

Gas Fireplaces: A Smart Heating Alternative

(NAPSA)—With homeowners facing the crunch of rising energy prices this heating season, gas fireplaces remain a smart and attractive choice for significantly reducing the monthly heating bill. While higher natural gas and liquid propane prices may tempt cost-conscious homeowners to limit their gas fireplace use, gas fireplaces can actually reduce dependence on a central furnace—providing immediate cost savings.

By practicing zone heating with gas fireplaces, homeowners heat the room or living area where people spend the most time. This lets them turn down the thermostat on their central furnace and use the gas fireplace as a supplemental heat source. Operating a furnace for one hour at 75,000 to 100,000 Btu costs a homeowner \$1.12 to \$1.49 based on last month's national average natural gas rate. By comparison, a natural gas fireplace running at 30,000 Btu per hour costs only 45 cents. From a financial standpoint, it makes sense to limit the furnace output whenever possible and heat the most frequently used rooms with a gas fireplace.

Homeowners considering buying a gas fireplace should first look for units that are A.F.U.E. (Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency) rated. A.F.U.E. gas fireplaces are tested to the same standard used to rate today's energy efficient furnaces. The second thing to look for is direct vent gas fireplaces. Direct vent gas fireplaces burn efficiently with up to 70 percent of the heat they generate remaining in the house. Masonry woodburning fireplaces in comparison can lose up to 85 percent of the fire's heat through the chimney. Direct vent gas fireplaces can also be installed in virtually any room of the home at a



Direct vent gas fireplaces can provide an attractive solution for reducing your monthly heating bill.

fraction of the cost of a masonry fireplace.

In addition to zone heating savings, homeowners can save up to \$12 each month on their gas bill by selecting a direct vent gas fireplace with an intermittent pilot ignition (IPI) system. For example, Heat & Glo™, Heatilator® and Quadra-Fire® brand direct vent gas fireplaces feature a patented IPI system known as Intellifire®. This electric ignition system eliminates the need to keep the pilot light always lit to use the fireplace. The IPI system automatically turns on the pilot when the homeowner turns on the fireplace. An IPI system can reduce as much as half the gas used by a fireplace, over nine million Btu per year, by turning on and off the pilot light.

Direct vent gas fireplaces provide a viable home-heating solution. By using the appliances properly, homeowners can obtain a functional supplemental heat source while also reaping the lifestyle benefits that come from spending time in front of the hearth. For more information on direct vent gas fireplaces, go to www.fireplaces.com.