

contributors



cathy coker martin

is a Stone Legends Certified Architectural Design Specialist and a licensed Interior Designer in the state of Texas. She has her B.A. in Interior Design from the University of Texas at Austin and over 20 years design experience in Dallas. She designs for clients from across the U.S. and is strategically involved in product development, public relations and business development for Stone Legends. Contact Cathy at cmartin@stonelegends.com or 214-432-9999.



ellen sackett

"Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment." That sums up Ellen in a nutshell. She's got a lot of experience and guess where it comes from? You guessed it! But now she's got help—lots of it—and she's going to be sharing her dilemmas, with advice and solutions from noted experts. Contact Ellen at ampersandesign@yahoo.com.

jenny bair, mhe, the inner organizer

is a Professional Organizer, Coach, Speaker and Motivator. If you are ready to get your life in order, Jenny and her team are ready to help you at Living Well Dallas Health & Wellness Center. With over 15 years of working in corporate wellness, clinic management, leadership, teaching, healthcare consulting and coaching, Jenny has the know-how to organize you from the inside out. Contact Jenny at jenny@livingwelldallas.com or 972-930-0260.



andrea ridout

radio show host, TV personality and author, is well known in DFW. With Ask Andrea -The Radio Show and her daily Ask Andrea's Hip Home Ideas, she has acquired a strong national audience as well. Visit www.AskAndrea.com for station listings and times. Look for her upcoming book, "If I Had a Hammer-Easy Weekend Projects" (Harper Collins) Mother's Day 2007.



linda blazosky

thoroughly enjoys organizing the lives of Fort Worth's homeowners. Linda uses her creative talents and organizing principles to motivate, teach and coach her clients to simplify their life by eliminating clutter, developing time-management skills and establishing processes for efficiency. Contact Linda at 817-793-4670 or Linda@beyondthec clutter.net. www.beyondthec clutter.net



john hunt

is a horticulturalist, Master Gardener and VP of promotions for the First Men's Garden Club of Dallas. He has been a regular on TV and radio programs and is a member of the Garden Writers Association. Contact him at gardenguy@dallasgardeners.org.

christy ilfrey

Christy and David Ilfrey founded Native Texas Garden Designs (now known as Natvedave.com) to restore Texas' natural beauty through design and consultation, and to inspire others through their writing and educational programs. David completed the prestigious Longwood Gardens Professional Gardener Training Program in 1992 and holds a B.S. in Environmental Studies. With Christy's B.A. in English, together they have combined David's passion for plants and the environment with Christy's love of words and education to form Natvedave.com.



angelynn harvey

has been the Senior Garden Designer for Fowlkes Norman & Associates Landscape since 1995. She holds a bachelors degree in Environmental Design/Architecture from Texas A & M University and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from the University of Texas at Arlington. She has over 15 years experience in residential and commercial landscape and hardscape design. Angelynn is the first place recipient of the 1996 ASLA National Research Award. Contact Angelynn at 817-249-8084 or by email ange@fnlandscape.com. www.fnlandscape.com



donna collins

is a Master Instructor and U.S. representative of the Mastery Academy of Chinese Metaphysics. Founder of the Feng Shui Guild, she is CEO of the Everyday Feng Shui Company, and internationally recognized artist and co-author of the book, "A Healthier You" with Deepak Chopra and Billy Blanks. Contact Donna at 214.353.5005 or pureenergy@sbcglobal.net.

masthead

publisher

Gene Adelson II

editor

Robyn Short

creative director

Christopher Rodriguez

editorial contributors

Lisa Doney, Denise Holguin, Barbara R. Vance, Jeff Wimberly

advertising director

Mark S. Mauser

advertising sales manager

Theresa Maysler, Theresa@homemagazinedfw.com

senior account executive

Michelle Chapman

account executives

Amy Conders, Shauna Tucker, Ashley Ware, Monica Foster, Alice Rogers, Heidi Carter

business development

Bonnie Owens

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a passion for fireplaces

cathy coker martin

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i always look forward to the day it is cool enough to have my first fire in the fireplace. The combination of cool air with a warm fire creates a beautiful, romantic and relaxing ambiance in a home. Whether remodeling or building new, a fireplace is a "must-have." There are endless possibilities and considerations when planning for a fireplace surround, but first let's take a trip back in time.

a brief history

The fireplace dates back as early as the 1700s, gaining real popularity in the 18th century in the Victorian era. Fireplaces during this time were small and shallow. They were used more out of necessity than appearance; however, the Victorians did feel that a fireplace added a touch of class, providing homes with a cozy, quaint environment. Ben Franklin played an important role in the invention of the fireplace. Ben invented the Franklin Stove after he discovered much of the heat was being lost through the wall. The original Franklin Stove was vented from below. Eventually it was changed and vented through a flue to the roof allowing for air to be drawn in at the bottom and up and out through the roof.



