



Element 4 Sky
TM See-Through
Gas Fireplace



Focus Fires
Paxfocus Indoor
Wall-Mounted
Fireplace

Masters of MODERN

European Home hits the mark for sleek, contemporary fireplaces.

BY KIMBERLY RODGERS

After two decades of offering sophisticated European-inspired indoor and outdoor fireplaces, Holly Markham, owner of European Home (Middleton, Massachusetts), is not one to rest on past achievements. Markham founded European Home in 1999 based on the simple, yet stylish design elements she saw throughout the continent while traveling and working there in the 1990s.

Markham started her business by licensing a single fireplace from the United Kingdom and handling the manufacturing and listing herself in the United States. Today, the company offers hearth brands from multiple

countries. This includes Element4 (Netherlands); Focus Fires (France); Evonicfires, part of CK Fires Ltd. (United Kingdom); and European Home Fireplaces. Not all products come directly from Europe. For example, the European Home and Gavin Scott brands are manufactured in the U.S.

"We certainly try to fill many areas," Markham says. For example, Element4 provides customers with direct-vent technology—the most commonly used venting design. "Aesthetically, Element4 provides us with the look I have always loved, which is clean, simple, and uncluttered." The company's own brand,

European Home Fireplaces, offers a similar design element except in vent-free technology. "For many builders, particularly in certain areas of the country, vent-free is the preferred fireplace system."

Evonicfires utilizes some of the most advanced electric technology available today powered by LED lighting. The line's products feature a clean, modern style. "It's important for us to offer an electric option since venting and gas are not possible in some locations," Markham says. "In addition, as we move toward green building and net-zero emissions, this line is a wonderful solution."

Focus Fireplaces, which feature the original suspended fireplace, were added to European Home's product lineup about four years ago. "I love mid-century modern style, so the company's designs really appeal to me and give me that wow feeling. The company brings passion to its designs and craftsmanship."

Moreover, Focus offers a contemporary wood option—a positive addition to European Home's product offerings. Although about 70% of Focus sales are in wood, the company also

offers a gas option in some of its fireplaces. "This helps with market penetration since urban dwellers are not geared toward wood," Markham says. Focus Fireplaces was created by French designer Dominique Imbert over 50 years ago. "Selling fireplaces that were designed in the 1960s and have stood the test of time gives me great pride."

In the near future, under the European Home Fireplaces brand, an H Series Linear vent-free fireplace will be released to support liquid propane gas. When first introduced in 2015, the H Series focused only on natural gas, Markham explains. "We have been working very hard this past year to modify the burner so that we can now offer a propane version." Available in three sizes, (42, 60, and 72 inches) the H Series features many configurations including single and three-sided models, corner style, and peninsula. "We offer a variety of solutions, which is why the H Series is so popular with our dealers."

As sustainability and creating a smaller carbon footprint become increasingly important to the health of the environment, Markham advocates eliminating the heat dump kit offered by some fireplace manufacturers. She encourages dealers to educate their customers on where the excess heat is going. "I believe our industry needs to

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European Home
H Series Corner
Vent-Free Gas
Fireplace

let the consumer know that releasing generating heat outside a building or home is irresponsible.” She notes more green builders and customers are asking about energy efficiencies when selecting a fireplace.

MODERN ON THE MOVE

Over the last 20 years, Markham has definitely seen the demand for contemporary fireplaces grow. In fact, dealers have continually expressed surprise that 50% of their sales are with modern fireplaces. “And I think that demand is still growing.”

This modern mindset and trend has come a long way since 2004, when Markham first showed a Massachusetts dealer a Vision fireplace from Gavin Scott Design. She says the dealer thought the market had enough contemporary fireplaces because another company already existed that offered a modern model.

“Many dealers thought modern fireplaces were a fad, but several also saw the contemporary design emerging with staying power.” Some of those dealers who were early customers of European

Home are still with the company today. This includes Dreifuss Fireplaces (Philadelphia), Fireplace Concepts (Toronto), Vancouver Gas Fireplaces (British Columbia), and Brassworks (Rhode Island).

A large part of European Home’s staying power is the company’s team effort to work diligently to ensure customer and dealer satisfaction. In addition, Markham notes that any problems that do arise can be turned into opportunities. “We also work equally as hard to understand why something didn’t go as well as it might have. We document issues and questions and keep clearing the path to make the process easier and more efficient.”

Ultimately, the company’s goal is more than just a sale—which comes through to its customers. “This makes us a helpful, engaged company to work with.” Through word-of-mouth and attendance at the HPBExpo, European Home’s dealer network is growing. In fact, 30 new dealers have already been added this year.

The coronavirus crisis did not slow European Home down. At the height

of the pandemic, Markham was concerned people would be reluctant to spend money on a major purchase. However, she says, “We are fortunate to be in the renovation industry. Overall, our sales are up 20% over last year.”

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

“Property Brothers” Jonathan and Drew Scott reached out to European Home earlier this year for help with their new HGTV series, “Celebrity IOU.” The show helps A-list celebrities express their gratitude to individuals who have had a major impact on their lives by surprising them with home renovations. European Home provided the fireplaces for three episodes featuring actors Viola Davis and Jeremy Renner, and singer Michael Bublé. “I was excited to go on-site for Jeremy Renner’s project, since my sons are Avenger fans,” Markham says.

Renner’s mom recently moved to Los Angeles, and he wanted to update her condominium to make it a more welcoming space to entertain family and especially her grandchildren. A Modore 100H single-sided direct-vent gas fireplace from Element4 was chosen for the renovation.

Initially, Markham’s team worked with the show’s designer and producer through phone calls and emails to decide on the fireplace, fire media, and installation date in Los Angeles. “Our tech department played a key role in reviewing the installation with the show’s builder,” she says. With the tight production deadlines, there would be no time for a do-over. “We had to be a 100% sure that framing and finishes were understood,” she adds. Fiddler on the Roof Chimney Service, a European Home dealer that offers fireplace and chimney services throughout Southern California, provided the installation.

“It was very fun, and the brothers are as friendly in person as they are on the show,” Markham says. She asked each one the question: If they could be a barista, landscaper, or waiter, which job would they choose? She thought they would each say landscaper. “Drew lit up and said barista so that he could make cool designs with the latte. Jonathan picked waiter because he had been one and would make balloon animals for guests.” ■