

THE WHOLESALER

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution



Contractor Mike La Fay believes his commitment to continuous learning and attention to product installation precision have been essential to his success with the more than 100 reliable Baxi Luna modulating wall-hung boiler systems he has installed over the past decade in Alaska's Meadow Lakes area, located northeast of Anchorage and home to the Twin Peaks landmark. Story begins on page 65.





BY PAT KAHNERT
Special to THE WHOLESALER

To excel with a boiler installation in North America's most demanding heating market is admirable. Mastering 100 reliable installations of a brand over a decade can best be described as exemplary — and that is precisely what Alaska contractor Mike La Fay has been doing with Baxi Luna wall-hung modulating boilers.

"You simply can't get better than that — saving lots of money while knowing your heating system will withstand the coldest challenges of our winter."

La Fay, owner of Meadow Lakes Supply in Wasilla, Alaska, has successfully installed Baxi Luna boilers since 2000 throughout Matanuska Susitna County, a 50-minute drive northeast of Anchorage.

"It can be 30° below zero here for three weeks straight, so a reliable heating appliance is essential for home comfort, not to mention survival," said the Baxi-certified con-

tractor. "I recommend this hydronic heating appliance to builders and homeowners with confidence, knowing it has a proven Alaska track record for quality, safety and reliable performance."

"I have not experienced any serious problems with this product," La Fay said. "I am even more excited knowing that Gensco is the exclusive stocking distributor of Baxi products in Alaska, meaning we have ready access to the product."

Gensco is a leading wholesale distributor of heating supplies and equipment, selling only to qualified contractors trade in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana since 1947. More recently, Gensco supplied 250 Baxi Luna boilers for an award-winning community redevelopment of Seattle Housing Authority, which reported 37% energy use savings over another hydronic heating system they had used.

\$500 monthly oil bill reduced to \$150 gas tab

La Fay says his personal experience with Baxi equipment was "icing on the cake" for his confidence in the product.

"My neighborhood just got natural gas over the past year, so I now have a Baxi Luna heating our family home and my shop," he noted. "Our previous fuel oil bill was up to \$500 a month, and now we are spending around \$150 for gas. You simply can't get better than that — saving lots of money while knowing your heating system will withstand the coldest challenges of our winter."

One of La Fay's top Baxi customers is builder Greg Koskela, owner of Elkhorn Log Homes in Wasilla.

"Mike is really good at what he does," Koskela said. "He convinced me five years ago how these compact, efficient Baxi boilers are ideal for our custom building. He designs simple, workable systems. Plus, he is a thorough and quick trouble shooter, always standing be-



Mike La Fay (left) enjoys ready access to Baxi product through Tom Beesing's Gensco Anchorage team. Gensco is the exclusive stocking distributor of Baxi products in Alaska.

hind his work. At the end of a day, you just know Mike knows how the appliance has got to work."

Baxi Modulo enhances custom log home

In December, La Fay completed a Baxi installation in a 3,200-square-foot custom log home built by Elkhorn in the Meadow Lakes area. Overlooking the scenic Twin Peaks landmark, the home features multiple heating zones and high domestic hot water demand. To the delight of the builder and homeowners, La Fay designed a hydronic heating system featuring the 98%-efficient, low-NO_x Baxi Luna HT 1.33 modulating, condensing boiler atop the 21-gallon, stainless steel Modulo storage tank. The Modulo is fully equipped with a fitting kit designed to connect directly to a fully loaded Baxi heating-only boiler.

"The Baxi boiler with Modulo tank is a slick combination heating unit that easily supplies the four heating zones as well as four bathrooms," said Koskela. "The heating zones include three radiant loops with RHT tubing and manifolds. Janes Brothers installed one loop is in the concrete slab, and two in Gyprocrete. We also have supplemental baseboard heating in the loft."

The Elkhorn custom log home was La Fay's first Baxi modulating, condensing boiler with Modulo install. He also added Sentinel chemical water treatment to the boiler system. Sentinel, now included with all Baxi boilers in North America, eliminates any impurities and oxygen in the boiler loop, enhancing performance and ensuring longevity to the system.

