





FIREPLACE FINESSE

The lure of the hearth is as old as history itself. Now, Aspen architects are heating things up with modern updates to your wood-burning wonder.

By Linda Hayes

"The hearth is the heart of the home," Frank Lloyd Wright once declared.

American architect Wright is famous for having designed homes that uplift the spirits of those who own and visit them. Key to his designs was integrating fireplaces and hearths at the core, and then wrapping living spaces around them. While the placement of modern-day fireplaces, not to mention the basic elements (flame, inserts, burners, surrounds), may have evolved, their intrinsic appeal remains to this day.

For a luxury home project on Red Mountain, for instance, CCY Architects (ccyarchitects.com) designed a double-sided fireplace that separates a dining area from a more formal living roomgathering place. Materials, including a board-formed concrete surround, blackened steel panels and a stainless steel gas burner, reflected the broader palette of the house. "Rather than being a focal point, like a view, it became a planning element with a strong presence in the space," notes CCY Associate Todd Kennedy. "It's a fine line in homes today."

Scott Lindenau, design principal of Studio B Architecture + Interiors (studiob-architecture.com) in Aspen, expresses a penchant for more traditional fireplaces. "I am still mesmerized [by] simply watching a real, wood-burning fire, with the crackling flame and ashes," he shares. "It's worth the effort for the nostalgia and romance they instill." While his clients largely tend to agree, local restrictions on wood-burning fireplaces have spurred a transformation in Lindenau's designs toward open or behind-the-glass gas flame versions, with or without ceramic logs and enhanced by creative, mixed-material surrounds.

The inherent flexibility of the forms makes them workable for both indoor and outdoor applications. For one of Lindenau's in-town Aspen projects, Monique Spears of Elements designed a series of fire elements set into a limestone platform along a patio wall. She also commissioned a stainless steel bowl from a NYC artist and filled it with ceramic "fire pebbles." All played an integral role in creating warmth and ambiance for the outdoor living space.

Want to finesse your fireplace, or find out what's new? Here's where to look.

The Fireplace Company

A collection of gas, wood and electric hearth products, as well as hearth accessories, for all architectural styles and designs. 935 Cowen Drive, Carbondale, 970.963.3598, thefpc.com

True North Hearth & Home

Specializing in everything from "builder box" fireplaces to "one-off" custom-built and certified fireplaces for modern to classic interiors. Stoves and inserts as well. 120 Midland Ave., Glenwood Springs, 970.230.9363, truenorthfireplaces.com

Colorado Hearth & Home

Hearth products and designs for indoor and outdoor living spaces. 8775 E. Orchard Road, Greenwood Village, 800,979,3267, coloradohearth.com



...CONTINUED Located adjacent to Hotel Jerome at the corner of North Mill and Bleeker streets, The Mill, as it's familiarly known, is perfectly positioned to take full advantage of views unique to the Aspen core. From various vantage points, Aspen Mountain, Red Mountain, Independence Pass and the open space of adjacent Rio Grande Park are evident. Aspen's full package of shops, restaurants, galleries and other offerings are just steps away.

The Mill was a collaborative design between David Johnston Architects of Aspen and NYC-based Alan Orenbuch Architects, as well as NYC-based Alex Papachristidis Interiors, all of whom were involved with the design of The Spring Building, a similar Rudin project in Aspen. The trilevel building features a redbrick (a nod to the town's historic Victorian past) and sandstone exterior with contemporary detailing. The top floors house four 2,000-square-foot

three-bedroom pied-à-terre apartments, including two penthouses with 1,300 square feet of outdoor living space. Floorto-ceiling windows, retractable glass doors, layered terraces and a rooftop deck edged with a gardenlike "green" roof further connect the building to its surroundings. Interiors for all four apartments feature high-end finishes, including Austrian white oak flooring and Italian Calacatta Gold marble, paired with custom millwork and elegant crown molding. The overall effect is what Papachristidis calls modern classicism. "The apartments have a clean, modern sensibility, with continuity of materials throughout to provide a neutral backdrop for whatever style of furnishings the owners want to install," he says. "When you're designing a space for others, it's best to keep it simple and not over-embellish."

Residences priced from \$6 million to \$8.5 million, 970.948.6954, themillaspen.com ■

