



TURN UP THE HEAT

Don't let the winter chill keep you indoors; invest in some external heating and enjoy the outdoors all year round

Story: Sandra Batley

Entertaining outdoors is such a pleasurable experience, but not if it's cold. That's where heating becomes an essential component for any outdoor setting.

There are a number of solutions to entice you back outdoors all year round and make it a comfortable experience, no matter what the climate or the season. Depending on your budget, you can create a warm, inviting environment outdoors with any of the following:

Patio heaters

Freestanding patio heaters are available in several sizes and styles for residential and

commercial use. They range in price from \$300-\$900. They provide warmth efficiently and quickly and are really handy for small gatherings if space is limited. They are ideal for courtyards, patios and decks. They give you the flexibility to create warmth where you want it. Mini tabletop models are also available.

On the down side, patio heaters add significantly to greenhouse and air pollution problems. Also check for features such as wheels for easy movement, tie-downs for windy locations, and a cover to protect it from the elements.

Patio heaters also come in a number of different, durable finishes such as stainless

steel and powder-coated aluminum. This makes them suitable for occasional exposure to the elements. When not in use, they should be covered. If you live by the sea, the more expensive stainless-steel models would be best.

Outdoor fireplaces

There is nothing cosier than the warmth from a fire. Outdoor fireplaces are becoming a popular choice for heating and cooking — they are the Rolls Royce of outdoor heating. Still deemed a luxury item, they do however add value, warmth and atmosphere.

There are many fireplaces on the market today offering the option of either gas or

1. This unique, individually handcrafted chimenea from Bella Fuego Pottery is made with a special blend of stoneware clay. Not only does it radiate heat but it also acts as an interesting focal point in the garden. (www.bellafuego.co.nz)

2 An outdoor fireplace such as this one from Broadys adds ambience and warmth to your backyard no matter what the season. (www.broadys.co.nz)

3. A centrally placed outdoor fireplace creates a welcoming setting in this formal style garden. Photography by Michael Mansvelt.

solid fuel (wood and coal). Manufacturers now have extensive product lines in a number of different styles and finishes to complement your particular outdoor setting and tastes. Whether it's a plaster or schist finish you want, your designer can help you choose the right design.

Outdoor fireplaces can fit into a number of situations including deck areas, courtyards and poolside spaces. Position the fireplace as a focal point and have your outdoor furniture and cooking facilities close to it. Incorporate other landscaping features such as lighting, built-in seating and planting to complement. Adding a windbreak wall or fence will help with keeping wind out and maintaining the warmth.

Selecting the fireplace usually starts with a simple question. Do you prefer the convenience of gas or the better heat-generating capabilities of wood? Both have their good and bad points depending on your personal lifestyle and needs. →





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Gas benefits:

- Quick, instant, consistent heat
- Low maintenance
- Clean, effective burning
- Natural gas is safer to control

Gas disadvantages:

- More expensive, the cost of gas can quickly add up. There are companies nationwide which will deliver your gas bottles to your doorstep

Wood burning benefits:

- Ambience! The look, smell and feel of fire is intoxicating and romantic
- Can be less expensive to buy and operate

Wood burning disadvantages:

- Can be a bit smoky when surrounding air pressure varies
- You will need to keep a steady supply of dry wood stored nearby
- More maintenance — open fireplaces can get messy
- Emissions — ask your retailer whether it complies with the new emission rules

Braziers and chimineas

If you like the idea of an open fire but don't have the budget for an outdoor fireplace, then a brazier or chiminea could be for you. Fire

pits or braziers are not particularly safe around small children, but they do provide a quick, simple way of creating fire for a more casual informal setting. There is something welcoming and primal about sitting around a fire.

Chimineas are basically a less-expensive version of an outdoor fire. They are freestanding and wood burning. They usually have a handcrafted finish, made from cast iron, cast aluminum, ceramic or clay. It is best not to install a chiminea on a wooden deck without a large approved non-combustible hearth pad.

With so many outdoor heating options, there's no need to let the chill in the air put you off making the most of the outdoors. ■

4. This Kent Stainless Steel Bullet Patio Heater from the BBQ Factory is suitable for any outdoor living area. It runs on a standard gas cylinder. (www.bbqfactory.co.nz)

5. This brazier from Hard Yards is a container for fire, taking the form of an upright standing design. Used for holding burning coal, gas as well as wood fires, the brazier is a source of light, heat, and can also be used for cooking. (www.hardyards.net.nz)