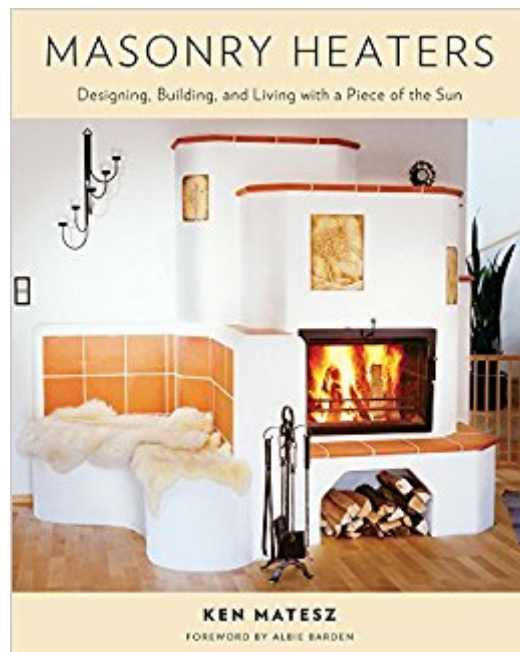




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# Masonry Heaters: Designing, Building, And Living With A Piece Of The Sun



## Synopsis

Masonry Heaters is a complete guide to designing and living with one of the oldest, and yet one of the newest, heating devices. A masonry heater's design, placement in the home, and luxurious radiant heat redefine the hearth for the modern era, turning it into a piece of the sun right inside the home. Like the feeling one gets from the sun on a spring day, the environment around a masonry heater feels fresh. The radiant heat feels better on the skin. It warms the home both gently and efficiently. In fact, the value of a masonry heater lies in its durability, quality, serviceability, dependability, and health-supporting features. And it is an investment in self-sufficiency and freedom from fossil fuels. The book discusses different masonry heater designs, including variations extant in Europe, and explains the growth of their popularity in the United States beginning in the late 1970s. For the reader who may be familiar only with open fireplaces and metal woodstoves, *Masonry Heaters* will bring a new understanding and appreciation of massive heat storage and gentle-but-persistent radiant heat. Masonry heaters offer a unique comfort that is superior to that from convection heat from forced-air systems, and more personal than that offered by "radiant" floors. As Matesz demonstrates, the heat from the sun or from a masonry heater is genuine heat instead of just insulation against the loss of heat. Those who are looking to build, add onto, or remodel a house will find comprehensive and practical advice for designing and installing a masonry heater, including detailed discussion of materials, code considerations, and many photos and illustrations. While this is not a do-it-yourself guide for building a masonry heater, it provides facts every heater builder should know. Professional contractors will find this a useful tool to consult, and homeowners considering a new method of home heating will find all they need to know about masonry heaters within these pages.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Masonry Heaters is informational across the board, and shares common, advantageous characteristics to passive solar design. Both methods of heating rely on heat transfer by radiation rather than convection, which gives a more natural feeling while reducing drafts and noise; both utilize thermal mass, which gives greater thermal stability; and both can allow independence from energy shocks and price fluctuations. I highly recommend this book for people-in any field-who are interested in learning about the design, construction, and use of this superior system of heating."--Ken Haggard, Author of *Passive Solar Architecture*

"Masonry heaters provide a quiet comfort that must be experienced to be believed. In this book, Ken Matesz shares his love of masonry heaters and artfully explains how they work, how to use them to provide efficient and comfortable heat throughout the day, and what it takes to install one in your home. This is a truly delightful book."--David Bainbridge, Author of *The Straw Bale House*, and *Passive Solar Architecture*

"This book should be on the required reading list for anyone wanting to become a heater mason, or for those who are planning to install and heat with a masonry heater. Matesz has captured the true beauty and user-friendliness of these exquisite heaters, and, with ease, helps guide readers through the process of designing a beautiful, and functional "bit of sun" for their homes. I highly recommend the book, as well as masonry heaters."--Tom Stroud, Founding Member and Former President of The Masonry Heater Association

"In *Masonry Heaters*, a rich and wonderful book, Ken Matesz sweeps away the ashes of our ignorance about the right relationship to fire. He argues-with quiet and crystal-clear clarity-that masonry heaters are the most intelligent, gentle, efficient, environmentally friendly and sustainable, beautiful, and healthy form of heating humans have ever known. There is more knowledge and truth about masonry heaters between these two covers than has ever been published before in English."--Albie Barden, Maine Wood Heat Company

"When I travel in the Northern states of the U.S.--particularly New England, where most people depend on heating with oil--I fear for these millions of folks for whom depleting, climate-changing fossil fuels are all that stand between winter comfort on one hand, and death by freezing on the other. *Masonry Heaters* explores one of the most promising alternatives, and its message needs to get out far and wide, and fast."--Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow, Post Carbon