"I like the Baxi combination heating and domestic hot water solution with everything built into the boiler," La Fay explained. "For this application, which has a high domestic hot water output demand, the boiler and

Modulo tank combi is perfect. We simply followed the manuals, checked a Baxi installation CD-ROM, and then assembled the boiler and Modulo within a couple of hours."

Commitment to learning pays off

Mike La Fay says his commitment to keeping aware of Baxi product installation specifications goes hand in glove with keeping his promise to customers for ongoing maintenance of his work.



Elkhorn Log Homes of Wasilla, Alaska prefers Baxi hydronic heating solutions for their custom-built homes.

"I will not install any product that I don't fully understand," noted the seasoned heating and plumbing specialist. "Also, since I remain responsible for servicing units that I install, I want to make sure they are installed flawlessly every time."

La Fay says his product knowledge is kept sharp by referring to installation manuals for each install. He has found the Baxi Luna training and certification CD-ROM to be an ideal sales and installation support over the years, and has taken the on-



Photos by Bob Martinson, Wasilla, AK.

Mike La Fay sets up his first installation of the 98%-efficient, low-NO_x Baxi Luna HT 1.33 modulating, condensing boiler atop the 21-gallon, stainless steel Modulo storage tank in a 3,200-square-foot log home.

Tough Alaskan winter climate allows Baxi boilers to strut their stuff

(Continued from page 65.)

line Baxi certification test. The contractor also appreciates having 24/7 access to the password-protected Baxi Certified section at www.wallhungboilers.com. He also values Baxi technical expertise available from hydronic specialists at Gensco

and Marathon International.

Marathon International, the exclusive North American distributor of Baxi products, has produced a series of technical training and certification CD-ROMs for the Baxi Luna HT modulating, condensing boilers line (up to 98% energy efficient), as well

as the Baxi Luna 3 Comfort and the original Baxi Luna modulating boilers. The CD-ROMs are available from authorized Baxi distributors throughout North America.

Marathon president Mike Thomas says the firm's CD-



The Elkhorn 3,200-square-foot custom log home's four heating zones and four bathrooms are no strain for the Baxi boiler with Modulo tank.



wear of a boiler's heat exchanger, valves, pump and pipe work.

Sentinel products can also save radiators that are clogged with scale and black magnetite sludge, and allow a system to operate at optimum efficiency levels.

Sentinel X100 Inhibitor now comes with each Baxi Luna wallhung boiler.

To learn more, contact Marathon International, the exclusive distributor of Sentinel products in North America, at 1-888-602-5360. Or, complete a request form at www.wallhungboilers.com.

SENTINEL
Water & Energy Solutions

See contact information on page 82

• Be sure to visit www.thewholesaler.com for web exclusive articles and videos! •

ROM series is a great learning tool for hydronic heating contractors located in remote locations.

"Mike La Fay's Baxi success is terrific," Thomas noted. "His careful attention to equipment specifications in each of his installs is clearly a manufacturer's dream. Above all, his work with Baxi equipment demon-

"For this application, which has a high domestic hot water output demand, the boiler and Modulo tank combi is perfect. We... assembled the boiler and Modulo within a couple of hours."

strates that if a boiler can heat a home in Alaska reliably for 10 winters, then it can heat a home anywhere."

Baxi is now in its fourth decade of manufacturing and marketing its Luna series of boilers worldwide, with a team of 12 mechanical engineers dedicated to the wall-hung line. The firm's Bassano, Italy, plant now produces 4,000 boilers a day for export to 70 countries, including the U.S. and Canada. Baxi Luna boilers are fully certified for North America, and include stainless steel heat exchangers bearing the ASME H-Stamp. ■

Visit www.wallhungboilers.com to learn more about Baxi proven hydronic heating solutions available in North America, as well as Sentinel water treatment products.



Baxi Luna HT 1.33 condensing boiler atop Modulo storage tank

