and the size of the room are important factors to consider as well as the design and the required restrictions. Let's start with an important question, what style fireplace do you want? Well if your taste veers to the more traditional, a beautiful mantel may be the answer. You could incorporate built-in cabinetry with your mantel for added storage and design appeal. The rustic approach is also great. A beautiful rough-hewn reclaimed wood beam in lieu of a formal mantel with the added touch of stone or tile can appeal to many décor styles. Or perhaps it's the modern sleek approach to a fireplace that you love – with or without a surround.

Gas fireplaces can be a wonderful asset to your home. They are not too expensive to operate and they can add to your home's energy efficiency saving you money on your heating bills! One of the great features of gas fireplaces is that they can be installed virtually anywhere in your home. One of my favourite brands in Canada is National Energy Equipment Inc., (neefireplaces.ca) which offer diverse and inspirational styles and products.

Though installation of gas units should be left to the professionals, as a consumer you should be familiar with certain terms while researching your new fireplace. Zero-clearance gas fireplaces simply means that the fireplace unit has been designed so that the unit can be placed up against combustible building materials without the risk of fire. The term direct vent refers to a gas unit that does not require a chimney and can be vented directly through a wall or roof. The direct vent unit draws its combustion air from outside. You should have a carbon-monoxide detector in any room that has a gas fireplace. It's a great safety precaution in case of incomplete combustion or if there's a problem with the venting of your gas unit, which is now mandatory in Ontario.

Another important term you will come across is BTU's, which stands for British Thermal Unit and is a traditional unit of energy equal to about 1055 joules. It is the amount of energy needed to cool or heat one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit.



BTU is a non-metric unit of measure that is commonly used to rate the heat output of fuels and heating appliances. The gas fireplaces of today deliver up to 50,000 BTUs and with the flick of a switch you can heat an entire room in minutes. It's an easy, low-maintenance alternative that still provides you with all the ambient beauty of traditional wood. However, despite the simplicity and cleanliness of a gas fireplace, there are many homeowners that love a wood-burning fireplace. The modern wood-burning fireplaces of today are designed to be energy-efficient and can be a great complement to your home. There is much more to consider with a wood-burning fireplace as it will require major structural support, masonry work and a chimney, which is a little more involved than the installation of a gas unit.

Though we have given much attention to gas and wood-burning fireplaces, the most common for your home, this is not necessarily a feasible option for all homeowners. If you reside in a condo all is not lost, you too can enjoy the beauty and comfort of the season. Electric fireplaces have come a long way in design and though they are not as energy-efficient as a gas unit, they are a great alternative. They offer a realistic flame, the sound of fire crackling logs and even a realistic smoke effect.

» With winter fast approaching, create a warm and inviting atmosphere in your home today with one of these great fireplace possibilities.