



Home & Garden

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Friday, Oct. 14, 2005

Orchids anywhere



Switch pillows with season



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Mix scale, texture & more



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Warm up to the glow of a fireplace



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There's something special about walking into a room that has a fireplace abloom with a roaring fire.

Everything about a fire — the aroma, the crackling logs, the shadowy flicker of light — adds to the warmth of a room, especially on a chilly evening in fall.

So here are some tips on making your fireplace a special focus of your home.



This contemporary fireplace features a recessed niche or alcove that runs horizontally from side to side, giving the space a unique feeling. The feature is further enhanced by the large horizontal stripes painted on the back wall.

At home with a hearth

Opening

Building a fire can be a challenge. It's important that the firebox, but not other mechanical parts, be sound. When starting from scratch, you can work with a craftsman to make something special for your space, or you can buy a prefab fireplace and, if you're handy,

Install it yourself.

Clearance

Local and federal codes dictate how large or small the combustible surround enclosing your firebox must be. In general, the surround must be at least 12 inches and the hearth must extend about 20 inches from the face of the

firebox. Once you learn the codes for your specific area, it's time to choose the best material that supports and complements the rest of your interior.

Mantel or not?

Traditionally, mantels were used to hold candles that provided additional light. They also, of course, are the perfect

place for photos and other special objects and collections. There are premade mantels, or you can have one custom made. You might also consider going without a mantel, especially if you want to create a more contemporary look.

Accessories

Just like the rest of your interior, your fireplace isn't complete until you've accessorized it. Here's what you'll need:

► Screen. You don't want

sparkles flying into your room, so you'll need a screen. There are lots of options — wire mesh, beaded glass, etched metal or glass — that you can use to dress up your fireplace.

► Fire tools. Both functional and beautiful, fire tools are like the jewelry of your fireplace. You can have wall-mounted sets or sets that sit on the floor. Brushes, tongs and shovels are as varied as individual tastes.

► Andirons. These decorative supports that sit inside the firebox and hold burning material close to a wealth of styles that are as contemporary as a traditional go-to fire.

► Fans and benches. Traditional fireplaces often feature benches and benches that sit at a comfortable distance from the fireplace. They provide a safety "barrier" as well as a chance to get close to and enjoy the warmth of the fire.

► Damper pulls. There are a ton of ways to add a little whimsy and personality to your fireplace. Such pulls are also practical, letting you know if the fireplace damper is opened or closed.

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