

Better Homes and Gardens®

# fireplace

Decorating and Planning Ideas





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Better Homes and Gardens® Books  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Better Homes and Gardens® Books**  
**An imprint of Meredith® Books**

***Fireplace Decorating & Planning Ideas***

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## 4 style

Find your fireplace style in these classic examples.



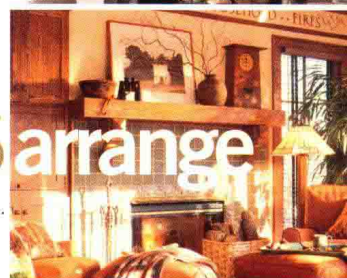
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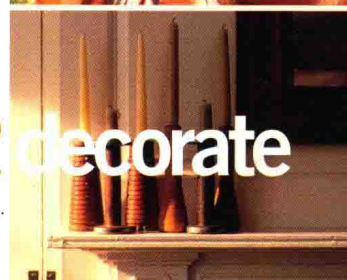
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Learn to create hearthside arrangements that warm both toes and hearts.



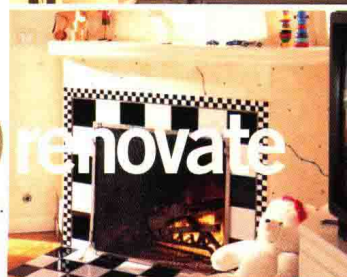
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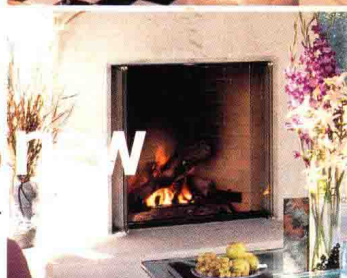
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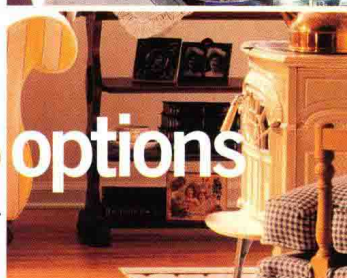
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Add the luxury of a fireplace with advice from the experts.



## 116 options

Create ambience using alternative styles or fuels.



## 128 technical

There's more to a fireplace than meets the eye. Learn the facts behind the flame.



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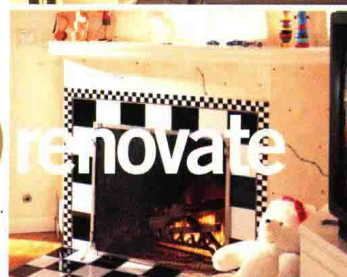
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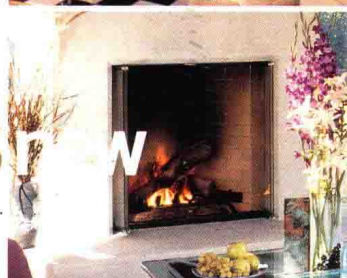
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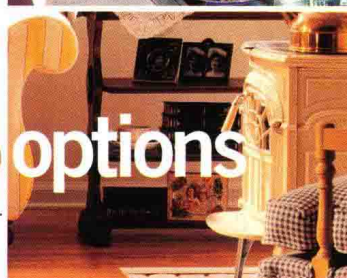
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Old World  
New Classical  
American Traditional  
Country European  
Arts & Crafts  
Laid-Back Lodge  
Smooth Southwest  
20th-Century Eclectic  
Contemporary Comfort

# reflect your style

FIREPLACES ARE CHAMELEON-LIKE, CHANGING character to reflect their surroundings. You determine the look of your fireplace with the objects you arrange on the mantel, the tools you place on the hearth, the chair you put beside it, the color you paint the wall that surrounds it.

On the stage set of your home, you are director and designer, playwright and stage manager. A fireplace can take the lead or play a supporting role in setting your room's style. If you have a fireplace you love, make it a focal

point and write your room's design script around it. If your fireplace lacks star quality, read on for ideas about how to groom your lackluster performer for top billing.

In this book, you'll find fireplaces that tuck modestly into small spaces and bold fireplaces that command attention, fireplaces flanked by bookcases, surrounded by windows, and bracketed by benches.

Fireplaces have changed through the centuries, reflecting the tastes of various times and various regions. In this chapter, you'll find rooms that highlight a range of fireplace and fireside styles, starting with a massive old-world stone fireplace and ending with a sleek, contemporary steel-fronted hearth.

As you consider your fireside style, trust your instincts. Surround your fireplace with the colors that cheer you, the fabrics that comfort you, and the treasures that capture your past.

