

Warm up this winter with the coolest fireplaces money can buy



French designer Dominique Imbert's suspended, rotatable flying-saucer-shaped Gyrofocus fire, a 50-year-old design classic worthy of any Bond lair. CREDIT: FLORENT JOLIOT

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Thanks to efficient boilers, double glazing and air-tight house design, a fire is no longer a necessity. Yet they're still highly desirable, whether you have the hots for a traditional wood-burning stove or a minimal letterbox-shaped design that occupies an entire wall.

Although a fire's basic function is now largely decorative, "its romance in architectural space prevails," says Rodrigo Moreno Masey, founder of architecture firm MorenoMasey. "Adding a new fireplace can be expensive, but we always try to put them in the principal living spaces. Where they are gone or never existed, we push our clients hard to include them; every home needs a fire at its centre."

From a design perspective, fires can be invaluable, providing somewhere to direct the eye, a place to gather around or a way to break up a large space into cosier zones. "I'm definitely finding that people want to make the fireplace a true focal point in their living areas once again," says interior designer Kelly Hoppen. Her advice is to keep a fireplace if you have one, "but it doesn't mean you can't replace a mediocre period one with something more contemporary and striking".