



Winter Warmers

Traditional designs are highly sought-after. Find out why with our guide

The Old Radiator Company

As the temperature drops and the evenings darken, there naturally comes a point when we have to let go of the British summer and admit that it's time to put the heating on. This relative ease of use was partly what helped central heating systems take off in the first place. Although the cast iron radiator was invented around the 1860s, and mass production began in the 1890s, it still took nearly half a century after that before radiators became a mainstay across the UK. But during this steady incline in popularity the radiator underwent many stages of continuous development.

Naturally as cast iron became a decorative feature in the home, styles changed, and therefore

Iron Age

The invention of the radiator as we know it today occurred during the Victorian era, and perhaps unsurprisingly its place of origin was the chilly climates of St Petersburg in Russia. A businessman named Franz San Galli completed the design between 1855 and 1857, thus making a giant contribution to heating rooms adequately and efficiently. San Galli took his work first to Germany and then to the United States, where the development of cast iron radiators really took off. There Joseph Nason had already patented similar models, and when he came to England he teamed up with AM Perkins, who had created his own central heating system. The pair, together with Robert Briggs, invented a steam radiator in 1862. After that, mass production escalated towards the end of the century, and the American Radiator Company – an amalgamation of three different manufacturers – was perhaps the biggest supplier. It even had factories in Hull which operated under the Ideal brand name.



The Old Radiator Company

BOX CLEVER

If you are in the situation where you have original radiators that are perhaps a little tatty, then a radiator cover may be the solution. After all, this was a traditional trend too. There are a number of styles available, as well as a variety of woods, finishes, paints and grille designs that you can opt for to get one that will work in harmony with your home. And if you're looking for something extra special then bespoke dealers can create something to your exact specifications.

Another place where alternative heating solutions might be considered is in the bathroom. In smaller areas storage can often be quite tight. It is possible, though, to get radiators with an additional towel rail added. This hand-crafted model from Vogue UK (pictured right), has a chrome finish but is also available in antique gold. It is priced from £922 and includes a five-year guarantee. Call 01902 387 000 or visit vogueuk.co.uk for further details.



so did the popularity of radiators. Although homeowners loved the comforts of central heating, many began to consider radiators to be obtrusive. The art of creating thin, ornate designs was soon overshadowed by decorative covers that could be painted to blend in to the room. Today though, lovers of traditional décor see radiators as another opportunity to add period charm and character to their homes. Whether it's a one-off authentic reclaimed and restored piece from a salvage yard, or a whole set of matching reproduction designs installed throughout a household, classic radiators can add warmth to a home in more ways than one.

All Shapes & Sizes

Typically, early radiators were constructed in columns. Obviously the number of columns, as well as the size of them, would dictate how much potential heat output each model could have. As a general rule two, four and six-column designs will increase in depth, so try to aim for less where space is limited, as long as the area will still be heated properly. Squat nine-column units are great where height is restricted, and can therefore be ideal to fit beneath a window. This Etonian range from Feature Radiators (pictured above) shows a

variety of four and six-column radiators in a range of sizes and finishes. Call 01274 567 789 or go to featureradiators.co.uk to find out more.

It is possible, whether buying reproduction or reclaimed models, to get a number of different finishes in a variety of colours. Many specialist dealers can salvage an old model, making it work and look better than it ever has. There is also a large scope for style too. Ornate designs can be found on many refurbished items, or bespoke manufacturers will be able to create something unique for you.



Feel the Heat

As delightful and important as traditional style and personal preference can be, the ultimate goal of any heating device should be to adequately warm up the space in which it belongs. If you're at all worried about what size radiator you need for a room, simply seek expert advice. Many specialist dealers will be able to work out the necessary output required by the dimensions of the room, which is measured in BTUs – British thermal units. This process might also take into consideration that a lounge, living area or bathroom is usually required to be the warmest in the house, while places like kitchens and hallways are typically the least important to heat. Other factors like double-glazing are also taken into account, and the final result will give you a firm idea of what size radiator you'll require.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Feature Radiators** (01274 567 789, featureradiators.co.uk)
- **The Old Radiator Company** (01233 850 082, theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk)
- **Traditional Radiator Company** (0808 178 5533, trads.co.uk)
- **Vogue UK** (01902 387 000, vogueuk.co.uk)