

Total Home

making your dreams come true, from start to finish

High-performance showers

Reducing the amount of hot water you use means saving money on both the water metre and on your electric bill. A bathtub full of hot water every day will take a big bite out of your energy budget these days, whereas a quick shower will help you keep costs down.

Low flow showerheads allow you to conserve both water and energy. They reduce consumption by 60 to 70 percent and help consumers save about 15 percent on water heating costs. These showerheads deliver water with just as much force as standard showerheads while using only between 3.8 and 9.5 litres per minute.

Low flow shower heads equipped with shut-off button valves allow you to turn off the water while soaping up and then turn it back on again to rinse, saving you the trouble of readjusting the water temperature. There are also shower mixers that regulate water temperatures more quickly so water doesn't drain away uselessly while you adjust the tap to your desired temperature.

Flow restrictors can be installed between the showerhead and the shower arm. These are very efficient in reducing water flow, which in turn reduces consumption. Some models come with adjustable jets and are equipped with control

valves, which allow non-aerated jets to reduce heat loss. Other flow restrictors inadvertently reduce water pressure, so be sure to do your research before buying one. For taps equipped with pressure reducers, aerators can be installed so that air is mixed into the water stream for consistent shower pressure.



Ensure that your shower is eco-friendly.

Hearth, Electric or Woodstove?

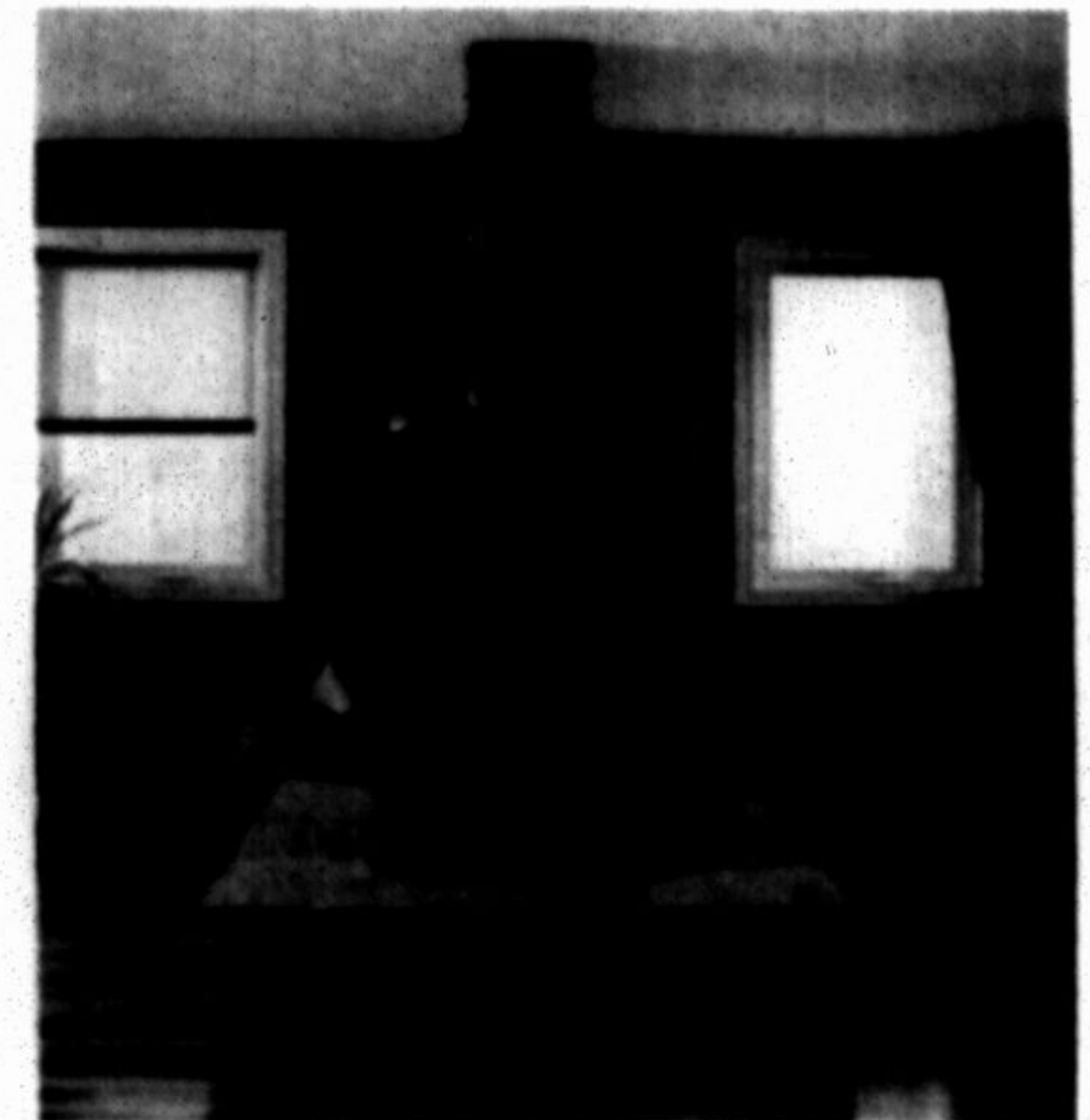
The way you install a new hearth or woodstove varies greatly, depending on the model you choose. The installation of an electric fireplace is very simple, as it only needs to be plugged into an electrical outlet. An electric or ethanol fireplace does not require a chimney or a ventilation pipe, so some models can be affixed directly to the wall while others are portable and do not require any assembly.

