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Make some radiator improvements

You'll be surprised how much of a difference changing your radiators makes – radiators no longer need to be the big white monster on the wall. Interior designer Jamie Hemsall considers choosing the right solution.



This is definitely the time of year when most people are extremely appreciative of the invention of central heating. As a consequence, any room plan should always give thought to heating solutions.

If you have a classic radiator based system, the traditional white panel solution can be an eyesore.

However, if you are prepared to push the budget a little, these heat sources can become a very attractive part of your design scheme.

In the last few years radiator design has undergone a complete revolution, transforming a humble workhorse into a thing of true beauty. The Hot Spring by Bisque actually won the Millennium Product Award and was considered such a cross over product that it is exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art.

If the steel finish of the Hot Spring feels stark, many companies offer products in colours from across the spectrum (with some providing actual colour matching services). The ability to colour match your radiator does away with the perils of home painting and ensures an even finish. It also allows you to either make your radiators blend into the background or act as an anchor point for your design by highlighting them in a core colour.

Modern production methods mean radiators no longer have to be straight or flat. This innovation can allow you to utilise awkward or "dead" spaces to accommodate radiators. Zehnder produces models

such as Orbis, which embraces curves and bends, and Charleston that actually fits around a corner.

The introduction of eye-catching vertical radiators allows you to obtain the same level of heat output, without losing a load of wall space. This is particularly useful in rooms where space is a premium, such as a small hall. The Kudox Tova Mirror radiator form B&Q incorporates a full-length mirror, which could even help reflect light to create a space that feels bigger and lighter.

In a small bathroom, I would now look to use a large heated towel ladder (potentially backed up by a small section of underfloor heating), rather than a standard radiator. Saving both on space and helping towels dry quickly. If the towel ladder is going to be installed into a water central heating system, consider a dual fuel radiator which can be independently run via electricity to allow you to dry towels all year.

No matter how attractive a radiator, choose a model that gives the right heat output for your room. The exact calculation is based upon your area volume (length x width x height) and factors, such as the number of external walls and whether you have a solid floor or double-glazing. However, any expert heating engineer can accurately advise the capacity required.

The position of your radiator will also effect its efficiency. The best place for a radiator is in the coldest part of the room.

Often this is directly below a window, where the radiator can heat cold air as it comes into the room.



A thing of beauty: Radiators need not be the ugly white thing you try and hide in each and every room of your home. This classic radiator by Bisque for example, in its column design, adds a point of interest to this bathroom

This can lead to design problems, as when full-length curtains are drawn, they cover any radiator in this position.

You can get around this by combining a pair of dress curtains coupled with roman blinds to cover the window (using heavy interlining in these to help with heat loss). Modern double-glazed windows and building insulation requirements now mean in new homes it is far easier to position a radiator where you would like, rather than

having it dictate its own position.

If you are tempted to the radiator "wild side" consider a design that is likely to become a classic, rather than something so fashionable it may quickly date. This will ensure that your extra investment will always be a joy to behold, rather than an expensive eyesore.

Supplier Details:

■ Bisque – Classic radiators from £314.40, Hot Spring from £494.40,

www.bisque.co.uk, 01225 478500

■ B&Q – Kudox Tova Mirror Chrome Effect Vertical Radiator £302.00, www.diy.com, 0333 014 3098

■ Zehnder – Orbis from £189.60, Charleston from £177.60, www.zehnder.co.uk, 01276 605855

■ Jamie Hemsall Ltd is a multi-award winning interior design consultancy. See more of his design inspiration at www.jamiehemsall.com or call 0800 032 1180.



Clever corners: Charleston angled by Zehnder



Mirror mirror: Kudox Tova mirror chrome effect vertical radiator



Award-winner: The Hot Spring radiator by Bisque won the Millennium Product Award and was exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art



Cool colours: Zehnder produces models such as Orbis, which embraces curves and bends