

# Infrared Sauna Buyers Guide

*"Get educated BEFORE you buy!"*

*Why is there such a large range in pricing?  
What kinds of heaters are best - Ceramic or Carbon-Based?  
How much glass should it have?  
How do they go together?  
What kind of wood is best?  
What options are available?  
What am I missing?*

The intent of this article is to educate you, the consumer, on the Far infrared sauna and the components that go into engineering not just a good sauna, but a GREAT sauna. You should fully educate yourself in order to go forward with your sauna purchase from a position of knowledge. This is a significant investment...please take five minutes of your time to let us further educate you, or feel free to print this article out for future reference

---

## **INFRARED HEATING PANELS - *Different types of heaters explained***

***Ceramic Heaters - Past Technology:*** The first technology devised to deliver infrared heat in saunas was the ceramic rod. This was an incredible breakthrough for the sauna industry and every infrared sauna had them. I personally owned one and used it every night, however ceramic heaters weren't without their pitfalls. Ceramic heaters are composed of glass rods, which *can* heat an entire sauna, but have to work so hard to get there they become extremely hot. Since the user has to sit directly against the infrared heaters during their sessions this can become **extremely uncomfortable**. The second downfall was their limited surface area. These heaters were so small, they may treat your spine, but what about your shoulders and the rest of your body? To aid in this lack of surface area, manufacturers would have to add reflector trays to the backs of their heaters to try to increase it. These were quick fixes to an inferior/outdated system.

**Standard Carbon Heaters:** Out of demand for a more effective way of delivering infrared therapy, came the technology of Carbon-Based heating panels. These new carbon heaters solved both of the downfalls of ceramic heaters; surface area and hot spots. This new carbon technology enabled the heat to be delivered evenly through a large flat panel instead of a small rod. Since this new technology has a 10x larger surface area than its predecessor, it is able to deliver over 10x the healing rays into your body. To visualize this, on a much smaller scale, try the following: Put a pencil besides a napkin (*get the picture*), the pencil represents the older ceramic heaters and the napkin represents the new carbon heaters. As you can visualize, the carbon heaters have a much larger surface area, which equates to more infrared rays into your body. What was once only for the elite, now most infrared saunas come with flexible carbon panels.

***Organic Clinically Tested Carbonwave 360 Heaters - The latest infrared heating technology***

These cutting edge heaters are formed out of 20 organic elements keeping toxins out of the sauna. They are clinically tested to distribute heat measured at 8-10 microns. Why is this 8-10 micron range so important? Lets go into more detail, as this is THE most important factor when choosing a sauna.

**FACTS**

- 1) Infrared heat is measured in microns.
- 2) Our bodies emit infrared heat naturally at 9.4 microns.
- 3) The closer your infrared heaters are to 9.4 microns the more your body will absorb as it strikes a balance resulting in a faster deeper sweat.

Did you know our bodies naturally emit infrared heat? Have you ever seen a night vision picture or video clip (like on the COPS show)? This is the camera picking up infrared heat coming from our bodies at 9.4 microns.

*The best infrared heaters in the industry today distribute heat in the 8-10 micron range. Most are in the inferior 5-16 micron range which equates to half the horsepower and half the healing/benefits.*

Always ask the manufacturer your considering what the micron range is of the heaters they sell - **This is THE most important variable in the long-term benefits you will receive from your infrared sauna.** If they don't know, **RUN!**

---

**SIZE AND QUALITY OF INFRARED HEAT PANELS**

The next item you will need in your arsenal to become an educated sauna buyer is

an understanding of the correct size and proper placement of these heaters.

Infrared saunas have anywhere from 1-14 carbon heating panels to deliver infrared heat. **When you are comparing saunas count how many infrared panels the sauna has, the size of the panels, and where they are placed.** You want large panels and lots of them. You also want the panels to surround you including; behind, in front, on the sides, on the calves and under the feet will give you the best coverage. **The first item a manufacturer does to cut the cost of the sauna besides cheap wood is to make the heaters smaller and less of them.**

**REMEMBER**, you can't put heating panels where you have glass. Glass looks good, but make sure you still have plenty of heating panels directly in front of you, as you want the front of your body to get the infrared benefits as well. Ask the manufacturer how many square inches of surface area heat the heating panels have. If they don't know.... move on, if they do...compare.

