

Hearthwarming News

A Newsletter from the Masonry Heater Store
By Fountainhead Natural Homes, LLC

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Autumn
2005



Custom Means It's Made Just For You!

Many who receive this newsletter are planning, or at least dreaming, to build a new home or remodeling an existing one. This means it's decision-making time!

Building and remodeling are all about decisions: How big is this room? How tall is the ceiling? What kind of siding? What color of paint? Which windows and where? Carpet or hardwood or tile or linoleum? On and on go the questions. And that's the way it should be. It's your house, after all.

Here at the Masonry Heater Store, we recognize that you have unique tastes and preferences. But we don't know what those are until we get the opportunity to talk to you and show you what has already been done.

That is why Tulikivi has a 60 page catalog with over three dozen standard models. Chances are that among all those choices, you will find a masonry stove that strikes your fancy. At the very least, you are likely to find features in which you are interested.

That is the starting point. Once we know some of your preferences and have heard about the kind of house you would like to have, we can begin creating a

masonry heater that is custom suited to you, your home, family, and lifestyle.

As this goes to press, we are completing a custom project very similar to the one shown in the picture (left). The client designed his home around a central masonry heater complex. What he knew he wanted was: a modest house of about 2,000 square feet, a heater complex that would heat that space, the ability to cook entirely with wood, and as much heated sitting bench as he could get.

What he is getting is a masonry heater of all polished soapstone with 16" wide, heated benches. The benches go entirely across the front of his TU2200, around the right side and halfway across the back. That back part of the bench is then connected to a soapstone cookstove, the LLU1250 as shown here. Just think! A heater complex that will do all the cooking, baking, and heating and will probably outlive the house itself! Now that's value!

What many are surprised to hear is that this very custom project actually cost no more than some of the "off the rack" options in the Tulikivi catalog! Yet the new owner has tremendous versatility and a heater complex made just for him and his family.

Of course, many people are happy to purchase a stove right out of the catalog. But isn't it nice to know you're not limited to those 40 designs? So bring your plans and ideas to us and we will show you how versatile a masonry stove can be. Let us build one just for you!

The Masonry Heater Store is located at 7416 Airport Highway, Holland, Ohio. It is 2 miles west of exit 8 off I-475/23 and 5 miles east of Ohio Turnpike exit 52. Please call 419-825-3031 or e-mail Tulikivi@fnaturalhomes.com for more detailed directions. **We will be establishing regular hours soon, but currently only open by appointment.**

When Less is More

A masonry heater is a high-performance heating device. It's efficient, clean-burning, and looks great too. But just like a high-performance automobile, it can be damaged by improper care or misuse.

For most of the heating season, it is actually pretty hard to damage a masonry heater. But it can be done by treating it like a conventional woodstove and keeping a fire burning in it all the time. This is a definite no-no. Overfiring (burning too much fuel) will not increase the output of a masonry heater, but it will overheat internal stones and cause them to deteriorate.

If you are in doubt about how much fuel to use in your heater, it is always better to err on the side of caution and use a smaller amount of fuel. Remember, all that you need to accomplish is to have the sides of the heater pleasantly warm most of the day. If it is too hot to touch all day, you are definitely overfiring. Reduce the amount of fuel you use immediately!

As a general rule, in a Tulikivi soapstone heater, burn no more than 1 pound of wood per 100 pounds of soapstone in a 24 hour period. So if you have a TU2200, a heater that weighs about 4300 pounds, you can safely burn about 43 pounds of fuel each day. Special features like heated benches may increase the amount of wood that can be used.



Remember, though, that you do not have to use the maximum amount of fuel each day. You may find that less wood is sufficient for the heating you require, especially in the fall or spring, when it isn't

all that cold outside.

And, you do not have to burn all that fuel all at the same time. In fact, it will be gentler on the heater to have back-to-back fires rather than one big fire.

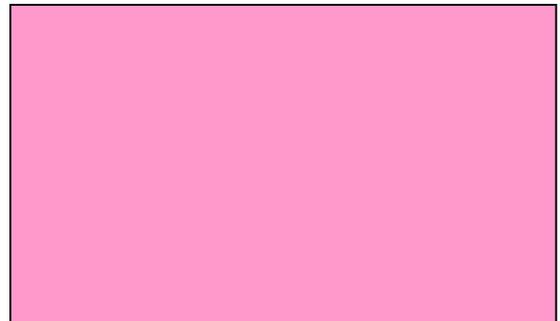
So, again, with the TU2200, you might start a fire after dinner with about 20 pounds of wood. Then you can sit back and enjoy the flames and a glass of wine for an hour or so until that wood burns down to mainly red-hot embers. At that point, add another 23 pounds of wood. The blaze will rekindle and last for another 1-2 hours.

