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The Best | Grate Wall of Fire stacks up best

BY DAVE ROOS • WHOSE DEN IS NOW POSITIVELY RADIANT • FEBRUARY 20, 2010

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The Grate Wall of Fire is the greatest fireplace invention since fire itself, and I'm not just blowing smoke.

Neither is our den fireplace — for the first time in 18 years. The [credit](#) goes to this why-didn't-they-think-of-this-500-years-ago product from a company in Litchfield, Conn.

The idea is simple. A traditional fireplace grate holds the logs horizontally a few inches above the floor. Since most heat is radiated from the embers, it goes down into the bricks, not into the room. The smoke goes every which way — into our den if we didn't keep the fireplace doors closed — and keeping the fire going is a constant battle of adding and rearranging logs.

The Grate Wall turns all that on its ear, or at least on its side. It creates a vertical wedge of logs against the back wall from the ground up to 12 to 19 inches high, depending on the model. To start a fire, put a bit of yesterday's Courier-Journal and some kindling in the bottom, add logs on top and light. One match usually does it.

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The smoke heads straight up the back wall and out the chimney. There soon will be a vertical ember bed 6 inches deep, radiating straight up into the room. I might add that a marshmallow held in front of those embers will be ready for a s'more in 30 seconds.

Because of the wedge design, the logs gradually sink into the embers, and all you have to do is drop another one in every hour or so. Wood consumption is decreased because it burns at a steady pace rather than a conflagration, and there's remarkably little ash left over.

With the smoke issue solved, we can leave the fireplace doors wide open (there's a mesh screen for safety) to get the full effect. Our den can be chilly — low 60s in the dead of winter. With the Grate Wall fired

up during the recent icy spell, the thermometer hit 72. We set up a small fan to move some of that warmth into the rest of the house.

We bought the M-5 model, which cost \$110 plus \$32 for shipping. If you like the Count Dracula look, you can get the gothic model, or choose from nine other styles. All are made of 3/4-inch steel.



Get a vertical wall of fire. (By Dave Roos, The C-J)

Dave Roos is a Courier-Journal sports copy editor when he isn't toasting marshmallows.



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