

# ACHICALIVING

Ideas and inspiration for your home, garden and lifestyle



**Style Insider:** Looking for the perfect, period fireplace? Let Owen Pacey, guide you through your choices



IF you're looking for an antique or high-end reproduction fireplace, Owen Pacey is your man. His stylish salvage business, Renaissance – which also sells reclaimed radiators and other architectural artefacts with history – has helped to kit out A-list homes belonging to everyone from George Michael to Gilbert & George and Jamie Oliver to Naomi Campbell.

Here Owen shares his top tips for finding the perfect period fireplace and, below, offers an inspirational visual style guide to choosing the right style for your home.

### **Where do you start when choosing a fireplace for a room?**

The period of the house is the most important factor, followed by the practical aspects of chimney breast size and flue status. Many people are given bad advice and unnecessarily install a new flue without a thorough check for damage. If it is not damaged don't replace it and you can save yourself a huge amount of money and time.

### **What are the most common mistakes people make when choosing a fireplace?**

Going for a mass-produced fireplace. Polished metal, glossy marble or granite are common materials used for these which are never going to look authentic no matter how much you pay. People often paint over a stunning period piece or get it removed without getting expert advice. Nine out of ten fireplaces that go to the rubbish tip are restorable.



## Is it OK to mix and match periods?

Absolutely, as long as it is done tactfully with a good eye. I have installed 18th Century Italian fireplaces in Georgian houses which look stunning but steer clear of mixing Georgian with Victorian.

## What should people consider before installing a fireplace?

Your budget. Investing in a high end reproduction, or original fireplace has cost implications however a decent fireplace will always add value to your home. A bargain nasty looking fireplace will cheapen a conversation, making the house look as though it has been tinkered with.



## Can a falling-to-bits original fireplace be restored?

The only time a fireplace cannot be saved is if it is calcified. This is when coke from the soot rots the marble, turning it to sugar. Once this happens it cannot be reversed however this rarely happens to the entire piece. Often we can replace the inside of the legs with old marble and reproductions are possible even on calcified fireplaces.

## What are your fireplace options if you live in a modern home and want to add character?

Your options are the same as in any home however costs will be higher as a new flue will need to be installed. You will need permission for this, which can add complications.





## Owen Pacey's fireplace style guide



**Classic elegance** Pairs of fireplaces are back in fashion with a shift in the way we use our rooms: smaller single living rooms, separate kitchens and dining and living spaces are now being opened up to make larger, double, open-plan areas, often revealing two fireplaces that no longer match, or creating space for a bold statement of two striking original fireplaces, with beautiful symmetry.

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**Eclectic interiors** With a good eye and tentative choices mixing origins and periods can work brilliantly. Accessorising the room with a striking chandelier or a marble statue can add character.

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**Rustic cosiness** Fireplaces instantly add warmth and cosiness into any room.





**Out and out glamour** There's a definite boom in black fireplaces right now. We're seeing an increase in both high end crafted reproductions and restored originals. It's a combination of people seeing the value of an original fireplace and finding beautiful black fireplaces in the restoration process. Many black fireplaces were painted over and when stripped back you expose a striking black surround. The other reason is that a black fireplace makes a statement and works well in most rooms, adapting well to both contemporary and period design projects.



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**Contemporary urban** A reclaimed fireplace alongside contemporary and urban pieces can be stunning. Try mixing with steel frames and industrial lighting.