Institute and Author of *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*"This book is a joy! Ken Matesz guides us on a clear path through the woods to getting an heirloom masonry heater, and offers invaluable information on why we should want to traverse it. Readers will learn about many more things than just masonry heaters along the journey, however, including how their house works (or should work), and how to have their own radiating energy source at its center— including exactly what it takes to get their masonry heater designed, built, and burning. Not to mention some wonderful stories of the people who have made masonry heaters a part of their lives! May the sun shine on this book."--Timothy Seaton, President, The Alliance of Masonry Heater and Oven Professionals

Ken Matesz first learned about masonry heaters in the early 1980s, built his first one in the early 1990s, and opened the Masonry Heater Store, LLC after the turn of the new century. Matesz's first solo heater project in 1994, a Finnish-style heater in his own home, gave his family heating energy independence. Now, with his new book, *Masonry Heaters*, he hopes to show many others how they can achieve the same freedom and a better standard of living using this simple but elegant way of heating. He lives in Swanton, Ohio.

So detailed it should be a college text....but unlike them, its colorfully written and engaging. Although I would buy it solely for the historical and cultural information it delivers, the superb technical aspects qualify the book as a basic desk reference for any architectural engineer's library. The secure binding and quality paper stock insures that it will take the frequent rough handling that a ready reference suffers. Interior designers consulting for architects will not be disappointed. There are so many professional looking color photographs throughout the book that clients will have a hard time choosing the final design for their own home's masonry heater, desiring them all! As one who has personally experienced the warmth of a masonry heater while living in Europe, I agree with Ken Matesz's apt description of it as "a piece of the sun."

*Masonry Heaters: Designing, Building, and Living with a Piece of the Sun* is a beautiful book with nice photos and illustrations serving to introduce quality masonry heaters to both those who know nothing about them as well as those who are only slightly familiar but haven't made up their minds because they (mistakenly) think these heating systems are big clunky industrial eye-sores. I met Ken Matesz at the Masonry Heater Association annual meeting at Wild Acres, NC in 2004 when I attended the workshops to learn the principles of heater construction for my structural insulated

panel (SIPs) architectural design practice in Spain. I watched him work: he is a pro. And, as Ken Matesz demonstrates in his book, masonry heaters, while necessarily big, certainly are not eyes-sores. He shows us they are beautiful features in any house, especially, when the masonry heater has been integrated into the plan and heating strategy by competent architects and builders who - and this is crucial - understand insulation and ecologically sound construction. The only other book I would recommend is David Lyle's *The Book of Masonry Stoves: Rediscovering an Old Way of Warming*. Lyle's book has long been the standard reference for anyone wanting to know the history and design principles of masonry heating from ancient times, through Europe and Asia to the United States. The two books would make a fine set to show some of the current design possibilities (Matesz), and to learn of the variety, history and design principles of wood-burning masonry stoves (Lyle).

Excellent, and modern, up-to-date review of Masonry Heaters and their use and construction in America. The rationale, use, differences, and construction of MHs is exhaustive; there are scores of beautiful full color photos of different heaters - it almost seems he has a photo of every current heater in America. The author shows the different uses and qualities of masonry types, right down to how fast they transfer heat, and how much heat each can store. He provides formulas for calculating how big the firebox should be, the length of heat channels, how much chimney you would need according to your altitude. Importantly, he reviews the half-dozen or so Masonry Heater companies, and delves into what type of heater they install, the design principles behind each companies' furnace, and the benefits and liabilities of each. I've been reading about these stalwart hearts of the home for some time, and this book is so soup-to-nuts I learned much and altered the design of my own eventual MH. (Changed from outside air to inside air supply, top down burn instead of top up burn, and a 1 1/2 story heater to give second floor some radiant heat, instead of a 2 furnace design.) If you have any interest in MHs, you must own this book, as well as David Lyles' *The Book of Masonry Stoves*. Lyles book is worth the price alone for the history of MHs, as well as its current information. From a practical, up to date perspective however *Masonry Heaters: DBL with a Piece of the Sun* is a must have.

I bought this book because we are planning a new home construction and we want to heat with wood. We will be building on 63 wooded acres and the wood is essentially free. We were not sure if we wanted to use a conventional American wood stove or try a masonry heater. Reading Mr Matesz's detailed description of how the two different types of heaters work helped us to decide to install a

masonry heater in our new home. Mr. Matesz's writing style makes the book an easy read and his enthusiasm for his subject is catching. The photos of the many styles of heaters are beautiful. I recommend this book to everyone who is planning a new home and is considering heating with wood.

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