

● Craig Issod, webmaster of HearthNet and a former wood-stove manufacturer and retailer, with the Krog-Iversen SCAN DSA 5.



**HOME** | Modern wood stoves smoke the older generation with hot looks and clean combustion.

By Patricia Mertz Esswein

# Satisfy your BURNING desire

**I**T'S OCTOBER. The temperature and the leaves are falling and you long to snuggle up in front of . . . the heat pump? Or you build your first fire of the season in your fireplace to satisfy a primal need for flame—but the heat goes straight up the chimney. There's a better, more satisfying and economical solution: a state-of-the-art wood stove.

Today's models are definitely not the primitive iron boxes of yesteryear, says Craig Issod, webmaster of [HearthNet](http://www.hearth.net) ([www.hearth.net](http://www.hearth.net)). Issod's romance with wood stoves started in the 1970s when he was living off the electric grid in Appalachia. After he returned to his native New England, he and his wife, Martha, tried to buy a wood stove but found a dearth of dealers. And so Issod began a 25-year career of selling—and at one point making—wood stoves. He recalls the black boxes spawned by the first oil crisis, when many wood-stove makers were long-haired guys working out of their garages, welding together infernal beasts that breathed as much smoke as fire.

Current stoves meet EPA standards for emissions by burning a

wood fire's gases more completely. The stoves either incorporate two combustion chambers or use a catalytic combustor, which reduces the temperature necessary for better combustion. The result? Your neighbors might not even see smoke rising from your chimney. Wood stoves can also be works of art, and you can find a model to fit any décor.

We asked Issod for his top picks from among the hundreds of models on the market.



## TRADITIONAL

The **Jøtul F 3 CB** comes with an optional firescreen so you can watch your fire with the door open. Add a magnetic stovetop thermometer to make sure your stove burns at the best temperature, 400 to 600 degrees Fahrenheit. **PRICE: \$1,300**

## HOT STUFF

**W**OOD STOVES have their utilitarian uses. They supplement your home's heat, and they can keep you warm when the power's out. But they can also be the accent piece in a den or living room, so aesthetics count. Stoves are usually built from cast iron or steel plate. The two materials run neck and neck as far as performance, but the process of casting iron allows more decorative possibilities—molding, lettering, raised panels and the like.

The **Jøtul F 3 CB** (\$1,300 for a matte-black finish; [www.jotulflame.com](http://www.jotulflame.com)) is designed with arched mullions on its front door to complement traditional American furniture. The F 3 CB also comes in a smooth,

easy-to-clean porcelain-enamel finish that's available in blue/black, ivory or forest green. And Jøtul (pronounced *yodel*), of Norway, is the world's largest stove company, as well as one of the oldest.

For a design that would work well in either a traditional or a contemporary room, consider the **Quadra-Fire 3100 Millenium** (\$1,300 to \$1,650, depending on options; [www.quadrafire.com](http://www.quadrafire.com)). The stove has an arched, Shaker-style door and comes with Queen Anne-style legs or a pedestal base. To spruce up its sober black color, you can add gold-plated or satin-nickel trim.

In what Issod calls the artisan category, he chooses the **Woodstock Soapstone Fireview** (\$2,600; [www.woodstocksoapstone.com](http://www.woodstocksoapstone.com)), which has a cast-iron frame (available in gray, black, blue or brown) and natural-soapstone panels. Each piece of stone is unique, and after the fire dies, the stone continues to radiate heat longer than cast iron or steel.

Jøtul and Quadra-Fire products are sold by retailers in all 50 states; Woodstock Soapstone sells its stoves directly from its home base in New Hampshire and will ship to all 50 states. In the lower 48, freight costs range from \$95 to \$325. The stoves come with a money-back guarantee that includes shipping.

If you want a stove that's as jaw-droppingly sleek as a Frank Gehry building, Issod suggests the intensely contemporary **Krog-Iversen SCAN DSA 5** ([www.scanstoves.com](http://www.scanstoves.com)). Made in Denmark, the SCAN comes in black, gray or stainless steel, and is available with soapstone or optional marble or granite accents. The large, curved glass door gives you a wrap-around view of the fire. But at \$5,300 for the base unit, the SCAN costs two to three times as much as more traditional stoves.

If you live in a part of the country where longer-burning hardwood is scarce, or in an urban area with limited space to store cordwood, Issod suggests that you consider a pellet-burning stove, such as the **Harman XXV** (\$3,000; [www.harmanstoves.com](http://www.harmanstoves.com)). The pellets are formed from sawdust and come in 40-pound bags (about \$3 each).

Such stoves cost more than similar-size wood-burning models, but because they don't need a conventional chimney, installation is comparatively cheap—usually less than \$500 if you run a venting pipe through the wall behind the stove.

Unfortunately, pellet-burning stoves deny fire gazers some of the fascinating flicker of flame. The stoves use a blower that forces air through the pellets to produce a steady, blowtorch-like blaze. However, the stoves have an auger that automatically feeds pellets into the fire, so you won't have to lug logs. Both the blower and auger require electricity, so unless you have a generator, you can't run the stove during a blackout.



JUSTIN STEELE

#### TRANSITIONAL

Pop a load into the **Quadra-Fire 3100 Millenium** and it will heat up to 2,200 square feet for up to ten hours. To get the most from any stove, locate a source of dry wood cut to size, clean the stove regularly, and make an annual date with a certified chimney sweep. **PRICE: \$1,300 to \$1,650**

#### LOCATION, LOCATION

**I**DEALLY, your stove should be placed in a room where you will want to spend time and which is open to other rooms or to a stairwell so that the heat can spread. For convenience, your woodpile should be close by. Unfortunately, you can't drop a wood stove just anywhere.

It's easiest to install a stove in front

of a fireplace, which lets you run a stainless-steel chimney through the existing masonry chimney, says Issod. That will run you about \$1,200. If you don't have a chimney, you'll have to decide where it's best to add one.

A new chimney can cost from \$900 for a single-story prefab unit to more than \$2,500 for masonry construction with exterior brickwork that's two or more stories high. You'll also have to protect the floor around the stove with a hearth extension. That can cost between \$150 and \$200 for a ready-made extension for an existing fireplace or \$200 to \$300 for a hearth pad made of ceramic or stone.

Once you decide where to put the stove, the retailer will help you determine what size firebox you'll need to heat the space. In addition to the immediate area's square footage, you must factor in the number of exterior walls, the number and size of windows, and the height of the ceilings.

It's also important to consider that wood stoves are designed to run most efficiently on "high." "Stoves don't like to smolder," says Issod. "If you get a big stove and turn it down (by reducing the air flow) because it's roasting you out of house and home, you'll waste wood and generate more pollution."

All of Issod's top picks are medium-size (except the SCAN DSA 5, which is large), and all are available nationally. He defines a small stove as one with a firebox of less than 1.6 cubic feet; medium, 1.6 to 2.3 cubic feet; large, more than 2.3 cubic feet. **K** —Research: **JESSICA ANDERSON**