



Blomus stainless steel ethanol-burning, wall-mounted fireplace.

Live large in a small space

A bold statement can change the look of a small space. Case in point: A fireplace feature that's equal parts fashion and function.

BY CHRISTINE COWERN

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renovations

Whoever coined the phrase “size matters” obviously didn’t have small-space issues. In today’s world of increasing urban sprawl, finding a place to lay your head that’s not the size of a shoebox can sometimes be tricky. And incorporating visually-appealing design elements that work within tight confines can be even trickier.

When Erika Floysvik of Fia & Company, a boutique firm that specializes in interior design and renovation, was looking for a stylish addition to help make her client’s limited living space cozier, a fireplace seemed like the natural choice. But without floor space or a chimney, options were limited. The solution? A fireplace wall.

Using porcelain INAC Lascaux black geometric slate tiles that have angled surfaces, Floysvik created a custom wall-mounted fireplace wall and paired it with an informal eating area for practicality, dimension, warmth and visual interest on what would have otherwise been an uninspiring surface. The German manufactured, stainless steel Blomus fireplace with modern wave design runs on ethanol, which can be up to 85 per cent cleaner than natural gas or propane. Plus, it’s easy to install and light adds warmth to any room.

“The challenge in homes with open concept living spaces is to create cohesion while defining areas based on function,” explains Floysvik. “My client was a young professional who had worked and travelled extensively abroad. We decided on materials and a furnishings plan that were urban and masculine and incorporated the various native artifacts he had acquired. The main materials used in this project were chrome, stainless steel, glass and natural porcelain. This combination worked to create a contemporary living space that reflected his design aesthetic and personal interests.”

FUEL YOUR FIRE

If you’re designing with limited space and decide to go with a wall-mounted fireplace, you’ll have two choices: **electric or bio fuel**. These units don’t require a flue like their gas counterparts. What’s the difference? **Electric** fireplaces have coils that heat up automatically and bulbs to produce a fire-like amber glow, while **bio fuel** models create a real, smokeless flame with close to zero emissions.



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Of course, not all fireplaces are created equal. When choosing which type of fireplace to add to your home, keep in mind that it shouldn’t dominate the space or be in sharp contrast to the other design elements around it. Chosen correctly, the fireplace should complement the finishes in the space without being tied to furnishings as those will likely change over time. **D**

Floysvik suggests five key tips to make small-space struggles a little easier:

- 1 |** Install custom built-ins for additional storage and/or display items. When clients hear the word custom, they naturally think ‘expensive.’ Yes, custom millwork can pinch the bank account but it’s an investment that gives every square foot a purpose and adds long-term value to a property.
- 2 |** Add dramatic lighting to small corridors or landings. Lighting is the most effective way to control the ambiance and visual interest of a room.
- 3 |** Don’t be afraid to install large furnishings in a small room. An oversized occasional chair or small loveseat will create more impact than several small pieces of furniture.
- 4 |** Enlarge a narrow hallway with large-scale artwork or a series of photographs.
- 5 |** Work with a monochromatic or minimal colour palette to create visual order in a small space. Instead of multiple colours, work with a combination of patterns and textures to add interest and warmth.

Whatever you choose, whether it’s more functional or fashionable, ultimately your goal should be creating a space that reflects your tastes but also fits your needs.



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