**Polish your room's image with a fireside style that reflects your taste.**







A photograph of a rustic interior. The ceiling is made of dark wood with exposed beams. A stone fireplace surround is visible on the right. A dining table with a chandelier is in the foreground. The floor is made of stone tiles. A colorful rug is on the floor.

## OldWorld

IN THE STately HOMES OF 17TH-CENTURY Europe, grand stone hearths provided welcome warmth and an enticing gathering spot for family. Still, it's a sure bet that any aristocrat would have gladly traded his imposing but inefficient fireplace for the comfort of a 20th-century thermostat.

Luckily, you can have the best of both worlds. To re-create the old-world fireside elegance of a French chateau or English country manor, think big. These fireplace openings, hearths, mantels, and surrounds are all weighty in appearance and large in comparison to other fireplace styles.

Check with architectural salvage firms for antique stone or marble fireplace surrounds or look into cast stone versions that mimic more expensive materials. Wood-paneled walls and ceilings and exposed beams contribute to the look of solidity. Floors of natural or simulated stone, slate, or large-scale tiles are a good choice, as is dark-stained wood flooring.

Warm the floors with richly colored area rugs. When choosing fireplace screens and tools, avoid refined finishes such as polished brass. Instead, opt for a dull pewter finish or the hefty look of wrought iron.

Finally, select deep, generously sized seating pieces and sturdy tables that are proportional to the scale of the fireplace.

The romance of fireplaces begins with the baronial stone splendors that created warmth in Europe's Middle Ages.

Look to the details for inspiration: The cove ceiling above the fireplace, *left*, repeats the curve of the stone surround. The scroll pillars on the fireplace surround are based on a detail found in the adjacent kitchen.



## Let There Be Light

Use light to enliven your fireplace and it will stay stylishly aglow even without a fire.

- To light a picture over the mantel, use a recessed, adjustable “eyeball” fixture in the ceiling, about 3 feet out from the fireplace wall. For a sloped ceiling, use a monopoint, surface-mounted track light.
- To highlight the fireplace, use a grazing light that plays up the texture of the stone, brick, or tile. Install a recessed downlight or surface-mounted accent light on the ceiling about 18 inches from the fireplace wall.
- Installing a pair of wall sconces? Locate them no more than 6 inches in from the outer edges of the mantel and at least 12 inches up from the mantel shelf.

## NewClassical

THE SINUOUS CURVES AND SUMPTUOUS FABRICS of Neoclassicism swept through the salons and sitting rooms of the fashion-conscious early in the 19th century. Inspired by Napoleonic conquests and British explorations, cabinetmakers and designers of that era produced furnishings steeped in the traditions of ancient Rome, Greece, and Egypt.

To bring this classic look to your home, choose a formal fireplace that combines refined materials and graceful proportions. Center a convex mirror over the fireplace, then dress the mantel with a symmetrical arrangement of classic objects such as vases or candlesticks. Select sofas, chairs, and daybeds with scrolled arms and backs. Favored fabric motifs include Roman eagles, Greek lyres, and stylized Egyptian lotuses.

This style, sometimes called Empire, was popular in the United States through the 1870s. You may be lucky enough to find exuberant antique or reproduction pieces with carved dolphins or winged sphinxes supporting marble tabletops. For a more restrained look, stencil a Greek-key design around the perimeter of the room just below the ceiling or use a similar design on the floor or in an area rug.

**Ancient civilizations left a rich design vocabulary that continues to inspire furnishings and design.**

Even without a fire, this fireplace exudes elegance, *right*. An armload of slender logs fills a brass container to create a striking still life in an unlit fireplace.



# INSPIRATIO





THE CABINETMAKERS OF 18TH-CENTURY America seemed to build the virtues of the budding republic right into their furniture. Queen Anne and Chippendale tables, chairs, and cupboards express a cordial dignity and strength of character in keeping with the times. Fireplaces also possessed the solid, dignified appearance.

Even if you don't have a period-style hearth, you can achieve a similar fireside feel by surrounding your fireplace with inviting seating. Pull up a pair of wingback chairs to your fireplace, and you've taken the first step to creating this ever-popular style. The winged sides and high backs of these chairs were originally added to protect the sitter from drafts; and these features remain popular because of the comfort they provide.

Upholster the chairs in gleaming damask for a formal look; opt for leather or linen for a more casual versatility.

A brawny fireplace calls for large-scale accessories, such as a large painting above and heavy brass andirons and fireguard on the hearth. Fixtures that replicate candlesticks continue the style, and dimmers allow you to reduce light levels when desired. For practicality, augment this moody lighting scheme with discreet recessed fixtures for plenty of ambient light and task lighting where needed.

