holiday cheer!
all fired up
You've finally landed a living room with a real working fireplace. But ideal it ain't. How can this situation go from lamentable to lovely?

Measly and shoved off to one side of a regrettably proportioned room, your new WBFP fights with an ill-placed window, a crumbly brick hearth, and a stained marble mantel. Yikes. It couldn't get much worse.

Luckily, when we showed our challenging floor plan to three top-notch design talents, they leaped into action. Fabulous fireplaces, they told us, are almost always made, not born. They also let us know that transforming an unengaging fireplace wall is one of the most satisfying challenges of decorating. All you need, they said, are a functioning flue, a good draw, and an un tethered imagination. The following solutions are as different as the designers who created them, but they all share a common approach: inventive camouflage and enhancing techniques. By incorporating everything from lighthearted wood paneling to smart fabrics to a cleverly placed shelf, the decorating firms of David Anthony Easton, David Kleinberg, and Marco Pasanella performed magic. Move over, David Copperfield! 

produced by ELIZABETH SVERBEYEFF BYRON
still-life photography by JONATHAN KANTOR
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- Grooved dado paneling in a light knotty pine gives the room a young feeling.
- Architectural pilasters add symmetry.
- The window is hidden behind a fake door with a Shirred fabric panel.
- Bolection molding around the mantel-less fireplace imparts a less formal look.
- A mercury-glass mirror above the fireplace echoes the lines of the "door."
- Checked fabric is used on lower cabinet doors to hide the television.

**stewart manger**

Educated at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts and at Trinity College, Manger worked at Christie's, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and Sotheby's before joining the decorating firm of David Anthony Easton this year. A contributing editor at ELLE DECOR, he matches a love of fine furniture and a rich color sense with a penchant for upbeat rooms. Not content to simply treat the walls and floor of this solution, he added a drawing indicating how furniture might be placed.

See Resources.

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Vaughan's Library Swing Arm Wall Light.

Green checked cotton fabric from Chelsea Editions.

Knotty-pine paneling and floorboards from S. Donadic Woodworking.