It wasn't until the 1950s when central heat was incorporated into homes, and the ranch style home became the popular architectural style, that the fireplace was no longer the primary source for heat in homes. At this time, fireplaces became horizontal in design to go along with the ranch style architecture. With this larger design came deeper fireboxes allowing for a more efficient exit up the chimney, thus less smoke inside the home. By the 1970s and 1980s, fireplaces were no longer built in every home. They were considered optional. Today, fireplaces once again are commonly designed into homes and often more than one per home.

Even with the changes and the advancements in style and size, the basic fireplace technology remains the same with the two main elements being the surround and the insert or box. The surround consists of a mantel and sides and is usually constructed of wood, marble, granite, cast stone, plaster and in some cases iron or other metals.

selecting the perfect fireplace

Deciding on the type of fireplace best for your home is an important decision. Start by looking at the size of your home and the size of the room where the fireplace will be placed. Choose a fireplace that works with the architectural style of your home. For instance, if your home is contemporary, a Country French style fireplace would not really fit the style of the home. The idea is for the fireplace to enhance your home's natural structure and blend with the design of your interior. Both exterior and interior should be complementary. Take time to consider your options, and you will end up with a beautiful addition to your home that is also an amazing heat source. The key is to WOW people when they walk into your home.

The structural material you choose will add to the style of fireplace you choose. There are many options available for building fireplaces: wood, plaster, stone, or even some metals. Wood surrounds work well for a study. Using deeply carved mahogany or other fine woods adds to the richness and warmth of a room. Painted, pickled, washed or faux finished wood is often a good choice for a formal setting where the cost of stone might be prohibitive.

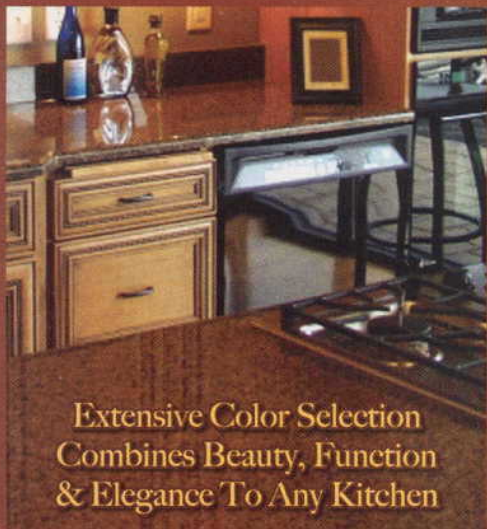
Plaster surrounds are another option if the cost of stone is more than the budget will allow. Plaster can be finished to resemble stone, wood or a painted surface. It is also very adaptable when heavy detail is desired. Plaster is lighter weight than stone and faster to manufacture.

Stone is the ultimate choice for a fireplace surround and will outlast any of the other choices mentioned above. Cast Stone is very popular and less expensive than natural cut stone, such as marble, granite or limestone. Cast stone is made to look and feel like natural limestone, dating back to around 500 B.C.; it is a mix of crushed stone that has been compressed under extreme pressure into a predesigned shape or form to create a man-made limestone. Cast stone is sometimes referred to as a hand-forged stone and is manufactured in a similar technique to metal casting. This technique is very similar to that used by children everywhere to build sand castles by pressing moist sand into a bucket, >

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The primary difference between cast stone and natural stone is the ability of cast stone to be formed into complex shapes and designs while maintaining the strength characteristic of natural stone. Cast stone can be custom colored, textured, antiqued, distressed or stained. Cast stone surrounds are available in a variety of styles, from extremely streamlined contemporary to highly carved and detailed traditional designs. One of the largest collections and the premiere source for beautiful cast stone fireplace surrounds is Stone Magic (www.stonemagic.com).

If you are trying to decide whether to use cast stone versus natural stone, take into consideration that production time for cast stone is considerably faster, easier and more cost effective than for natural stone. As far as durability, cast stone is more durable than natural limestone due to the process by which it is produced. Cast stone gains strength and durability without the air pockets that are common in natural stone simply by the hand-forging technique that is used in the manufacturing process.

Natural stone is the *crème de la crème* for fireplace surrounds. Popular natural stone options are marble, granite, travertine, limestone, or large natural stacked stones in random or uniform shapes. The latter is a good look for a lakehouse or mountain house where a more rustic feel is desired. Marble, possessing the natural ability to take on a high polish, is often chosen polished for more formal settings. However, marble can also be honed, a process that gives the marble a matte finish, and thus a more casual appearance. Marble comes in a wide range of colors and qualities. Travertine is a less expensive form of marble and can be carved for a fireplace surround. One thing to keep in mind with travertine is to specify it "unfilled." The fills in filled travertine have a tendency to pop out over time. Unfilled travertine has a more antiqued appearance.

