

# ON *the* GO

— TO —

A woman with curly hair and freckles, wearing a red dress and black strappy heels, is sitting on a white couch. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain white wall.

Stacey  
McKenzie

plus!

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# TIME TO TURN UP THE HEAT

BY MELISSA DAVIS

Nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

Franklin and Dafoe had a point, however I propose a Canadian rewrite that reads something like death, taxes and wind chill. As we approach another glorious season of hockey, skiing and hot cocoa my clients inevitably begin dreaming about hot toddies in front of their new fireplaces.

Before we start picking out the mantle art we need to decide which type of fireplace is right for your budget and home. One of my go to shops for fireplaces is Kastle Fireplaces. Here I will find the latest designs. Here are some of my top considerations I look at when helping clients decide to go with a gas, wood or electric fireplace.



## GAS FIREPLACES

This eco-friendly option is efficient and customizable offering the ability to be programmable with built-in thermostat, remote control and timers, model dependent. These features do come with a sizable price tag though. Better models give you the look and warmth of a wood-burning option but without the mess, annual chimney maintenance and need to

buy wood. If you don't already have a gas line you may be in for a shock when you learn it requires a certified technician to do the installation and it's billed by the foot. They also require direct venting to the exterior which means the placement is limited. One of my favourite manufacturers today is found at [www.neefireplaces.ca](http://www.neefireplaces.ca). Diverse range of styles to select from like the "Bellfire" and "Marquis Collections".

## GAS LOG SETS

The retrofit solution that transforms a masonry wood fireplace into a more efficient gas unit. There are now gas log sets that create the ambiance without the fuss of real wood while still maintaining your existing chimney and surround. *Pros: convenient, clean and easy to use | Cons: installation is expensive*

## WOOD FIREPLACES

The romantic in the group, nothing conjures up visions of cool night cuddles quite like the sound, smell and warmth of a wood-burning fireplace. Here's the truth, they're a lot of work. Maintaining the fire itself requires a skilled hand to stoke, and reload with wood. The chimney requires at a minimum annual cleaning and they are notoriously inefficient with drafts and heat loss. There are also insurance issues and fees and some urban centers have installation limitations. *Pros: the real thing! | Cons: laborious and inefficient*

## ELECTRIC FIREPLACES

The most budget-friendly option, installation is a breeze with most models only requiring a standard outlet to plug into. What was once a cheap imitation, in recent years these units have come a long way. There is no need for venting and you can install it yourself which means these are the perfect option for condos or where no gas line exists. Most know of the furniture style units but many suppliers also offer inserts akin to gas units which allow you to dream up a custom design. The units themselves start under \$500 making them extremely accessible and you can also take them with you when you move which is a bonus.

*Pros: budget-friendly and no installation required | Cons: can look fake*



Toronto-based celebrity designer and contractor, **MELISSA DAVIS**, is known for her appearances, creative design and reno work produced for various HGTV shows. With almost two decades of reno & design experience her firm continues to service clientele throughout Ontario & GTA, specializing in value-adding ROI and resale consultations.  
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