



Window treatments

Window coverings play a leading role in the interior of home. They can help set atmosphere and can be both attractive and functional. Windows now come in a variety of new shapes and sizes, which has put increased demand on window covering manufacturers to create new products.

Many new and custom-built homes have windows that are rounded, or that stretch from floor to ceiling. For owners of older homes, installing new windows is often high on their "must do" list, and each window often requires a different application. Whatever the window shape, there are probably more window covering choices in terms of pattern, colour scheme, and design than ever before.

Today, families look at their homes as a place to retreat. Some people have called it "cocooning." This is reflected in the recent trend towards the traditional look, with the heavier fabrics and fuller drapes of days gone by. Drapes, with an interesting pattern and strong colour, are often combined with simple sheers or matching, lighter-weight balloon curtains.

Drapes are popular when matched with a covered valance or when they flow into a gentle or full swag. Drapes can make a strong fashion statement when they are accented by colour-coordinated or differently designed hooks and rods, or tied back in unusual ways.

Tassels are being revived again. Made of cord or rope and especially popular during Victorian days, tassel tie backs are practical with heavier fabrics. It's a look that is well suited to older homes with high ceilings because it creates an elegant graceful appearance.

Drapes in a print of pattern that pick up the primary colour, with a matching covered valance, will set the tone for the room especially if the same fabric is used to cover a lamp shade or used as a wallpaper border.

A combination of drapes tied back into a full swag with interior shutters is another popular look. This combination is particularly appealing on a bay window, with the drapes used as a side panel. Balloons (a fabric which gathers at the top of the window and swells out) can be used as a valance or alone to cover the entire window creating a warm and elegant feeling in the room.

Balloons, blinds and verticals that have lead in popularity for the past five years are being replaced and upgraded. You can give verticals a new look by teaming them with an interesting valance or by adding drapes to blinds and blinds to balloons.

Another attractive option that can be used with any décor is the "shirred" curtain, a panel that is gathered on a rod both at the top and the bottom. Often used on door windows, it has become a popular and pretty way of covering the bottom half of a window.

Just as window-covering options are unlimited, so are the costs particularly when it comes to custom drapery. The major expense is not in the labor, design, or consulting fees, but in the fabric, especially if it is imported.

With so many window coverings to choose from, you may want to consider consulting an interior decorator to determine the best fit for your décor.