Many safety regulations must be followed when putting in a wood fireplace, however. If your home already has a hearth and chimney, you can install a fireplace insert, but it must include a new, officially approved stainless steel chimney lining. Ensure that your chimney is suited to the type of fireplace you want and that its installation meets building codes. If you have chosen an advanced combustion fireplace, be sure to hire a competent professional to install it.

A gas fireplace doesn't require a chimney, just an evacuation pipe or duct. You will, however, need to replace the existing chimney lining with an approved metal duct. Insert models are simply placed in the opening of an existing fireplace. For those homes that do not have an existing fireplace, a zero clearance fireplace can be installed on an interior or exterior wall with approved

venting material. Again, a natural gas or propane fireplace should be installed by a home heating professional.

Wood pellet stoves require an evacuation pipe rather than a chimney, and a simple vent is sufficient for some models. It is always advisable to have this type of fireplace installed by a licensed contractor familiar with the procedure.



For safety, make sure a professional installs your new fireplace or woodstove.

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Specialists in dream kitchens

If you have loads of great ideas for your future kitchen but you have no idea where to start, why not talk to a kitchen designer. The kitchen is the central area in many homes; it is where family gathers and where guests first sample the personal style of the homeowners. Because of that importance, many consultants today are specially trained in kitchen design and conception. They have different skills ranging from design and ergonomics to cabinetmaking, carpentry, and installation.

Above all, kitchen designers are advisors. They meet with clients and build a concept to suit the style of the family, taking into account budget, space, time, and personal needs. Most designers work with computers using virtual design techniques that allow clients to preview the results without spending thousands of dollars. Working with a kitchen designer is an opportunity to name your dreams for your home. Because these professionals design tailor-made cabinets adapted to your requirements, they will be able to personalize storage areas and maximize available space. If you're dreaming of a gas stove but think you don't have enough room, or if you'd love to have culinary heat lamps, refrigerated drawers, or a professional restaurant-style kitchen, a kitchen designer will help you adapt your dreams to your budget.

Kitchen designers are constantly on the lookout for new items in the world of interior design and can suggest ergonomic innovations that will turn the most reluctant of cooks into enthusiasts!



To renovate a room as important as the kitchen, hire a specialist. The job will be done quickly and you will be able to enjoy it for years to come.