

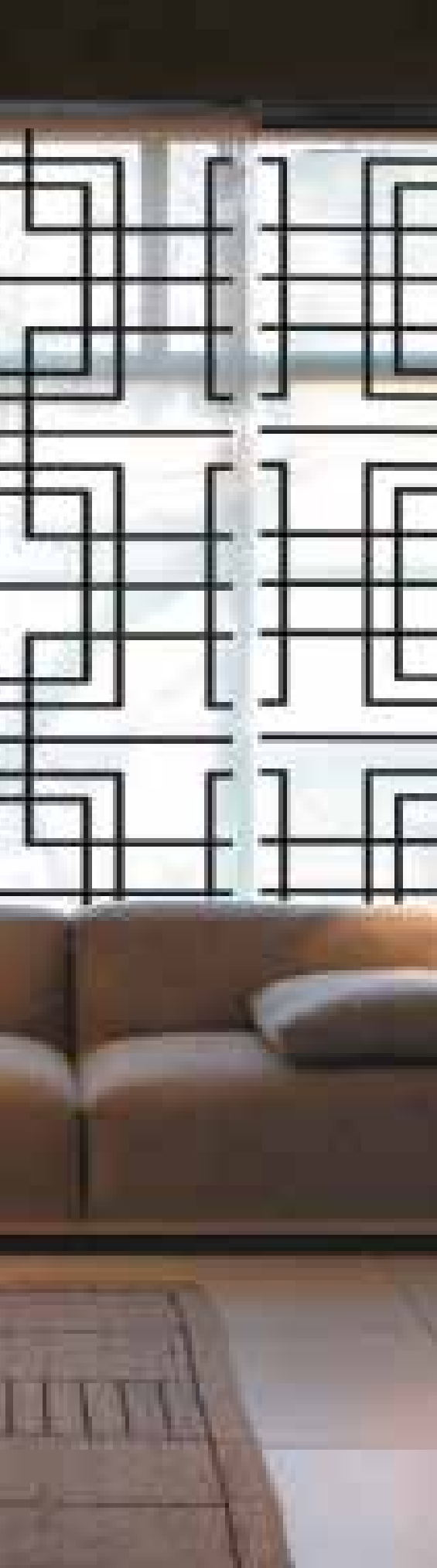
COVER UP

In Australia, we love our homes filled with light. We enjoy north-facing sun streaming through the windows and behold our bewitching views, so the bigger the window the better. But how do we ensure the carpets don't fade while keeping our rooms warm or cool? Interior designer and TV presenter Shayna Blaze-Vaughan offers expert advice on furnishing windows with flair





Contemporary blinds symbolise modern design that embodies a feeling of peace. avenueandco.com.au



Install a touch of the Mediterranean with shutters that allow you to control light and privacy. victoryblinds.com.au



In the past 20 years, the ratio of glass to solid wall on homes' exteriors has become at least 80 per cent. Our outdoor views are just as much a feature as our interiors, and the invigorating feeling you receive from natural light and outdoor greenery is hard to deny. What is also hard to deny is the confusion of how to dress these large, expansive sheets of glass. In its uncovered state, glass becomes a magnifier of light and heat from the outside and unable to trap the comforts of interior heating and cooling when needed. Our love of large, expansive views has not only created problems of keeping the house within a green-star rating but also how to make them look good.

On top of the aesthetics, different types of windows require different types of dressings. In one house there can be different styles of windows and varying sizes, creating confusion about whether to treat them all the same or change styles room by room. Large panes of glass can be up to four metres in length (or even longer in extreme cases), so trying to create a window treatment with no seams and be void of hanging cords can be a costly exercise. Doors can also be treated as windows, with floor-to-ceiling bi-folds, stacker and sliding doors.

Renovating or building is beyond a hobby; it is a spectator sport for friends and family who gather weekly to see your progress (or lack of it), with everyone throwing in their two cents worth of what should or shouldn't be done. It's usually when everything is finished and the furniture placed that people start to think about how to dress their windows. Window treatments can make or break the framing of your view and, like

lighting, it's one of the most underrated and least-thought-out aspects of a renovation or new build.

