



BEFORE YOU BUY

OUR HONEST ADVICE FOR PURCHASING A QUALITY FIREPLACE

We believe that purchasing a quality fireplace is one of the best investments you can make for your home. It can be a challenging process to identify what qualifies as a quality fireplace that is made to last for the long term.

Here's what to look out for:

STEP 1

UNDERSTAND HOW KW RATINGS WORK – IT'S KEY

When comparing fireplaces, it's essential to understand how heat output (measured in kilowatts) is calculated. Here's the simple version:

Burning 1 kg of dry, seasoned wood in a closed-combustion fireplace produces roughly 3 kW of heat for room heating. So, if a fireplace is tested with 2 kg of wood, it may be rated at 6 kW. Tested with 3 kg, the rating may rise to 9 kW. The more wood added, the higher the heat output – and the higher the rating.

Premium European brands, like Kratki, stick to conservative kW ratings. They value longevity over inflated numbers; testing their fireplaces with **modest fuel loads**.

These premium fireplace brands have a philosophy that **a fireplace should last for generations** and therefore they use **conservative kW ratings** on their fireplaces.

IMPORTANT NOTE

An inferior fireplace brand may not care whether the fireplace will last for the long term, and they will load more wood during testing to claim a higher kW rating so that they can sell more fireplaces.

Our advice is to **research the fireplace manufacturer's international website** so you can get a good understanding of their company history, quality levels, and complete fireplace ranges.

This helps you determine whether they are a fireplace brand that rates their fireplaces conservatively (to last long term) or if they rate their fireplaces with higher kW ratings (to sell more fireplaces).

STEP 2

KNOW THE BRAND AND ITS BUILD QUALITY

Not all fireplaces are created equal. Reputable manufacturers build their fireplaces with strength and durability at their core, using **high-quality materials** and **robust designs**. Look for a brand that has a strong reputation in Europe and a proven track record of lasting quality.

IMPORTANT NOTE

One of the challenges when shopping for a fireplace is that material quality isn't always visible at first glance – so you have to trust the brand. Lower-tier brands often cut corners by using cheaper glass or lower-grade metals to keep costs down. These shortcuts may not be obvious, but they can impact both performance and longevity, even if the fireplace looks fine on the surface.

Inferior brands often cut corners – lighter units, lower-grade materials, and poor finishing. When comparing fireplaces, don't just compare prices and the kW ratings, compare the actual craftsmanship behind the brand.

PRO TIP:

Ask for the fireplace manufacturer's international website so you can research and understand the quality level of the fireplace brand.

STEP 3

WATCH OUT FOR MISLEADING INFORMATION

Sadly, the local South African market includes some suppliers who distort technical details to make their products seem better than they are. This makes it difficult for customers to make honest comparisons. To avoid being misled:

- Verify the kW rating on the manufacturer's international website. This is an important step as, unfortunately, many South African fireplace importers **inflate the kW ratings to sell more fireplaces** (this can be very misleading to customers).
- A fireplace's weight can indicate its build quality and durability. Some local importers **overstate the weight by 20 – 40 kg**, sometimes including the pallet/crated weight instead of the actual unit weight. Always refer to the manufacturer's international website to confirm the correct specifications.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A quality fireplace isn't just a purchase – it's hopefully a once-off and long-term investment in your home's comfort and style. Do your homework, choose wisely, and you'll enjoy warmth and peace of mind for many winters to come.