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Fire tables are beautiful and safer than many wood-burning fire pits

By Jill Sell

A dramatic way to show off a back yard is to add a fire feature as a part of the landscape. Even in the daytime, fire is mesmerizing and can convey that your home is cozy and great for entertaining.

If used properly, today's gas and propane-fueled fire tables or fire pits can be safer than wood-burning tables in an open, ground-level pit.

Technically, the fire table is the hearth. The table or mantle is usually made of flame-retardant material such as stone, porcelain or marble and it surrounds the fire pit frame. Bases are made of stainless steel, wrought aluminum or another type of durable material. Gas and propane fire pits often feature ceramic logs, lava rocks or tempered glass.

Depending on its size, a fire table can serve as an outdoor coffee table, a chat table that is meant to serve as a focal point for seating and conversations, a dining table, or a bar table. Dining height fire tables are usually 29 inches high, and bar fire tables are 42 inches high. The higher tables are particularly good for families with small children or pets.

The 2013 Castelle handcrafted fire pit tables feature various style options and offer luxury,

convenience and safety. Tables accommodate two to 10 people. The company's high dining table is 50-inches round with a center fire feature. A 54-x-108 inch cast top dining table will take you all the way through outdoor fall dining.

Castelle fire pit bases allow for propane storage and have a control valve that is located on the outside for convenient igniting and extinguishing of the fire. Burners are rated to produce 40,000 BTUs. They provide both warmth and aesthetic appeal.

Always locate a fire table on a level and preferably non-flammable surface such as stone, brick or concrete. If the fire table is used on a wooden deck, use a fireproof mat underneath. The table should be away from the house, overhanging tree branches and awnings. Never leave any outdoor fire feature unattended. A fire extinguisher should always be on hand.

Home sellers with a large fire table as a part of their outdoor living space often find that potential home buyers express interest in also buying the table. The transaction should be spelled out in the purchase agreement.

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Handcrafted Castelle fire tables come in both formal and casual styles.