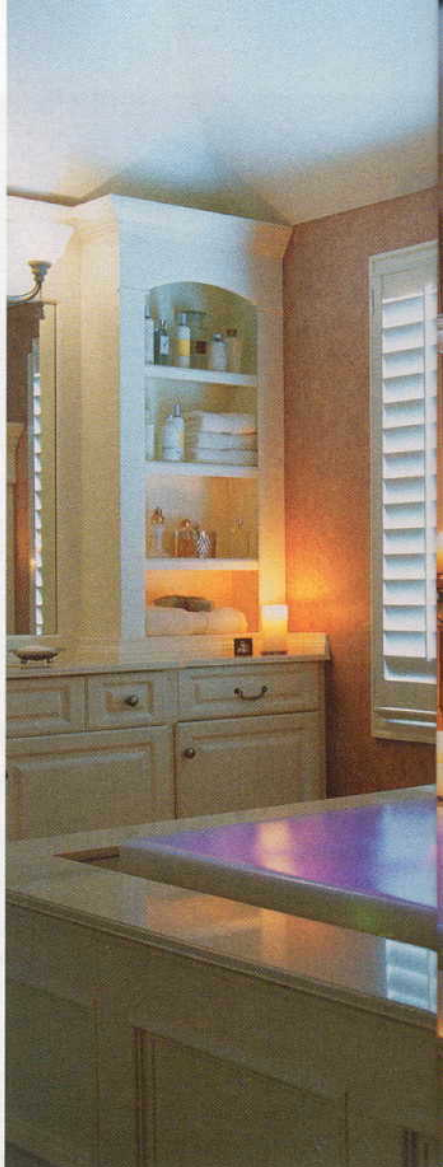
Limestone, available in a variety of shades of off-white to an almost gold color, is usually specified unpolished for most surrounds. The natural matte appearance of limestone is the preferred finish. Limestone will take a low polish if desired just not as high a polish as marble or granite. Limestone is softer than marble and is easier to carve, thus a better price point than marble or granite.

Granite comes in numerous colors and varieties and can be carved for fireplace surrounds; however, granite is one of the hardest stones, and therefore it is not as easy to carve. Other stones that are always thought of for fireplace surrounds are soapstone, sandstone, slate, alabaster and cantera. There is no right or wrong material for a fireplace surround. Explore all the possibilities to find the one that suits your vision and your budget.

Metal is gaining in popularity as a material for fireplace surrounds. Stone Magic even has a fireplace combining cast stone with cast bronze insets. It is truly a beautiful idea. I am told they can also cast in nickel, silver or copper. Polished or matte finished metal panels fabricated for fireplace surrounds can achieve a very sleek, contemporary look.

outdoor fireplaces

A discussion on fireplaces wouldn't be complete without talking about outdoor fireplaces—the hottest trend in the fireplace industry. Outdoor fireplaces are incorporated into most homes these days. There are also freestanding options available on the





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market in a variety of sizes, materials and prices to suit any desire. With outdoor living having become so incredibly popular, the fireplace has established itself as a mainstay in today's patio areas.

When planning an outdoor fireplace, keep in mind you will want it to complement your outdoor surroundings. A formal polished marble fireplace would most likely look completely out of place in an outdoor setting. Consider large irregular shaped stones—the same material your home is constructed of—or, for a free-standing option, something that blends with the environment. I could not live without my chiminea. I have solved lots of world problems sitting by the chiminea on a cool evening gazing into the fire, not to mention the captivating smell of piñon coming from the piñon wood burning inside my chiminea. By the way, there are other wonderful aromatic woods available for fireplaces such as sandalwood, cedar and juniper just to mention a few.

final glowing thoughts

Fireplaces have always held a very special place in my heart. I have such fond memories of popping popcorn in the fireplace as a little girl, lingering by the fire for hours as a teenager completely mesmerized by the tranquil, romantic fire. When my husband and I were looking for our first home, we would not settle for a home without a fireplace to cuddle in front of. The addition of our chiminea was the icing on the cake. We have spent untold evenings with family and friends entertaining outside on cool evenings, thanks to the warmth and inviting atmosphere created by our chiminea. It has truly become the focal point of our outdoor living environment, and a central gathering place for all to enjoy.

A fire in the fireplace, whether inside or out, sends an unspoken welcome, beckoning you to sit for a while, warm your self, and take in the tranquil and overwhelming peace from its radiant glow. ©



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