



We Will Rock You

For elegant, exquisitely crafted stone chimneypieces, Pinckney Green Fireplaces are hard to beat

When it comes to improving historic homes, natural stone fireplaces are without doubt an excellent investment. Besides bringing character, they can also increase the long term value of your property.

If a former owner of your home has replaced the original fireplaces with unsuitable alternatives, take a look at the range available at Pinckney Green. The firm offers a wide selection of stunning hearths and surrounds crafted from beautiful English limestone. A variety of classic styles are on offer, so finding an example to complement your room should be easy, but if you have something specific in mind the company's expert craftsmen can also recreate designs from a good quality photo or image.

Wise Decisions

When choosing your fireplace, it's important to take your décor into consideration. "As a general rule, Georgian, Regency and Victorian interiors lend themselves to opulent, curved examples, while surrounds featuring clean, straight lines are better suited to more contemporary settings," advises Bif Wilkins, Director of Pinckney Green Fireplaces. It's also vital to get the size right, or you could find that your purchase sits uncomfortably and looks out of place. "You'll need to do some measuring up before you visit a showroom, as your supplier will want to know the square footage of your space, as well as the height, width and depth of the hole in the wall,"

he says. "Start by gauging the scale of the room, the height of the ceiling and where the mantelpiece should be situated on the chosen wall. Next, measure across the chimney breast or wall to ascertain the best width for the surround, and draw and outline of the dimensions using chalk or pencil. You could even ask your builder to mock up a surround and mantle shape from plywood or plasterboard so you can check it fits correctly."

Perfect Fit

Once you've purchased your fireplace, the installation process is usually fairly straightforward. Your provider can fit it for you, or alternatively you can ask your builder, which is often cheaper. Before fitting an example, there are a number of things to check. "Make sure the chimney doesn't smoke or allow fumes to escape into bedrooms above, and ensure that the aperture isn't too large," Bif advises. "Openings that are too big can prevent smoke from escaping up the flue correctly, which in turn can

cause fumes to drift back into the room. Also, if you're installing a gas fire into your home be sure to check that it has been commissioned by a registered Corgi or Hetas engineer."

To view Pinckney Green Fireplaces' wide range of classic and contemporary designs take a look at the firm's website by clicking on pinckneygreen.co.uk. The company can also be contacted on 01225 332 549.

Good As New

One of the practical advantages of natural stone is that it's easy to clean - spillages can usually be removed using just soapy water and a hard brush. You can also take precautionary measures by applying a spirit-based sealant to the outer hearth to protect the stone from discolouration or soot marks. Alternatively, why not consider choosing a black slate or granite hearth? These look great in period properties, and won't show the wear and tear of a real fire.

Digging Deep

Wondering how limestone gets from the ground to your home? Bif Wilkins sheds some light on the quarrying process:

"At Pinckney Green Fireplaces we select our stone from the top bed of the quarry. This offers the best quality limestone, which allows for more refined carving and architectural features. After leaving the quarry bed it is taken to the saw mill where it is kept moist on the water saws. The sawyer mason then cuts it into

manageable blocks using large disc saws. The final stage sees the block being lifted up onto the banker bench, where the design is carved on to the surround. At each of these stages the quality and appearance of the limestone is checked."