Q. A question we are often asked is, "Why don't you carry any one person saunas?"  
A. There is simply no room to put front heaters in it with the door. Front heaters are extremely important to heal your front extremities and you would not have complete infrared sauna without them.

---

## **WOOD**

This could be an article in and of itself (I may write one shortly!), but I will do my best to summarize. There are two predominant woods used in today's home sauna kits; Hemlock or (Bass wood) and Cedar woods. The reason for this is not only the beauty of the wood, but its ability to resist mold, mildew, cracking and bacteria. Mother Nature took care of growing them but it is up to the manufacturer to ensure the wood is properly cured. **If not Kiln Dried, wood can experience future cracking and warping.** Curing these woods is a scientific and timely process dealing with temperature variables, humidity values, wood density/acidity, and much more. It is the sauna manufacturer's responsibility to over see this process and make sure it is done to all specifications and within the appropriate time frame to avoid any warranty issues down the road.

Ask the company you are considering where the wood comes from. Many lower-end saunas get their wood "second hand" and may not even know where it came from.

**The highest quality saunas built today only use Canadian woods:**

**1) Canadian Hemlock or Basswood:** This strong non-allergenic, non-toxic wood comes standard in all higher end saunas. This is due to its longevity, no-out gassing, as well as it's resistance to cracking or warping.

**2) Canadian Cedar:** Cedar has been used for centuries in homes and furnishings due to its elegance and resistance to mold, mildew and pests. Its oils have been historically utilized for aromatherapy treatments, perfumes and soaps to name a few. From closets and drawers to dog beds and hamster cages, its ability to resist odors is unsurpassed. I am often asked if it is bad for you or toxic. If you are extra sensitive to the smells in shampoos, soaps, perfumes and candles, the same would apply with cedar and you may opt for the Hemlock wood. Aside from individuals with such sensitivities, cedar is completely safe when cured correctly. I personally love the aromatherapy of the cedar sauna as it fills up my home. That being said, it of course comes down to your individual taste.

Both Hemlock and Cedar will naturally darken over time, adding to its timeless beauty. The Cedar wood is a reddish brown color and the Hemlock is lighter in color such as Maple or Pine. You may want to consider this if you are trying to match any other furnishings or decor.

*If you are putting your sauna in a humid environment or outside, I would strongly recommend Cedar due to its ability to resist moisture. If you are placing it inside, both saunas will perform equally and have the same longevity.*

---

### **CONSTRUCTION** *(How the walls go together once you get your sauna)*

The better manufacturers will pre-assemble the sauna in their factory and then ship the walls to you. This way the hard work is already done for you, such as hanging the door, running the electrical wires, installing the stereo, and more. This makes it incredible easy for the buyer as all they have to do when they get it is put the walls together. There are currently 3 ways in the industry to put the walls of your sauna together - magnets, clips, and bolts.

**Clips:** These are installed on almost all of the lower-end saunas. Why? It's a lot easier and cheaper to put a clip on the outside of the sauna, than installing a permanent attachment system within the walls. Pros: Easy, Cons: Not a clean look - Very noticeable, over torques corners and can lead to warping, no finishing wood on corners.

**Magnets:** I for one thought this was a great idea. What could be easier than just slapping four walls together and having them stick like ...well...magnets! Great idea, yes, but here's the problem: It takes more than the standard 3 months to cure the wood of a sauna. Did you know your sauna actually keeps curing while it's in the shipping box? Now let's take that shipping box through a Buffalo ice storm at 0 degrees, a Florida monsoon at 90 degrees, and on to California. During this journey

your *slightly uncured sauna* experiences a large range of different temperature and humidity values. These changes often lead to a slight warping of the panels. No, not the "return your sauna kind of warping" just an annoying 1/8" warp towards the bottom of a wall. A magnet does not have enough torque to bring that wall flat and make it true again and can fall apart if you try to move it.

