

Consumers Digest

OCTOBER 2006



Best Buys in Gas and Oil Furnaces, Heat Pumps, and Gas and Oil Boilers

Best Buy Categories:

[P]=Premium selection;

[M]=Midrange selection;

[E]=Economy selection.

Best Buys for furnaces, boilers and heat pumps were selected on the basis of energy efficiency, noise levels, features and the manufacturer's reputation for reliability. Best Buys are for series of furnaces with the exception of the Monitor FCX boiler, a single-sized unit. List prices are estimates based on input from distributors and other nonmanufacturer sources; manufacturers do not divulge prices. For furnaces and boilers, these prices reflect units with output capacities around 100,000 BTU. For heat pumps, the prices reflect heating capacities around 3 tons. Prices do not include installation costs or options such as thermostats. Furnaces and boilers are labeled with the peak energy-efficiency rating AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency), while heat pumps are rated in SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio). The ratings are taken from Department of Energy tests. Manufacturers say single units might produce higher ratings under certain conditions.

Gas-Fired Furnaces

[P] **Bryant Evolution Plus 95i or Plus 90i**

List: \$2,800-\$3,000

A two-stage system, it operates at 60 percent capacity during milder weather but moves up to 100 percent when an extra boost of heat is needed. The thermostat's LED screen provides preventative maintenance reminders. An option with the control lets you change temperatures remotely over the telephone or through the Internet.

Features:

- * Output: 40,000 to 120,000 BTU
- * Peak efficiency: 96.6 percent AFUE
- * Warranty: 5-yr. limited, limited lifetime on the heat exchanger

[M] **Rheem Prestige 90 Plus RGF**

[E] **Comfort-Aire Conquest 90 GL Series**

Oil-Fired Furnaces

[P] **Lennox Elite Series O25**

[M] **Thermo Pride OH6 Highboy**

[E] **Comfort-Aire Patriot 80**

Heat Pumps

[P] **Bryant Evolution 288A**

List: \$4,200

This ultra-efficient unit achieves ratings near the industry high. Two-stage operation in both heating and cooling mode and a variable-speed blower motor are automatically adjusted by the thermostat to meet temperature conditions outdoors. Four-wire hookup to the outdoor compressor speeds installation.

Features:

- * Heating capacity: 2 to 5 tons
- * Peak efficiency: 18 SEER
- * Warranty: 5-yr. limited, 10-yr. limited on the compressor

[M] **Lennox Elite Series XP16**

[E] **Rheem Classic Series RPPB**

Gas-Fired Boilers

[P] **Monitor MZ Series**

[M] **Burnham Revolution Series**

[E] **Lennox Conservator Series**



Bryant Evolution Plus 90i furnace

Oil-Fired Boilers

[P] **Monitor FCX**

[M] **Weil-McLain Ultra Oil**

[E] **New Yorker CLW Series**



Bryant Evolution 288A Heat Pump

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Original published version includes prices and full reviews on each model listed by product category and manufacturer. Original layout modified for reprint purposes.

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Best Buys in Central Air Conditioners

Best Buy Categories:

[P]=Premium selection;

[M]=Midrange selection;

[E]=Economy selection.

Air conditioner Best Buys were selected on the basis of energy efficiency, noise level, features and brand reliability. Prices are strictly for the unit and do not include electrical upgrades, ductwork or installation.

Manufacturers do not publish prices for central-air systems. List prices for central units are based on estimates provided by distributors and dealers.

All central-air Best Buys come in a series of sizes, but the price listed is for a unit with a heating capacity of around 3 tons. All central-air Best Buys use the environmentally friendly R-410a refrigerant.

All air-conditioner Best Buys are Energy Star-listed.

Central air conditioners use a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) rating.

Best Price is a reflection of the lowest retail price available at press time and is subject to change.

Central Air Conditioners

[P] Bryant Evolution 180A

List: \$4,000

This ultra-efficient system provides up to a near industry-high 20 SEER rating, and a two-stage scroll compressor provides quiet operation. Its Evolution Control can control as many as six home-comfort functions, and the control's LED screen provides preventive maintenance reminders and alerts users to pending system problems. It even provides the phone number of a nearby Bryant servicer. A cool option with the control allows you to set temperatures remotely through a telephone or over the Internet.



Bryant Evolution 180A

Features:

- * Output: 18,000 to 60,000 BTU/hr.
- * Peak efficiency: 20 SEER
- * Warranty: 10-yr. compressor; 5-yr. parts and labor

[M] Coleman Echelon 5T

[E] Goodman SSX14