

## Fireplaces

Since the cost of energies are rapidly growing these years, house and cottage owners tend to consider the most effective energy sources much more than they did 20 or 30 years ago. Nowadays, the cheapest and redeemable energy source is firewood. Because of this reason more and more people demand for fireplaces which meet two goals; They are decoration from the outside, and they are very specialised additions to each home where their role is simple... They heat rooms and houses.

### History

As this article's subject says, I am focusing on fireplaces which are based on well-known and old principles, authentic fireplaces, made of clay and rock. Such fireplaces were known from old Bronze ages, about 2500 years before Christ. They were conserved in Alps region and we can consider them to be forerunners of today fireplaces. Basically, their evolution stagnated for hundreds of years until the Middle ages when man invented fully functional chimney. Chimneys were found in Italy (about 10-th century) for the first time and their evolution was finished in 14-th century. Let's get back to the 10-th century when Italian craftsmen from Alps started to build large clay furnaces - arched dungeon on placed on massive frames, originally whitened, later closed. As time went by, the design was changing to angled one. But first real fireplaces were built in the beginning of Gothic ages when ceramists were able to produce square ceramics instead of elliptical ones. Square ceramics assured enough endurance and quality.

Fireplaces like currently used ones come from the second half of 19-th century. These ages are characterised by technical expansion but without any scenic improvement. That time fireplaces expanded to common households where they had become the most used heating element. The gold ages in fireplaces design is era between 19-th and 20-th century, the secession. Unfortunately, beginning of 20-th century (the end of World War the First exactly) was the last successful era of classic fireplaces when newly invented metal heating devices took their place at the market. After decades, classic fireplaces are coming back and people are re-discovering their advantages.

### Characteristic

Generally speaking, customers search for fireplaces because of following reasons:

- They are shining aesthetic addition of every interior and they improve the comfort.
- Their output is independent on electric power supply.
- Surface of ceramic parts have low temperature what guarantees that they produce so-called "soft heat" from surfaces with 60 - 80 Celsius degree.
- Their definitive feature is accumulation of heat. Classic fireplaces with fire-clay bricks and clay emit heat for a long time after they are shut down.
- Are highly effective up to 80% which means their service is economic.
- Well-produced and well-installed fireplace transmits the heat (radiation and convection) in that ratio which is the most suitable and acceptable for human beings.

Radiation (heat emission) is very similar to sunlight beams. Sunlight beams don't heat the air, but they turn to energy after they fall on the object. Fireplaces work similar, they produce similar heat which spread equally to all walls and objects which heat up the air inside the room. Thanks to fact that heating is equal to all directions, there is no air circulation and man feels comfortable with 19 - 20 Celsius degree temperature and it is not necessary to heat the room up to 23 - 24 Celsius degree like it's needed with conventional heating devices (space heaters for instance). Generally, increasing temperature by 1 Celsius degree means another 5% of energy.

### About the Author

Jan Hvizdak, this article's author, works for sites owned by Gel Fireplaces Ltd. The first site sells gel [fireplaces](#) to customers in the UK and the second one sells [electric fireplaces](#) to people living in the USA primarily.

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