



### *Decorative Row*

In this fireplace we have added a row of decorative tiles around the edge of the firebox. Not only does this add a nice visual interest, but it also changes the spacing of the larger tiles of the surround. If you look carefully, we also monkeyed with the grout spacing around the smaller tiles. Taken all together, we were able to do the whole job with just a few cuts.

### *Cutting tiles*

It sounds simple, but not all tiles can be effectively cut, particularly in the set above the firebox. Quarry tiles, though, can often have as much as 10% off their width cut off before the casual eye notices it's been cut. One way to make this even less obvious is to make a larger cut to all the tiles in a row, rather than just one column, as you can see in this fireplace where the tiles in the top row are all cut.



One rule of thumb on cutting tiles – try not to leave less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a tile remaining. If you need to cut  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a tile off, try cutting half of that amount off of two tiles instead. This has particular application when filling the space between the pilasters and the firebox. However, with exceptionally large tiles, you may need to take off more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  as shown in the fireplace above.

### *Keystone*

There's an old trick in woodworking used when you have a piece of wood that has excess length, but not quite enough width. By cutting both pieces along a diagonal, and then sliding the pieces along the cut edge, you create a "wedge" that gets thicker as you slide the pieces. You can use this trick with tiles and bricks, as well. You can also set a row of tiles (or brick) in a keystone pattern, which can be scaled to give you just about any width you need.

