

Urban Fires is appointed sole distributor of Escea products

● *Tony Young, the veteran gas man and former owner of Wonderfire, is well known for his introduction of new and innovative products. In this exclusive feature, Fires & Fireplaces reveals how he is now investing in important new gas fire technology in partnership with internationally successful New Zealand manufacturer Escea.*

TONY Young has formed a new company, Urban Fires, which has been appointed as the sole UK and Ireland distributor for Escea's products.

As Tony told Fires & Fireplaces, "Every retailer in the industry always wants to know what the next big thing will be and I believe I have the answer."

Tony's primary objective is to maximise on the success of the New Zealand business and to create what he describes as a British Escea, working closely with Escea's founder, Nigel Bamford.

Tony continues, "Escea has become incredibly successful in its home country New Zealand and is already exporting dedicated products to Australia, Canada and the USA. The next logical step is to launch some of its very successful products in Europe."

Describing New Zealand as 'the Italy of



Pictured, Nigel Bamford the founder of Escea



Above, Rimu with wood inserts and driftwood fuel bed.

the South Pacific', Nigel Bamford says Escea has the perfect balance between great design and low cost manufacturing. Formed eight years ago, Escea has just opened a new \$4 million factory in Dunedin, South Island, New Zealand which, Nigel says, "Bucks the trend of focusing on riding out the recession and praying for an economic upswing by expanding the operations to cope with growing demand."

Extensive range for indoors and out

The product range will soon be available to carefully selected UK dealers and will comprise two balanced flue models, with a wide range of frame options offering distinctly different looks,

an outdoor fireplace, frameless hole in the wall models and other designer oriented burner options which will be available under the new Urban Fires brand.

Escea's indoor balanced flue fires are safe to locate below a flat screen television which allows retailers to fulfill this common demand without exposing themselves to the liability for a heat damaged television.

One styling innovation of the Escea indoor range will be the use of wood as optional inserts in a range of decorative stainless steel trims.

Although local Rimu Driftwood inserts will be available initially, Tony also intends to introduce certified 30,000 year old Swamp Kauri preserved wood which comes from trees that fell to the forest floor at a time when mammoths

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and sabre tooth tigers roamed the world. Definitely a first for Harrogate!

As well as providing unique quality finishes, all Escea balanced flue products incorporate state of the art R-Emotion thermostatic full sequence remote controls.

An outdoor range, consisting of both gas and wood burning wide aspect stainless steel fireplaces, will be of interest to any fireplace retailer that works with high value homes. Tony says the expansion of outdoor entertainment areas is a growing trend in many parts of the country.

Top end showroom experience

Sales will be delivered via a small and exclusive network of retailers



Above, ST900 in white with white coals.



Above, ST900 in black with driftwood.

who can offer the necessary top end showroom experience.

Tony's marketing strategy will be to develop strong relationships with interior designers, architects and developers throughout the territory as well as with consumers.

He adds, "Our retailers will become a vital component of that process. We

will use the internet and other digital communications to their fullest extent in the promotion of these products but they will not be offered via internet resellers. We believe the type of customers we will be cultivating will want personal service and to enjoy the cosseted 'touch and feel' experience of say, a Lexus or Bentley owner."

Traditional national advertising will also feature in the marketing mix.

New Escea UK brochures are being produced together with other marketing materials for the January launch and the new www.escea.co.uk website is already online and generating consumer enquiries.

Deliveries will be made overnight from a UK base where it is intended to keep all models and options in stock at all times.

Containers from New Zealand are scheduled to arrive on a regular monthly basis.

"The exciting thing for me in partnering with Escea is the amazing future pipeline of products that we will be releasing into the UK over the next few years. Not only have we already got a great range of models for 2011 but Escea has some additional models on sale in other countries that will get UK approvals in the very near future.

Tony also revealed that one new development, available for 2012 will offer the most efficient and flexible frameless wide screen gas fireplace on the market. Although he is keen to keep technical details under wraps, this new range of fires could, he claims, put some balanced flue fires 'out of date' overnight.

These will give 'best in the world' efficiencies whilst keeping a modern and clean faced aesthetic style."

Whilst heavily focussed on achieving over 90% efficiency and a great flame picture, this key addition to the range will use an innovative flueing system which will be inexpensive, simple and highly flexible to install and allow installation without an existing chimney almost anywhere.

Tony hopes that the new innovative flueing system may appear at next year's Hearth & Home Exhibition where Escea has already booked space.

Get in touch

As we write, Tony is busy contacting retailers throughout the UK and, via the pages of Fires & Fireplaces, invites any of his old friends in the industry to get in touch to find out more about what he believes will be a new and lucrative segment of the market.

FAST You can contact Tony by email to tony@escea.co.uk or by calling **facts** 0207 183 1806.



Above, Escea's EF5000 in stainless steel which is suitable for outdoor use.