**Bolts:** Our favorite. Since they're hidden in the wood they aren't noticeable, and with a Phillips head they can be screwed right in with a standard Phillips screwdriver. The bolts don't go into raw wood but rather a nut hidden within the frame. When secured, you will not find a more solid secure sauna. Since you can adjust how much pressure you put on them, they seem to do the best job of getting the walls of your sauna nice and tight to keep that heat in as well as getting rid of any minor warping from the panels sitting in the boxes. Pros: Gets rid of minor warping, very sturdy, provides expansion without cracking or future warping. (proven 10 year technology). Cons: More expensive to manufacture.

**Bottom Line:**

- 1) Take 2 magnets and put them together - Can you pull them apart?
- 2) Now screw a bolt into a nut - Can you pull them apart?

We have designed this system to allow for the expansion and flexing of walls. During the eight years of using it, we have had a ZERO failure rate

---

**HEATER COVERS**

This is the wood that separates you from the heaters. If you look at some saunas out there, you may notice horizontal boards to keep your skin from touching the heater. Many manufacturers still use this design due to lower manufacturing costs. Some of our first designs used these covers but from a users standpoint we never liked them and this is why:

**The flaws with the past technology:**

- 1) When we leaned against the heaters with the horizontal slats it would cause discomfort to the spine and were very uncomfortable. We tested many prototypes and concluded the best heater covers would be ones which would align with your spine and be vertical vs. horizontal.
- 2) To have this past technology ETL approved the manufacturer is required to install a piece of fabric between you and the heater. This fabric not only equates to longer heat up times but has a tendency to disintegrate after a couple years as well.

3) The "safety" fabric used in every one of the horizontal backrest is exposed toxic sweat on a daily basis, which can not be taken out to be cleaned becoming a breeding ground for bacteria. Five years down the road = Five years of built up toxins on the heaters.

**Solution:** After a year of research and testing we hand crafted individual vertical dowels for each heater enabling the user to lean directly against any heating panel in comfort without actually touching it.

**Benefits:**

- 1) Much more comfortable on your spine
- 2) User can lean up against any backrest
- 3) Faster Heat up times
- 4) ETL Approved
- 5) Does not block infrared heat. *Since infrared heat coming from flexible carbon heaters is distributed in the shape of a cone. No infrared heat is blocked by the wood dowels but rather is directed around it.*
- 6) When the dowels heat up they give the user the secondary benefit of gentle heat directly on the skin (much like a heat pad).
- 7) Safer and more sanitary as the dowels block your sweat from getting directly on the heaters.

*Still want the horizontal slat type covers? – We can custom make one for you*

---

**FEATURES/OPTIONS**

Yes, that's right, **OPTIONS**. I know you are not buying a car, but we like options, right? And, of course, we like them all the better if we don't have to pay for them. If you do have to pay, you'd better know why. This is where I come in. Here is the run down on most of the options out there and why you might care.

**Chromo Therapy Lighting:** From reducing inflammation to lowering blood pressure, various studies have shown that LED light therapy aids in healing. This system is usually located in the ceiling and has an average of 5-7 different color lights. The nicer units have them inset into the ceiling.

**Quality Stereo/AM/FM/CD player:** Stay away from "no name brand" stereos. They tend not last very long in the high heat. Also, look for a stereo that drops down from a trap door inside the sauna. It's easy to get to and will last much longer as it is not exposed to daily heat.

**Oxygen Ionizer:** This is a small device which introduces Ions to purify the air. With all the toxins you'll be releasing, this is a great bonus! Think of it as an air freshener on steroids and a **MUST HAVE** in any sauna (unless it's Cedar).

**All Glass Tempered Doors:** If you have any claustrophobia issues (like my wife), this is a must have! All glass doors really give you an open feeling while sitting in the sauna. Of course tempered doors are a MUST HAVE – especially with children.

**Commercial Hinges:** Take a look at the pictures of your future sauna's hinges. If they use the small chrome hinge, plan on resetting the sauna door every six months. You want to look for a commercial grade hinge to keep that door set and from rubbing on the sauna's frame.

**Inside/Outside Soft Touch Controls:** This enables the user to set the temperature, and adjust the lighting without opening up the door, or adjust it from the inside without letting the valuable heat out on a cold day.

**Lighting:** Proper lighting throughout the sauna is not only helpful for reading but gives an elegant feeling as well. The higher quality saunas may also have outside lights under crown molding adding to the beauty of its overall appearance and making it a nice focal point in your room of choice.

