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around the corners

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Wood Burning Tips from Wittus – Fire by Design

Niels Wittus (right) of Pound Ridge's **Wittus–Fire by Design** has been importing contemporary European wood stoves to the US for nearly 30 years. And he has lots of tips and techniques for getting the most efficiency and enjoyment from your wood burning stoves and fireplaces.

For instance, which tree species makes the best firewood? Traditionally, the favored trees in central North America as well as Pound Ridge were oak and maple because they are very dense and produce long-lasting coals.

Ultimately though, it is more important to have wood that is cut and split to the right size and properly dried – or “seasoned” for at least 1 year – than it is to get the hardest wood available. Niels notes that properly seasoned firewood has moisture content of



less than 20 per cent and is a pleasure to use.

Signs of poor performance related to wet or “green” firewood include:

- Difficulty getting a fire going and keeping it burning
- Smoky fires with little flame
- Dirty glass
- Rapid creosote buildup in the chimney
- Low heat output
- Smell of smoke in the house
- Short burn times
- Excessive fuel consumption
- Blue-gray smoke from the chimney.

Stacking your firewood is a great family project as well as a time-honored singular pursuit. Just abide by a few simple rules.

- Keep all firewood off the ground to prevent mold growth: use railroad ties, wood pallets, etc.
- Pile wood to be seasoned in a single row exposed to the sun and wind.
- Don't stack wood higher than about 4' tall; brace ends if necessary.
- Have at least a 3-day wood supply on hand indoors; replenish as you go

Stop by the **Wittus–Fire by Design** showroom at 40 Westchester Avenue for a look at Europe's most beautiful, most efficient wood stoves and fireplaces.

914-764-5679

www.wittus.com