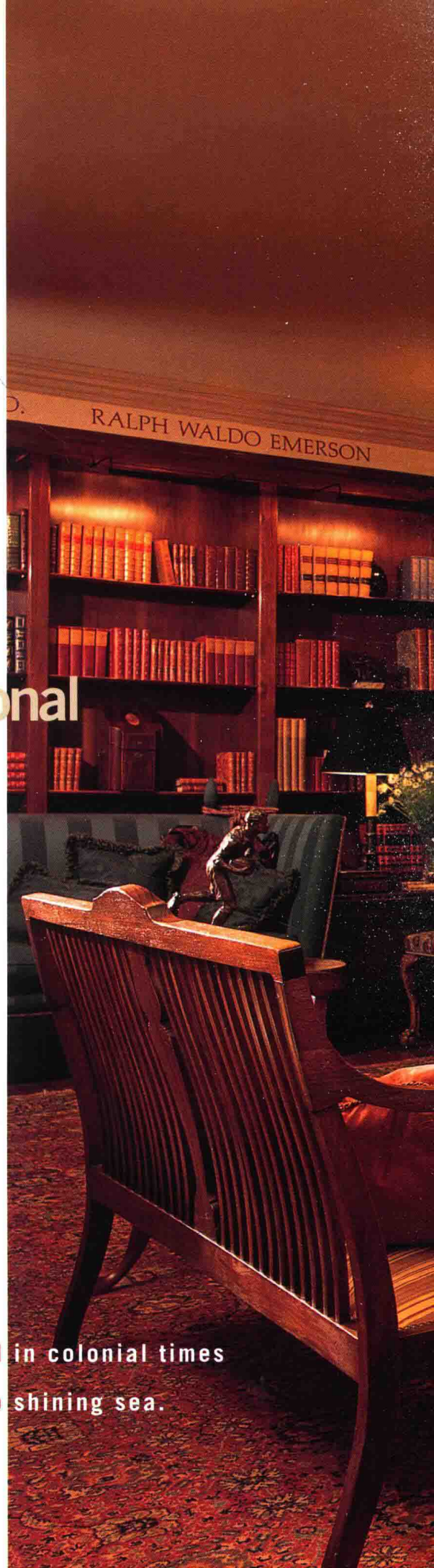
Consider adding an oversize ottoman. It will do triple duty by serving as a coffee table, an extra seat, and a place to prop one's feet.

Finally, imitate wealthy early colonists by covering your walls with polished wood paneling and your floors with plush Oriental rugs. Both work with the fireplace to warm your room.

## American Traditional

Personalize your room by stenciling a favorite quotation around its perimeter. The quote circling this room, *right*, is by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

**The furniture styles that originated in colonial times still look right at home from sea to shining sea.**











SNUG AND SIMPLY FURNISHED, THE COTTAGES and farmhouses that sheltered generations of rural Americans have left a legacy of comfort as suited to urban high rises and to suburban ranches as it is to log cabins and white-clapboard Colonials.

Beaded-board walls and ceilings evoke porches and kitchens past, setting an informal tone. Paint the beaded board and mantel a

high-gloss white for a bright but unobtrusive hearth. Keep the millwork simple: A shallow mantel and unfussy columns create an understated background. Add a bright country note with a rim of folkish, hand-painted tiles, such as the classic blue-and-white delft designs.

Furnishings and fabrics with easy-going finishes fit right into country style. A well-worn pine table that started life in a long-ago

## CountryEuropean

Choose colors and patterns to set a mood. Fresh blue and white, *above*, bring sea and sky indoors; red toile, *right*, creates a look of country French.



## Country European

farm kitchen or a painted secondhand treasure becomes a family-friendly coffee table, its charm enhanced by the scuffs of use.

Treated cotton slipcovers shed spills and can be whisked into the washer when disaster strikes. Country-style interiors are natural showcases for heirlooms and collectibles. Pedigreed quilts and priceless pottery will look right at home, of course, but don't hesitate to incorporate sentimental favorites. Drape a well-worn afghan over a fireside chair or give a child's paint-by-number masterpiece a place of honor on the mantel.

The appealing mix of comfort, simplicity, and nostalgia that characterizes American country style also marks the traditional interiors of rural Europe and the British Isles. Each region offers a charming variation on the theme. Base your home's decor on the thatched cottages of England's Cotswolds, and you'll lean toward layers of chintz and mantels crowded with china. Take your cues from the South of France or Italy's celebrated Tuscany, and sunshine yellow walls and terra-cotta tiles on the floor will set the mood. *Below*, the clear northern light of Scandinavia illuminates the design scheme. The furnishings have the authentic look of family favorites—handed down, cherished, and given fresh covers in traditional checks and toiles to be enjoyed by a new generation. Painting walls, fireplace, and furniture white is a practical response to Scandinavia's long, dark winters.

