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Ventless Fireplaces Burn Alternative Fuels: Bio-Ethanol,  
Isopropyl Alcohol

Bans on wood-burning fireplaces spark growing interest in smoke-free alternatives.

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At 52 Lispenard Street, a new development in Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood,  
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[c24gallery.com](http://c24gallery.com)



buyers paying anywhere from \$6.65 million to \$11 million for a condo can expect a gourmet kitchen, heated floors in the master bath and a walk-in dressing room. What they won't get: an old-fashioned fireplace.

A New York City ban on new wood-burning fireplaces that went into effect last year has sparked widespread interest in clean-burning units that run on bioethanol, isopropyl alcohol or simply plug into a wall outlet.

The building's developer, Murat Bugdaycay of Essex Development, helped design the new fireplace units at 52 Lispenard, saying that with New York's frigid winters, "having a fireplace is a real luxury item," he says.

Made by HearthCabinet, the custom fireplaces have marble surrounds, polished stainless-steel detailing, and river stones at the base of the flame. The fuel is a blend of isopropyl alcohol, water and a thickening agent.

Ventless fireplaces require no chimney or gas lines, so they can be placed almost anywhere in the home. The fuels burn clean—no smoke, pollution or odor—and units come in a wide range of sizes and styles.

Nu-Flame, which makes a ventless fireplace that uses bio-ethanol, says the biggest markets are on the East and West Coasts, where the units add to the aesthetic appeal. "Fire is now a design element—that is what ethanol and gel fuels have done," says Jo-Ri Way, business-development manager with Bluworld HOMEelements, the parent company of Nu-Flame. "What was once only for the very wealthy is an affordable design element."

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