

Mark Weighs In On Fireplace Selection Options For Your New Home

Hey there, fellow home design enthusiasts! Mark Meyer here, your friendly neighborhood architectural designer from Meyer3D. Today, I want to talk about a topic that's sure to warm your hearts (and your homes) – fireplace selection options for your new abode. So grab a cozy blanket, sip on your favorite hot beverage, and let's dive right in!

Now, when it comes to fireplaces, there's no shortage of options to choose from. From traditional wood-burning beauties to modern electric marvels, the possibilities are endless. But fret not, dear reader, as I'm here to break it down for you and help you make the perfect fireplace decision.

1. Wood-Burning Fireplaces: The Classic Charm

Ah, the crackling sound, the mesmerizing dancing flames, and that unmistakable woody scent filling the air. Wood-burning fireplaces are the epitome of timeless charm. Embracing the allure of tradition, they create a cozy ambiance that's hard to beat. Just make sure you have a good supply of firewood and don't mind a little extra maintenance.

2. Gas Fireplaces: Convenience Meets Comfort

For those who crave warmth without the hassle, gas fireplaces are the way to go. With just a flip of a switch, you can enjoy an instant, hassle-free fire. No need to chop wood or clean out ash. Plus, they offer precise temperature control, allowing you to create the perfect cozy atmosphere. Most gas fireplaces can be modified to operate utilizing Natural Gas or Propane.

3. Electric Fireplaces: The Modern Marvels

If you want a fireplace that's as easy to install as it is to use, electric fireplaces are the answer. These sleek and efficient fireplaces are perfect for those who want the warm glow without the need for venting or chimneys. They come in various styles and sizes, and some even offer customizable flame effects and heat settings. Some of the newer models utilize steam to simulate smoke. Ultra safe realism, especially when you have small kids running around.

4. Ethanol Fireplaces: Sizzle Without the Fizzle

For the eco-conscious and design-savvy individuals, ethanol fireplaces are a fantastic option. These fireplaces burn bioethanol fuel, which is clean-burning and produces no smoke or ash. They are incredibly versatile, allowing you to place them in unconventional spots like tabletops or even outdoors. Just be sure to keep those marshmallows at a safe distance!

Now, before you rush off to pick the fireplace of your dreams, here are a few additional tips to keep in mind:

- Consider your home's style and architectural elements when selecting a fireplace. Your fireplace is typically the focal point of the room. You want it to complement the overall aesthetics. Scale and proportion is always important, you don't want it to stick out like a sore thumb. So choose wisely.

- It's okay to mix types! Example: The ambiance of Wood-Burning Fireplaces for outside and the convenience of Gas or Electric Fireplaces inside.
- In the 'Good-old Days' fireplaces were essential for heating and cooking in the home. In today's homes, most people think about aesthetics and ambiance of their fireplace first. Followed by initial cost, long-term energy efficiency, safety concerns, available space, cleaning and stoking requirements, as well as the potential emergency heating needs of the home. A larger room may require a larger more powerful fireplace, while a smaller space might benefit from a compact and more efficient model.
- Be careful! I recently had an interior decorator have a client glue huge sheets of stone to the walls above his fireplace. It looked incredible! However, once the fireplace was fired up, the walls heated and the glue melted. That's a problem you don't want to have.
- If you are building a high performance home "Don't forget the replacement air requirements." All that heated air going up the chimney, has to be replaced by air sucked into the home. In a high performance home you will need an EVR (Energy-Recovery Ventilator). In simple terms... An EVR filters and conditions the replacement air as it is drawn into the home. If you want a high performance home, for health and energy efficiency, you will need an EVR for replacement air for your bath room fans and range top exhaust fan. Just be sure to get one, properly sized, to address the needs of your fireplace(s) as well.
- Make your fireplace decisions early in the design process, so your architect can draft in the requirements for the proper foundation requirements and the correct measurements for the framing crews.
- As always, Don't Forget About Safety! Make sure to follow the local building codes and regulations, especially when it comes to material selections around the fireplace, as well as proper ventilation and clearance requirements.

Here's a couple of tips about Fireplaces and TVs...

- Did you know that most TVs have a 'thermal trip switch' that will automatically turn your TV off when the TV gets too hot? Several clients have mounted their TVs above the fireplace, only to discover that they could use their fireplace or their TV, but not both at the same time. So be sure to follow the manufacturer's specifications when installing a fireplace / TV combination. Sometimes, when you install a fireplace for heating the room, the fireplace mantel just isn't enough to protect the TV.
- Since the TV has to be a certain height above the fireplace (see above), many TVs were placed high on the wall. This has led to chronic sore necks, discomfort while viewing, and headaches. Consider a different wall for the TV or, if the aesthetics allow, a shorter fireplace, placed lower on the wall.

And there you have it, folks – a beginner's guide to fireplace selection for your new home!

Remember, the fireplace you choose will not only warm your space but also add character and charm to your abode. So, take your time, weigh your options, and let your inner designer shine!

If you have any questions or need further advice, feel free to reach out. Stay cozy, my friends!

Yours in design,
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