

Wants & Needs

Amish Fireplace Anything But Plain

Temperatures drop. Energy prices rise. People scramble for more efficient ways to keep themselves warm in winter.

And since most of us spend most of our home time in just a portion of the house, lowering the thermostat and using supplemental heat in one or two rooms makes sense.



That's why a cauldron of electric heater manufacturers is vying for your dollars. There's oil-filled, radiant and ceramic, those with fans and those without; dish-shaped, cube-shaped, tower style and squatty horizontal. But none of them is especially attractive.

Enter the Canton, OH, company, Heat Surge, that's taken an aesthetic, nostalgic, even almost patriotic angle to the bank with its Amish Fireplace.

If this heater were mounted in a wall, with its simulated wood-burning flame and cherry or oak mantel, some might mistake it for the real deal. But this heater needs no wood or flue.

Almost 3 feet wide and more than 2 feet tall, the Amish Fireplace is four times larger than other electric heater. And it didn't heat a room any more efficiently than smaller electrics that sell for a fraction of the price.

But that's not the point. Encase a heater that looks like a real wood-burner in some quality cabinetry built by hard-working country folk, and you'll get more than \$250 per unit. It is without a doubt the most beautiful electric heater we've ever seen. Who knew heat could be so luxurious? Available at heatsurge.com

A Decade-Old Dew Delivers

We reviewed Tullamore Dew whiskey in spring '07, but when tempted with the distillery's latest offspring in the fall, a 10-year-old, well we couldn't resist.

An already stellar "standard" issue grows even more mellow after a decade in Spanish and American oak – a little less spicy; a little more malty – and so smooth it's hard to believe this stuff is really 80 proof.

So what separates Irish whiskey from Scotch or American bourbon?

Extra distilling, malted barley dried in closed kilns, over coal fires, rather than over peat smoke is the Irish way. This maintains, what Tullamore Dew calls, "natural flavor," not as smoky as Scotch nor sweet as bourbon.

First distilled in 1829, Tullamore is indeed a classic. Available for about \$35 at Kelly's Liquors and Westside Liquor in Albuquerque and Kokoman's in Pojoaque, north of Santa Fe.



Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Lunch and ...

Fats, proteins, sugars, fiber, the glycemic index, good carbs, bad carbs, no carbs. Most of us "heavy" folk have been suckered into diets that promote one kind of food over another.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand a green salad is better than a pastry, or that taking the stairs instead of an elevator ups our metabolism. But we've lost (or wanted to ignore) an even more basic mathematical fact: a body, everybody, must burn more calories than it takes in to lose weight.

Thanks to micro technology and the internet, there's now a weight-loss coach that's more precise and pesky than a drill sergeant. Bodybugg is a \$250 monitor users wear like an armband. Unlike a pedometer or heart rate monitor, the Bugg also measures heat dissipated by the body, galvanic skin response (sweat) and skin temperature. The monitor constantly uses this data, as well as age, gender, height and weight to measure caloric expenditure more precisely than any instrument outside a clinical setting.

Before starting, use the Bodybugg website to build your own database and decide how much and how fast to lose those extra pounds. Every day, connect the Bugg to a computer and enter how much and what you've eaten. In return, the website displays an ongoing, always changing graph of calories burned vs. ingested. Maintaining a calorie deficit means you're losing weight.

Couldn't resist that Chinese dinner buffet? Then hit the streets or the gym – the Bugg will help you determine how long to exercise before the egg rolls ... roll away.

Every customer is assigned a coach, who calls when you're starting and then follows up a few weeks later. Our Bodybugg users initially found it a bit "clunky" on their arms, and bothersome to report every meal to the computer. One said she'd wear a chair on her arm, if it would help her lose weight. But she didn't have to do that with the Bugg. Parking at the far end of the lot; taking the stairs; and tackling those long-postponed yard projects proved immediately gratifying on the Bodybugg graph. And even more gratifying on the scale at the end of the week.

The other staffer said that charting the calories she burned made her see for the first time the reasons for why she had trouble losing weight. A mini version is being unveiled – smaller, thinner and 50% lighter. Visit bodybugg.com



Blink-Blink; Time for a Drink

Winter – time to ease up on outdoor watering. But if that break in the routine makes you forget your indoor plants, a Thirsty Light might help.

Not much bigger than a pen, the Thirsty Light goes right into the soil next to your plant. When all is well and wet, the light stays off. But when the soil begins to dry the light begins to blink. The drier the soil – the faster it blinks. OK, maybe plants can't talk, but they can offer a kind of Morse Code through this interpreter. Double-blink + long pause means, "Water me now; I'm dying!"

Still, we wonder: If you're not alert enough to notice a drying/dying plant, is a little blinking light really going to get your attention? Perhaps if you talk to your leafy green friends in the dark. For more information, visit thirstylight.com.

