

# What's a Hearth Worth?

Published Jan 20, 2013

**I**n a study of Manhattan sales that appraiser Jonathan Miller made with researchers from NYU's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, apartments with fireplaces cost an average of about **10 percent more** than those without. (The difference was 11.4 percent in condos, 9.7 in co-ops.) But the fireplace is “part of a suite of amenities” not easily parsed from other prewar features like high ceilings. Miller estimates that the fireplace itself adds **2 to 5 percent** to the price. That's a fairly wide range, depending majorly on placement: A mantel in the center of the living room is worth a lot more than if it's in a back bedroom. And if the fireplace doesn't work, or the flue needs more than a cosmetic touch-up? That **cuts the value by half**.

## 79 Words From a 21st-Century Chimney Sweep

*Mike Makarius, owner of Rite-Way Chimney Co.*

“Ninety-five percent of sweeps are done from the apartment, not the roof, with a brush and poles. We close up the fireplace and use a HEPA vacuum. We're cleaning out the creosote, the flammable liquid that comes out of wood when you burn it and builds up. We've had buildings where the fire burns through the flue and the casing—that can take the building down. I've seen a lot of dead birds, but no squirrels. And no Santas.” —*As told to S.J.R.*

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