**Cup Holders/Magazine Racks:** Cars have them, why not saunas? Sure you could set your drink on the bench, but don't blame me the 5<sup>th</sup> time you knock it over. The magazine rack does keep the sauna nice and tidy.





**Positive Ventilation Systems:** A properly designed sauna will naturally pull fresh air through part of the door while ventilating it through a vent in the ceiling.

**DVD / MP3 / LCD:** Don't feel like reading? Love movies? Have a good motivational DVD to play? Not necessary, but a nice option. Don't want to spend the extra? Put your sauna in front of your TV, or easier yet, you're TV in front of your sauna.

---

## **INFRARED SAUNA SAFETY**

**This is a BIG one.** There are a lot of knock off products out there sneaking their way into the country. What am I referring to? Saunas with faulty and unsafe electrical wiring! No ifs ands or buts about this one. For you and your family's safety, you **MUST** purchase a sauna that is ETL approved to meet America's highest safety and performance standards. It takes a lot of time and money to get these approvals, which is why many manufacturers bypass it. How do you know what to get? That's my job, below are the **safety seals** available and the definitions for each.

	<p><b>INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION</b>  Our manufacturing facility has implemented a quality Management system in order to maintain the highest standards in product development and quality assurance</p>
	<p><b>INTERTEK'S ETL SEMKO STANDARDS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA</b>  Electrical Testing Laboratories (ETL) was founded in 1896 by Thomas Edison, and is one of the oldest product safety testing laboratories in the world. Certification by ETL and ETL-C assures you that all Signature models have been tested to meet both US and Canadian safety and performance standards.</p>
	<p><b>CE CERTIFIED EUROPEAN SAFETY STANDARDS</b>  The CE Mark is a requirement for products sold to the European Market. The CE Mark identifies a product as complying with the health and safety requirements spelled out in European legislation and is mandatory for equipment operating in the European Union (EU).</p>
	<p><b>RoHS DIRECTIVE</b>  The RoHS Directive stands for "the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment". This Directive bans the placing on the EU market of new electrical and electronic equipment containing more than agreed levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants.</p>

Besides these approvals, all of our sauna's **electrical wiring is encased in metal fireproof conduit**. Why is this important? You DO NOT want faulty electrical wires touching dry wood! Also, remember to ask the sauna manufacturer you're considering if they have ever had any safety recalls...this is very good to know.

Another nice safety option making its way in the industry is individual thermostats behind each heating panel. These are invisible to the user but this is why they're recommended: If there was a malfunction in the electrical system and one of your heaters decided to not turn off, that heater could actually melt! Not with this safety



feature - it's going to cut power to that heating panel and save your sauna in the process.

### **WARRRANTY**

So you've done your research, found a sauna and are ready to buy. Consider however, what is the company's policy if one of your expensive panels goes out. **Do they come with a lifetime warranty?** Are they easy to replace? Does your manufacturer stock them? Make sure you fully understand the terms of your saunas warranty BEFORE you purchase your infrared sauna.

### **CONCLUSION**

We hope you have found this article useful and it has given you some clarity in your search for an infrared sauna. We know you have many choices when choosing the appropriate sauna for you and would like to invite you to our website: <http://www.CoastalSaunas.com> where you can view details on all of our models.

#### ***Some of the differences that separate Coastal Saunas from the rest:***

- More included options than any other units (see features on website)
- Only use the latest 2011 Carbon Wave 360 Technologies
- All of our saunas are rated for residential AND commercial use
- Lifetime Warranty
- FREE Shipping
- 90 Day Money Back Guarantee (see details on website)
- Lowest price guarantee
- 6 month price match guarantee (will refund you the difference)
- Guarantee it's in stock and ready to ship or we will give you \$100 off

If you have any questions at all please call or email us anytime. We promise not to pressure you into a sale but rather educate you so that you can make a better decision for your body and health

Happy Healing,  
Timothy Davids  
Owner - Coastal Saunas Inc

[www.CoastalSaunas.com](http://www.CoastalSaunas.com)

800.327.5122

[sales@CoastalSaunas.com](mailto:sales@CoastalSaunas.com)