



Home style

Let there be light, or shade

It's curtains for insulation and blind luck for screening light, writes **Shayna Blaze**

WINDOWS have gone through dramatic transformations in the past five years.

Modern style trends have increased the area of glass on our walls and the focus on outdoor living has resulted in greater use of large expansive openings of bi-fold and sliding doors.

Our outdoor areas have become such a large focus and reduced our wall space, which has limited areas available for hanging artworks and positioning the TV and cabinetry.

This has made window treatments an integral and more significant element of our interior schemes.

Curtains and blinds seem to be the simple and obvious choices, but they present hidden headaches when it's time to make a selection.

With the large openings come questions. Do you or don't you cover them up — and if you do, what styles do you choose?

Limitations are put on us before we make any decisions. These include manufacturers' widths of fabrics, the amount of room to hang our blinds or curtains, and doors leading outside where once there were just windows.

Blinds

WHETHER Holland, roman or security screens, you need to consider the restrictions of mounting either on or inside the window frame.

The advantage of mounting inside the frame is having the material closer to the glass, which is better for trapping heat and keeping out cold.



The disadvantage is that because of the brackets the blind never goes the full width of the glass, so you will always get light through the edges.

Mounting blinds on the frame creates the opposite challenges. As the blind extends over the frames, the light blockage is better. But as the fabric is further away from the glass, insulating properties are reduced.

There are limits to the widths of your blinds because of fabric widths and stability of the mechanisms.

Curtains

USING heavy backing will give you great insulating qualities, but be aware that when they are open you need at least 500mm either side of the window (depending on window size). This is so they can "stack" out of the way and not obstruct the view through the window.

Double glazing

IF YOU want to keep that expansive view and not have to worry about window treatments, look at double-glazing.

Double-glazed windows reduce noise and heating costs, but the price can be off-putting, so you need to weigh up the cost to the benefit.

If you are inner-city in a high traffic area, the benefits will far outweigh the costs.

Window treatments are usually bought at initial build stage and then only changed in a full renovation or when you move into a home and want to make it yours.

Make sure you look at all the details of your window treatments because a mistake can be expensive.

Shayna Blaze's column appears every fortnight. Visit www.shaynablaze.com



Comfort zones: (clockwise from far left) Consider double glazing on large expanses of windows. Picture: Wildberry Studios.

If you are after full blackout from window treatment, curtains are your best option.

Fabrics from Mokum. Be aware of gaps of light when blinds are hung inside window frames. Picture: Victory Blinds.