



Q I'm planning to extend my Georgian home and am keen that every detail should complement the original look of the property. What style of fireplace would you recommend?

A The fireplace was the feature of greatest significance in every Georgian public room, so making the right choice at the outset is very important. To achieve the all-important 'harmony' so beloved of the Georgians it is essential to strike the right balance where scale is concerned. Too small and plain, and the result can look mean, too large and decorative and it can look fussy and pretentious. The design, too, should be tailored to its context. Timber and moulded composition mantelpieces were much in favour in the last quarter of the 18th century when imported marble supplies were curtailed as a result of war with France and America. These became the hallmark of the refined Georgian interior and were produced in large numbers for such schemes as the Adam brother's Adelphi, where the surviving inventory shows them to have been the preferred choice in the majority of cases. A typical example from David Garrick's library is now in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

David Black, Thistle & Rose (01450 376 928, thistleandrose.co.uk)

Flame Academy

Open fires or traditional stoves can bring a room to life. Be inspired by the advice of our expert panel

Q Most of our home's original stone fireplaces have unfortunately been removed by a previous owner. We are prepared to invest classic replacements, so what is our best option?

A Stone fireplaces fall into two basic categories: those made of natural stone and those made from reconstituted material. A fireplace made from reconstituted stone will have been replicated in the same form many times. If you would prefer a unique piece then natural stone – such as marble or

limestone – is ideal. Marble fireplaces are generally offered with a polished finish whereas those manufactured in limestone have a matte appearance. Each displays individual shading and veining. You can choose between designs carved by hand or machine. Bear in mind that intricate hand carving is more expensive and may require a longer lead-time for production, but be assured that stone designs have re-established their dominance in the market and promise a longevity and timelessness that make the purchase a worthwhile investment.

Eve Iravani, Montpellier Marble (01452 714 800, montpellier.co.uk)

Q For a long time we have wanted to install a wood-burning stove. Having recently moved to a smoke control area, will this be possible?

A Absolutely! Under the Clean Air Act a local authority may declare the whole or part of the district to be a 'smoke control area', however certain models are officially exempt from this ruling. These stoves have passed tests to prove that they are able to burn without emitting smoke. Emissions from the Dunsley 'Yorkshire', for example, are so low that it very easily complies with the Clean Air Act. Independent laboratory tests show efficiencies of over 70% on a whole range of fuels including wood. This has been achieved without using catalyst combustors, which can be expensive to replace and can easily become damaged if coal or impure wood is burnt. Also remember that stoves are technical pieces of furniture that need to be installed by a competent person, not only for greatest efficiency but for your safety and so that you adhere to building regulations.

Stuart Broadbent, Dunsley Heat (01484 682 635, dunsleyheat.co.uk)



Q I love to cook and we spend much of our time together as a family in the kitchen. What type of heating would you suggest?

A If the kitchen is the hub of your home, perhaps you would appreciate the warmth of a heat-storage range? As well as offering an excellent cooking facility, this would also provide you with welcome background heat. They can be straightforward to install and efficient to run. For instance the Everhot range is powered by a normal 13 amp supply just like an electric kettle, but provides warmth and costs from just £8.50 per week to run. Some people believe that food cooked in a traditional range oven can taste better too. Without the direct heat from a gas flame or an electric element, food is said to cook more evenly and be less dry. Everhot models also have cast iron hotplates that are divided into boil and simmer zones. Everything is separately controlled, so you can cook in your own style.

Richard Frost, Everhot (01453 890 018, everhot.co.uk)



Q We love the look and feel of an open fire, but are keen to be more efficient. How can we achieve this?

A Have you considered an open convector fire? These use the principle of convected warmth to increase the efficient use of your fuel whether you are using wood, coal or gas. The cleverly designed box-within-a-box principle gives higher levels of performance than those of a conventional open fire. In addition to the radiant heat generated by the fire, cooler air from

the room is warmed as it is naturally convected around the chamber before returning it to the room, extracting more heat from your fuel. An added benefit comes from the gentle and even spread of warmth which reduces the 'hot front-cold back' effect that open fires can generate. Traditional Tortoise Fireboxes are available in two styles, inset models for building into the fireplace or surround and freestanding models which are ideal for inglenooks or as a stand-alone fire.

Gordon Allen, Flamewave Fires (0845 257 5028, flamewavefires.co.uk)



TRADITIONAL STYLE

The Old Radiator Company holds a stock of over 4,500 reclaimed cast iron radiators dating from between 1890 and the 1950s, so if you are looking for a period model to suit your home, you are very likely to find the right design in its selection.

The 'Rarer' collection includes Princess and Duchess models along with some more unusual ornate designs which would originally have graced the more stately homes. Meanwhile the 'Original' collection features the column and school radiators with which people are most familiar.

Stock radiators can be altered to provide the correct heat output for your room. A member of team will be able to guide you through the process advising you on the sizes required for your needs and style to suit you and your property.

The Old Radiator Company's skilled team restore, test and paint the radiators in-house. You can choose colours from a large selection of stock shades, or it can be matched to any colour of your choice. You may prefer a metallic finish where the cast iron is highly polished to draw attention to the detail of the casting.

To view the styles and finishes on offer, visit The Old Radiator Company's showroom in Kent. Here you can see examples of radiators in a 'home' setting to help you picture how your choice might look in your own space. Alternatively you can browse the selection online at theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk. For further details, call 01233 850 082.