

The captivating, clean lines of Wittus' stoves and fireplaces appeal to today's consumers.

BY CHERISE FORNO



The Phenix Green 120 fireplace

INSPIRED BY DESIGN

After 40 years in the hearth industry, Wittus®—Fire by Design (Pound Ridge, New York) continues to build on its rich history of supplying modern products, with unique designs, that perform at the highest efficiency possible.

In just four decades, the company has grown substantially from when its president, Niels Wittus, began selling imported European stoves. It's now a thriving business, with a showroom in Pound Ridge and a well-established nationwide dealer network. Alyce Wittus, vice president, says, "Our product line is ever evolving, and we currently offer a clean line of contemporary products in many style variations."

In addition to offering its tried-and-true flagship stoves, fireplaces, and accessories, Wittus continues to focus on developing new and innovative designs to meet customers' needs and personal styles. Some of the newest Wittus products to hit the market in the past few years include Stack wood stoves, Lugo cookstoves, Firebird grills, and revised Shaker stoves (updated to meet new EPA standards). "Our customers are very interested in style-savvy products such as the Shaker and Stack wood-burning stoves," Wittus says.

These best-selling products are ideal for a wide range of customers because they can be paired with both contemporary and traditional

settings. The Shaker stove acts as an accent piece that enhances a living area while also providing ambient heat. The standard model is 41 inches high, 34 inches wide, and 21 inches deep, with a short table. The stove is also available in an extralong version that features a 6-foot bench. "The Shaker stove is designed by Antonio Citterio and styled after classic U.S. furniture—with a contemporary flair," Wittus says.

Wittus notes that each category is popular with customers seeking wood-burning, gas, or outdoor stove and fireplace products. "Wood-burning stoves are very popular, with the Shaker stove leading the category in both style and heating capability," Wittus says. "Our clients want a product that is efficient and stylish—and that can also be placed in a prominent spot in the house to stand out as a conversation piece."

Wittus adds that the ceramic Stack stove is handmade, for high design quality, and can be glazed with a wide variety of colors for a modern finish and look. This product is produced by La Castellamonte in Italy and is created by Adriano Design.

Another popular category is the built-in, zero-clearance fireplace. Wittus explains that these products are versatile and also provide customers with a convenient, easy-to-install piece. The company's new Phenix Neo Green zero-clearance fireplace inserts are currently a popular choice for Wittus' clientele. "The Phenix Green wood-burning series is equipped with the latest retractable-door technology and allows the user to enjoy the fire with the door open or closed,"

Wittus says.

Wittus offers another versatile product in its recently released Slim-Line gas built-in unit. Only 12 inches deep and available in three sizes, it can be installed to fit in most areas. Consumers also get the option of purchasing a see-through version, for a different aesthetic.

Whether customers are seeking wood-burning, gas, or outdoor products, Wittus has a fireplace or stove to fit the individual needs of their living areas and match the decor. For example, the Flatfire fireplace is a wall-hanging gas unit that is a perfect fireplace for clients who want to optimize smaller spaces because they don't have to sacrifice

floor space to add a heat source. Wittus recalls that she has noticed an interest in products that heat, as well as cook. "The popularity of an indoor/outdoor-living concept and the threat of power outages from seasonal storms make cookstoves a practical choice," she says.

To meet this growing demand for multipurpose products, Wittus offers the Lugo, Domino/Domina, Eco, Atmosfera, and Klassic cookstoves. These wood-burning stove collections offer an array of designs and features ranging from contemporary to traditional. The Klassic stove fireplace is made in the United States with the help of Danish industrial designer Bent Falk. It features a large fireplace with an upper compartment for roasting or baking. The new Lugo cookstove from the Czech Republic offers a sleek, elegant look and efficient cooking and baking capabilities.

Wittus has also seen sales growth in its outdoor collections. The newly released Firebird grill pairs well with the Phoenix grill: Both are visually stunning, as well as highly efficient. "Outdoor products such as the Wittus Phoenix and Firebird grills, made of COR-TEN® steel, are attention getters," Wittus says. "The tall cylindrical design of the Phoenix grill draws much attention as a sculptural piece, a firepit, and a beautifully functioning grill."

Customers have also continued to gravitate to Wittus' pizza ovens

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The Shaker stove

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as families invest in creating welcoming and functional outdoor-cooking areas. The environmentally friendly Italian Happy Pizza oven is available in whimsical colors and reaches temperatures of up to 930 degrees to produce delicious food quickly.

Wittus products not only stay on trend, with features and styles that are popular in the industry, but also remain consistent in their high-quality construction. The company specializes in importing European stoves and fireplaces that are manufactured with the utmost skill and care. Wittus also offers products made in the United States, in addition to Denmark, Belgium, Italy, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

“Our fireplaces are constructed with top-quality steel, special glazed ceramic, fine soapstone, and a lot of attention to detail,” Wittus says. In order to achieve these reliable results, automated manufacturing techniques are paired with hand craftsmanship. Most of the products that carry the Wittus name are also created by award-winning designers. Wittus products all meet the

highest technological and environmental standards in the industry.

“Our stoves are clean burning and highly efficient,” Wittus says. “We go to great lengths to test our products so that they meet stringent U.S. standards.” For example, the Wittus Twinfire, imported from Germany, won an award for its efficiency in 2013 at the Wood Stove Decathlon in Washington, DC.

The stove “has a unique double-chambered burn system and the highest rate of efficiency that a wood-burning stove can achieve,” Wittus says. This November, Wittus is positioned to receive more recognition, as it plans to compete in the Wood Stove Design Challenge at the National Mall in Washington, where it will again feature a German product: the E-stove from HE Energy GmbH.

As the company has evolved and grown, it has remained committed to bringing its clients beau-



tiful, high-performing, one-of-a-kind products that deliver both form and function. Wittus reports that the company will keep striving for excellence by developing dependable, eye-catching cooking and heating products. She says, “Our goals, since we opened our doors in 1978, have been to continue to bring unique, high-quality, modern European products to the hearth industry and the U.S. market—and to meet the needs and desires of homeowners.” ■