Alternatively, if your schedule permits, you could have one fire in the morning and one in the evening. Many owners that I know have a fire burning while they eat breakfast and read the paper in the morning before going to work.

The fact that a fire in a masonry heater is so easy to start and doesn't require poking and care to keep burning makes it easy to have a fire almost anytime you're going to be around for an hour or so.

Regardless of how you schedule to burn your wood – all at once, back-to-back burns, or two separate fires – the output of the heater will be the same. But how you experience that output may be different. Thus you need to experiment and find the solution that best meets your family's heating needs.

Just remember that a masonry heater is very efficient at storing the heat from a fire and it is likely you need less wood than you think to keep it warm. Being gentle on a heater by using less wood will result in a long heater life – more years for you to enjoy its gentle radiant heat. This is one example of when less is more.



Healthy Hearth

Did you know that the radiant heat from a masonry heater is the healthiest way to heat your home?

Sometimes the surest way to judge the healthfulness of something is just to ask how safe it is. After all, no one would suggest that standing out in the middle of the interstate is a healthy thing to do, right?

The matter of safety is one subject that truly sets masonry heaters head and shoulders above any other way of heating a house.

Consider this: If your home is currently heated by a gas, propane, or oil furnace, there is an unmonitored fire burning inside your home when you are out or when you and your family are sleeping. Is that safe? Well, most experts would say that it is.

But a 2004 report by the National Fire Protection Association reports that one fifth (20%) of about 54,000 home-heating related residential fires were related to central heating systems. (1.)

The other fires were related to other space heating methods including woodstoves and fireplaces among more conventional heaters like electric or gas space heaters.

This is why I carefully distinguish between a masonry heater/masonry stove and a fireplace or woodstove. Once again, with a woodstove or fireplace with an insert, it is common to have a fire burning even when no one is attending to it.

A masonry heater is much safer than an automatic central heating system, a conventional woodstove, a fireplace with an insert or any of the myriad portable heaters just by the fact that it only requires a fire of short duration at a time that the operator chooses.

Usually, this means the homeowner finds a relaxing time when he can start a fire and sit and enjoy it for the 1-3 hours it is burned each day. At the same time, this fire is always burned with doors closed. The

combination of a monitored fire with an appliance that has a latched door makes this very safe.

But what really sets the masonry heater apart from other woodburning devices is that it burns hot and clean. It is designed to burn at very high temperatures that consume everything combustible in wood fuel. This means that there is almost no chance of getting a buildup of creosote in any part of the system.

Creosote is nothing but a tar-like buildup of unconsumed hydrocarbons (fuel) that condenses on chimneys. If it catches on fire, you have a chimney fire that can destroy your home, or worse.

The only way to reliably avoid ever having creosote build up is to use dry firewood and burn it at temperatures at or above 1100 degrees Fahrenheit. And this happens every time you burn dry wood in a properly designed and built masonry heater! But it never happens in a dampered metal woodstove or insert.

Masonry heaters are also safe to touch. All the masonry surfaces get quite warm, even hot. But they are not so hot that you will burn yourself if you touch them. This is in contrast to metal stoves that get so hot that one touch can result in a blister. The difference is the heat transfer of metal versus masonry. The slower heat transfer of masonry makes a masonry heater much safer when children are around the house.

Of course, even a masonry heater has a metal framed door that can get quite hot. But it cools quite rapidly after the fire is out. And, small children tend to stay away from a fire they can see through glass doors. Again, since a fire only exists for a few hours each day in a masonry heater, the door is still about 8 times safer than a woodstove door.

When it comes to safety, masonry heaters are at the top of the list. This is just another reason why masonry heaters are the healthiest way to heat your home.

1. Statistics from: "Home Heating Fire Patterns and Trends" by John R. Hall, Jr., Fire Analysis and Research Division, National Fire Protection Association, November 2004.

Inside:

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