



INSIDE

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LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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AROUND THE HOUSE

Tell us about your first pad

CONTEST • It may not be decorated with heirlooms or international artifacts, but it's the place you call your humble abode.

Life At Home is looking for three ultimate starter homes, condos or apartments — that first home away from mom and dad.

It could be a swank party pad or a contemplative cocoon. Perhaps it's a Connaught condo or a new home in McKenzie Towne. It must, however, be decorated by you and all yours — or a collaborative effort between you and a roommate or two. (No university residence rooms, please.)

E-mail a brief write-up on your first post-parents pad, plus a few images, to lifearthomecomment@theherald.canwest.com by Tuesday, Jan. 9.

Three lucky residences will be featured in a future Life At Home story, and their residents will win a \$75 gift certificate to Walls Alive (one per home).

— Calgary Herald

Pewter shakes up the sink scene

PRODUCT • When it comes to faucet finishes, polished chrome and brushed nickel have been the standard for years. Now, Delta is shaking up the sink scene with the latest addition to its Victorian line of faucets and accessories — an aged pewter finish.

The rich, textured finish, along with the Victorian line's classic style, adds the patina of age to a home's sink or bathtub hardware. Delta's Victorian bath collection also features ornate detailing, brass fittings and a high-rise spout. Go to mascocanada.com for details.

— Calgary Herald

Be aware of fire risks

SAFETY • The cheery flame of a candle, the crackle of a fireplace and delicious aromas wafting from the kitchen are among the treasured sights, sounds and smells of the holiday season. But while each is a memory in the making, the holidays are also a time of increased risk.

Be aware of the risks and take extra care when heating your home, cooking, using candles and decorating.

To reduce the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning, ensure fuel-burning appliances, such as space heaters or decorative fireplaces or stoves, are approved for use and certified by a recognized testing agency, such as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriter's Laboratories (UL/ULC).

Never use unvented appliances, such as infrared heaters, barbecues or torches, inside a dwelling, RV, camper, tent or other enclosed space.

Installing a carbon monoxide detector, while no substitute for prevention, can give early warning of carbon monoxide buildup.

See municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_FireSafetyPubs.htm and click on the December Holiday Fire Safety link on the right.

— Jac MacDonald, CanWest News Service

DESIGN



Courtesy, Starline
France-based Starline International's free-standing fireplaces burn denatured alcohol to produce flames.

NO smoke, soot or chimney

Cast a contemporary glow with a free-standing fireplace built to burn corn-based products

SHERRY NOIK-BENT
FOR CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

This winter, there are lots of ways to achieve the warmth and drama of a crackling fire in your home or condo — without burning trees or emitting harmful particulates.

Consider corn. Expensive in its popped form, it's quickly emerging as a cheap, alternative fuel source that is cleaner, greener and rapidly renewable.

A corn-based ethanol gel is what produces the authentic snap, hiss and pop of fire in an In Flame fireplace.

The proprietary substance called Sunjel — the only one Eco-Logo-certified by Environment Canada — is smokeless, odourless and gives off just one part per million (ppm) of carbon monoxide — far lower than the 10 ppm that is the Canadian safety standard.

In Flame requires no flue or gas connection, making it ideal for condos and lofts, as buyers at Plazacorp's West Harbour City in Toronto will soon find out. The lakeshore-area condominium is offering an In Flame

fireplace in every suite.

There are a dozen architectural designs with wood, stone or concrete surrounds and mantels; prices range from \$599 to \$1,800.

Every \$5 worth of fuel will burn for between 2½ to three hours. For older buildings or homes, where the fireplace may no longer be functional, In Flame has a range of log-and-grate inserts. And for that real campfire smell, the company sells a line of aromatic essential oils that can be burned along with the Sunjel.

Although In Flame isn't meant as a substitute for central heating, "it will raise the temperature in a typical room by anywhere from two to four degrees," says Plazacorp spokesman Nestor Repetski.

"The heat level is moderate enough that you can keep burning it for an hour, two hours, and it's never going to get uncomfortably warm."

The byproduct of burning Sunjel is water vapour, which helps humidify those dry, static-shock-inducing suites.

Another choice for the chimney-challenged is Eco Smart Fire (ecosmartfire.com), an Australian innovation that has won several awards in that country.

Also ventless and sootless, the ultra-modern fireboxes keep the heat in the room rather than sending it up in smoke. Designs can be free-standing, built-in or inserted into an existing fireplace; they'll fit into almost the smallest space.

Tony Lantorno of Company B. Inc., the exclusive Canadian distributor, recommends the unit not be placed in a room smaller than 12 by 12 feet.

"It's a real flame, and just like when a candle burns, it consumes (a small amount of the) oxygen in the room."

SEE FIREPLACES, PAGE G2

ARTFUL SHOPPER

Put your feet up in style

Ottomans to make you want to repose

JANE HARRISON
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

You could call it a hot trend or a decorating cliché, but these days it's common to find a leather ottoman anchoring a seating arrangement in design magazines and stores. Whatever you call it, it's a great idea embraced by a lot of intelligent people.

When you're looking for kick-back comfort, the first thing you seek is a way to put up your feet. With a lot of modern furniture, it isn't an afterthought but part of the design. And by all accounts, people love it.

At Inhabit Interiors, feet-up comfort comes in a wide selection of ottomans and benches covered in dark-chocolate bi-cast leather. It has a protective treatment that makes it durable and easy to wipe off mud or spills.

"They are so practical because they are multi-use," says store owner Denise MacDonald. "They can be used as coffee tables, footrests and extra seating as well."

Their functionality has made them popular items.

"They are saturated in the market, but still sell like crazy," MacDonald says. "Every single one I put on the floor sells."

Some, like the large, square Sylvester ottoman with a hinged top (\$749), also provide storage. In the showroom, it's grouped with the Jacob sectional covered in a toasty textured fabric. Although the sectional comes with its own ottoman, it's typically sold with the leather ottoman as well.

MacDonald has this sectional at home and she loves the fact two people can stretch out on it at the same time.

It's all part of a trend to more casual living, she says.

Whether at home uptown or in the country, relaxed comfort is what her customers want.

"Modern and contemporary doesn't mean uncomfortable."

Change the proportions of the ottoman slightly and it becomes a bench that transitions happily from room to room. Benches can be tucked up to a table or positioned at the end of a bed.

The Augustus bench (\$699) is popular for entries, MacDonald says, providing a place to sit while putting on shoes, and offering storage for hats and mitts. The same bench makes a great coffee table.

Feet-up comfort is apparent in the design of other furniture styles. The Juliet chaise sofa has a built-in ottoman. The floor model is covered with a tawny microfibre (\$1,499).

MacDonald says this is a popular style because it's a fit even in small interiors, where the chaise footrest provides additional seating.

SEE LOUNGE, PAGE G2

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