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Hot Options: Tips for Choosing the Right Fireplace

Whether it's coming inside after hitting the slopes, playing ice-hockey, or walking the dog on a brisk night: there's nothing better than curling up to a nice, warm fire. A fireplace will keep you cozy on cold winter nights, but it should also be safe and energy efficient. If you're looking to add a new fireplace to your home or upgrade an existing one this season, make sure you know all the options available.

Wood-burning Wood-burning fireplaces are great for those who love the majesty of an open fire, the smell of burning wood, and the sound of crackling logs. However, you may not know that older wood-burning fireplaces are not very energy efficient and can actually pollute the environment. The good news is that there are newer, safer, and more advanced wood-burning fireplaces available. Look for models that are certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*, as they emit 90% less smoke than traditional wood-burning fireplaces and distribute heat better in your home.

Electric Electric fireplaces are the perfect way to set the mood, and temperature, at the flick of a switch. They are safe, convenient, low-maintenance, and cost little to install. Although electric fireplaces probably won't add to the value of your home like other types might, they are great for small spaces and don't require a chimney or outdoor venting. Most

models also come with the option of having the decorative fire turned on while the heating element is off: a great feature if all you're looking for is a little ambiance.

Gas Gas fireplaces are popular options because they are clean burning, efficient, and don't even require a chimney. Although they may not offer the same flame sensation as real wood-burning fireplaces, gas is more energy efficient and you won't need to worry about cleaning up woodchips or ashes. They also distribute heat better and provide a constant supply of fuel, even if the power fails. Look for models that have an Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) rating; the higher the rating, the higher the efficiency.

Other Options If you already own a fairly old or outdated fireplace, there are still options available. Electric and gas models, for example, are easy to upgrade or replace entirely if you're looking to make your fireplace more energy efficient. Similarly, you can purchase inserts for traditional wood-burning fireplaces that cause less harm to the environment and improve heating efficiency. And if you want to experience an open fire a little closer to nature, consider buying an outdoor fireplace. Outdoor fireplaces come in many shapes and sizes; just make sure to check your local municipality's by-laws for safety regulations.

*Note: The standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are also applicable in Canada



A Strong Start for Real Estate in 2017

The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) announced another milestone for residential sales across the region, with the best January results since LSTAR began tracking sales data in 1978. A total of 574 homes were sold in January, an increase of 26.2% over last January. "We're off to a tremendous start this year with our best January ever," said the 2017 President of LSTAR. "The trend of high demand and low supply continues, with January experiencing a 12.2% decrease in the number of listings compared to the previous year. Those thinking of selling may want to consider maximizing the current market conditions."

February 2, 2017 - London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®.



2017 Average Prices (YTD)

Type	Average Price	Increase from 2016
Detached	\$313,879	9.6%
Condo	\$197,190	4.3%
Total Residential	\$285,418	5.9%

Breakdown of January 2017 Residential Sales

Type	Units Sold	Average Price
2 Storey	128	\$407,000
Bungalow	58	\$229,599
Ranch	37	\$362,543
Townhouse Condo	64	\$157,469
High Rise Apt. Condo	36	\$158,775

St. Thomas also had a very healthy January, with a total of 55 homes sold, up 139.1% from the same time last year. The average home price in St. Thomas was \$192,474, down 28.1% from the previous month.



Winter
Activities To do in
London & Area

happy family day!

A Raisin in the Sun
The Palace Theatre

Thursday, February 9th - 19th

<http://www.palacetheatre.ca/shows-and-events/2017/2/9/a-raisin-in-the-sun>

Jesse's Journey - Trivia Night

Friday, February 10th at 7 pm

<http://www.jessesjourney.com/trivia/>

Singing Valentine

February 14th

<http://www.londonontario.ca/Events/Fundraisers-and-Benefits/Singing-Valentine>

Blue Rodeo

Budweiser Gardens

February 14th

<http://www.budweisergardens.com/events/2848>

Valentine's Dinner & Jazz Show

Idlewyld Inn & Spa

February 14th

<http://www.idlewyldinn.com/pages/events.php>

London Golf Show & Sale

February 18th & 19th

Western Fair District - Progress Building

<http://www.westernfairdistrict.com/ldngolfshow>

Board Game Event

Centennial Hall

February 20th - 10 am to 5 pm

<http://centennialhall.london.ca/london-event-listings.html>

The Tea Party: Transmission

February 21st - Doors 7 pm / Show: 8 pm

London Music Hall

<http://www.londonmusicall.com/event/1367659-tea-party-transmission-london/>



*May the
warmth of home
bring you
comfort this
winter.*