

MACLEAN'S

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Money's Worth: Faux firelogs

Some like it hot and crackling!

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How do you create that "happy fireside clime" which, according to Robbie Burns, is the "true pathos and sublime of human life?" First, you gather your loved ones 'round the hearth on a cold winter's night. Then—assuming, like most of us, you're too lazy, busy or unskilled to build a roaring wood fire—you spark up a store-bought firelog for an immediate blaze that requires no tending.

Contrary to popular perception, firelogs are an eco-friendly choice. On average, they emit 90 per cent less carbon monoxide, fewer toxic compounds, and half the smoke of regular wood. The latest firelogs produce little or no odour and do less damage to your chimney. Some even have compelling hi-tech features: Duraflame's Crackleflame log makes crackling sounds, and its EasyTime Colorlog burns in "festive" multi-coloured flames.

We compared four popular varieties for flame quality, odour, and overall ambiance:

	BRAND	COMPOSITION	ODOUR	OBSERVATIONS	RECOMMENDED FOR
	NORTHLAND BY CONROS \$2.99	Sawdust, petroleum wax, trace of molasses, and a "patented additive."	A slight waxy smell.	Produces a decent	Fire-building budget.
	CRACKLEFLAME BY DURAFLAME \$3.99	Sawdust, petroleum wax, and seeds that produce a crackling sound.	None detected.		romantic night accompanied by wine and Marvin Gaye stereo.
	EASYTIME COLOURLOG BY DURAFLAME \$3.99	Sawdust, petroleum wax, and a copper-based colouring agent.	None detected.		ing the family. pasting allows over the Colorlog—firelog—not tending.)
	JAVA-LOG BY ROBUSTION \$4.99	Recycled coffee grounds, wood and vegetable by-products.	A faint scent of coffee, which may please or offend.	Flames are tall and hot for about an hour. Then the fire continues to burn in a less intense, though still satisfying, way.	Eco-friendly consumers who appreciate a more traditional fire, minus the hassle.

OUR PICK

Canadian-based **Java-Log** may cost slightly more, but it's worth the price since it delivers more natural, taller, hot flames, faint sweet aroma while making innovative use of waste headed for landfill.