With glass taking up so much space, there's the issue of maintaining as much view as possible while trying to create an energy-efficient home. First and foremost is to have the least amount of sun hitting the window as possible, which reduces the level of window insulation. If your building's eaves are not doing the job, consider exterior blinds. Old-fashioned canopy blinds make most modern homeowners cringe, but there's a great selection of retractable blinds that can be hidden most of the time and only used when the sun hits its peak. Your outdoor living area is an extension of your home, so it has a double purpose for providing outdoor shade as well as protecting the walls' glass.

The closer the window treatment is to the glass the better the thermal qualities to keep the heat out in summer and trap warm air in winter. Double roller blinds are a very popular choice in slimline window coverings, as the sunblind will provide protection and privacy during the day but still let light in. The blackout blind can be used at the peak of the day and then for full privacy in the evening. Having the brackets on the outside of the window frame reduces the thermal quality and sitting out at nearly 200mm can really encroach on limited room space. Putting the blinds on the inside of the frame changes both of those negatives but does cut into your view. You need to work out if this view is all about the skyline or the garden and that will help with placement. When you are watching TV and your sunblind is behind you,



Shutters are ideal for in bathrooms for directing light while maintaining privacy. shaynablaze.com



Roller blinds work beautifully in modern interiors. luxaflex.com.au

make sure you use a black or dark blind, as this will absorb the sunlight; white or light colours will reflect and make watching TV harder during the day.

Blinds such as roller blinds, stacker blinds (sleek drops of material that stack on the side, hence their name) and Roman blinds are seen in more modern interiors than any other treatment; however, while they may look great when rolled up, it could be a whole different story in use. On large windows they can look like a projector screen or temporary sheets.

There are different finishes available for blinds, including textured and coloured fabrics, as well as laser-cut and printed, because at night the once-prominent view is no longer a feature of the interior. A process from Avenue & Co prints the design onto sunscreen and blockout fabrics, creating a whole new focus when the blinds are drawn. These can also be used in other areas of the house as room dividers and screens. If you have a wide series of windows, look at where the blind casings can join so they go up as a set, minimising the amount of cords. This works well with remote-controlled systems.

Even though curtains sit outside the window frame, they have one of the best thermal qualities, which is formed from solid material that can go as wide and as high as you want without limits of material size. The best way to “seal” a window is to take the curtains right to the edge of the wall and ceiling. One thing to note: the wider the window the more stacking room they will need on the sides, so this is where you need to consider thermal qualities against view.

Shutters are not used for large expansive views and bi-folds but more for controlling light, creating privacy and giving the room a mood



Floor-to-ceiling curtains with full block-out lining are fantastic energy-saving window treatments. blankcanvasinteriors.com.au



If you're relying on your windows to be a feature, consider the design and look of your window treatment when closed. avenueandco.com.au

or style. Shutters sit easily within a beach-themed, modern or traditional interior. While they may seem cold with no thermal qualities, when they are shut they create an excellent barrier for windows and minimise heat and cold transference. Direct the blade in an up position and you create privacy, limit direct sunlight but still gain light. If in an area with limited light, direct the blade to the middle or slightly down to entice the light inwards. Shutters are available in cedar, painted, waterproof vinyl, basswood and aluminium and can add a soft or dramatic feature just by the materials and colours used.

At the planning stages and when you have the money, double-glazing is a great option; it maximises as much green energy as possible, meaning you won't need a heavy window treatment, with the bonus of exterior noise reduction. If you don't have that luxury and are looking for solutions for your existing windows, you can install double-glazing as a retro fit (with a magnetic fixing) or put a clear thermal film on the glass. Stephen Wood from Unique Green Solutions says the company's film has a technology that is able to reflect the heat, generating infrared rays back through the glass while allowing light to enter. You should expect the film to reflect more than 90 per cent of the infrared and allow more than 70 per cent of light to enter. This reduces the need for energy-busting airconditioning, thus saving on energy bills.

When you are renovating or building, consider your window treatments as a priority and make decisions at the same time as you decide on the windows. This allows you the opportunity to give thought to hiding blinds in ceiling cavities and get electrics pre-wired. Give time to consider whether to use internally or externally fitted blinds and consider the type of glass and exterior eaves and blinds. 🏡



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