

Hearthwarming News

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

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Spring
2005



It's Show(room) time!

It's been a long time coming; long anticipated! And now it's here! For the first time in Ohio, there is now a place you can come to see, feel, and touch a masonry heater, a little piece of the sun: It's our own **Masonry Heater Store**.

Currently open by appointment, the Masonry Heater Store, in Holland, Ohio, just outside of Toledo, is your one stop place to find out more about the wonders of masonry heating and to meet Ohio's one and only certified heater mason.

The Masonry Heater Store is a showroom now displaying three full-size Tulikivi soapstone masonry heaters. Most notable is the TTU2700/5 as in this picture. The "2700" as we call it, is an unbeatable value. It's like two, no, three appliances all in one! It features a see-through firebox, giving you essentially the opportunity for fire enjoyment from two adjoining rooms. And it has a true, operating baking oven that makes

fantastic pizza and bread! And the wraparound sitting benches make this the coziest place in the house!

Our "2700" is the primary heat source for our showroom building. This makes the Masonry Heater Store not only the first store in Ohio for masonry heaters, but also the first commercial building in Ohio heated with a masonry heater!

Also on display is a TU2500L. Another terrific value, this heater features two mantels, beautiful rockface (split soapstone), and green serpentinite stone for decoration and added mass. The TU2500L is the dressed-up, big brother of the base model TU2200. It's meant to heat about 1400 square feet of living area. It can be purchased and installed anywhere in Ohio for less than \$10 per square foot of heated area or about \$2.25 per pound of soapstone!

Also available at the showroom are lots of brochures, tile samples, soapstone countertop samples, and more. It's the one place to come and meet and discuss your plans with a certified heater mason. He can help you properly locate a heater, choose an appropriate size, and custom design a heater to make it truly your own.

For a limited time, while quantities last, make an appointment and come to the store and we will send you home with a soapstone candle holder/coffee cup warmer. It's a \$25 value yours free for just visiting us at the Masonry Heater Store!

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 weekend hours soon, but currently only open by appointment.**

Spring is the time for growing . . . a woodpile!

We made it through another winter! For those of you fortunate enough to have a masonry heater, you may have used up most or all of your wood supply the way this winter has endured. For those of you planning to have a masonry heater in use by next winter, now is the time to think about your wood supply.

In fact, the best wood for a masonry heater is very dry wood of any species. Many people ask, "what's the best wood to use in a masonry heater?" Is it oak? Maple? Hickory? Cherry? The answer is that the best wood is any dry wood.

In order to have truly dry wood for correct, clean-burning operation, we recommend that you have wood that has been split to 3-4" in diameter and stored under cover for a year. But do not despair. If you obtain wood in the spring that is properly split, and store it under good cover with plenty of ventilation, the summer's heat and wind will give you very good wood in six-months.

The key to good firewood is good cover *and* good ventilation. Out in the country, you will sometimes see wood stacked on the ground between trees out in the open. This makes for great ventilation, but not good cover. Wood that is not covered on top will continue to be wet and will frequently grow mosses, molds, and even mushrooms! This is not good fuel for any fireplace.

Likewise, some people will store wood in a closed garage or shed. This is excellent cover, but poor ventilation. Once again the result is often moldy wood and an attractive place for insects that love moist, dark places. This is how the idea that wood burning involves a lot of mess and bugs was created.

Proper wood storage can be very simple. For starters, we suggest you obtain some good pallets from a local business that likely will give them to you

for the taking. Line these up on the ground as your firewood "floor". Then stack your wood criss-cross, or log-cabin style, leaving a little space between each piece of wood. When you've covered the pallets to about four feet high, or when you run out of wood, cover the stacks with sheets of metal roofing, plywood with a tarp over it, or even just a tarp. Weigh down that covering with bricks or other heavy materials, or strap it down with rope or bungee cords.

The pallets keep the wood off the damp ground and let air pass under your wood. The tarp or top cover should only cover the top or drape down the side just a little. This keeps rain from drenching and permeating the inside of the pile. But it leaves the sides open to the drying effects of wind. Do not be concerned about wind-driven rain. If the top is covered, the wood will dry.

If you are a real firewood connoisseur, you might consider a firewood shed with a permanent, wide-overhanging roof, and elevated, ventilated floor. Walls can be non-existent or mostly open to again allow the drying breezes to pass. This can be well worth the effort to build because the temporary wood stack covers can become an obstacle when they become snow-covered or when the wind blows hard.

Regardless of how elaborate your wood storage becomes, if you follow the basic pattern of good ventilation and good coverage on top, you will be rewarded by your efforts with dry, well seasoned wood.

Beware of local firewood merchants claiming they are selling "seasoned" firewood. Some will call their wood seasoned after just a few months or even though the wood was never covered. So ask about these things before you assume the wood is ready to burn.

So we encourage you to think ahead and gather wood early. A good initial plan might be to consider simply buying a two-year supply now, then simply restock a one year supply every spring henceforth. This way you will always have plenty of wood on hand that has been dried for more than a year before use.

Healthy Hearth

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

One of the many reasons a masonry heater is so good for you is that infrared radiant heat – that which comes from a masonry heater - is basically the same heat with which the human body has evolved over thousands of years.

In our modern age, it is easy to forget that electronically controlled central heating systems are only about 50 years old. Meanwhile, for thousands of years, mankind has lived as part of the natural world. As such, the heat to which he is most accustomed is radiant heat. This radiant heat always came from either the sun or a fire.

The human skin and circulation system is profoundly affected by radiant heat. Anyone who has lived with a masonry heater can attest to this. And we get the resulting reaction all the time when someone walks into our showroom and feels the heat.

What you can literally feel is the penetrating warmth of this kind of heat. The air temperature can be surprisingly low to some people's standards, yet they report that the feeling of comfortable warmth goes deep.

I personally have lived with a masonry heater as my primary heat source for over ten years now. What I find is that I am much more comfortable in my home with an air temperature of 65 degrees F. than I am in someone else's home with forced air heating at 72 degrees F.

The difference, of course, is the radiant heat and how our bodies react to it as opposed to moving warm air. The human skin is very sensitive to moving air. And the automatic physical reaction the body has to moving air is to constrict blood flow. Recall that moving air is the natural way that our bodies cool off, not warm up. So when the body senses moving air and

the body is right on the borderline temperature between warm and not-warm, its reaction is to constrict blood flow to minimize the chances of cooling the blood, and thus, the rest of the body.

So the natural reaction of your body to a forced air heating system is for it to reduce circulation. This not only makes you feel colder, but it also means the other health oriented tasks of blood circulation are reduced, making you more susceptible to colds, flu, and other illness.

On the contrary, a low-level radiant heat source provides just the bodily reaction we need when we want to be warm and comfortable. Gentle infrared radiant heat actually penetrates deep into the skin and warms every cell. The natural bodily reaction then is to open blood vessels wider, increasing blood flow to every part of your body.



Increased circulation, of course, enhances the function of the blood and all the systems of your body, resulting in a stronger constitution and lower susceptibility to illness. Increased blood circulation increases respiration and overall makes you feel more alive.

If you're the kind of person who enjoys being illness-free (um, and who isn't?), then perhaps you should consider having a masonry heater in your home. Look for this column in future issues to find out other reasons masonry heat is healthy heat. –Ken Matesz

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Inside:

- Visit the Masonry Heater Store
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- Health Benefits of Masonry Heating

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