

Smart shopper
**WINDOW
 TREATMENTS**

Sumptuous curtains, automated blinds and air-purifying fabrics... The latest coverings offer far more than just window dressing, writes *Georgia Madden*.

Veri Shades polyester vertical blinds in Soft White, \$2861 (5.2x2.4m, installed), Wynstan.

Soften the decor, dampen acoustics, boost privacy, reduce energy costs - there's no end to what you can achieve with the right window treatment. "They can completely elevate the feel of a space, adding warmth, texture and light control. They also provide a measure of insulation, helping to keep rooms cool in summer and warm in winter," says interior designer Jasmine McClelland. "Well-chosen window treatments are an investment that can add value to a property and make a house a home," adds Neale Whitaker, interior design expert and brand ambassador for Luxaflex Window Fashions.

If you favour blinds, you will quickly discover that there's a design to suit just about every room style and set-up. There are sleek and practical roller blinds, the casual aesthetic of roman blinds, panel gliders for larger windows, versatile venetians and plantation shutters for a more tailored look.

Keen to take the sting out of power bills? Seek styles in insulating fabric. "As much as 30 per cent of heat loss from a home occurs through uncovered windows," says Neale. "Honeycomb-technology blinds, such as Luxaflex Duette Architella Shades, are wonderful insulators and very adaptable - a versatile choice."

Automation systems allow you to operate blinds and awnings without lifting a finger. You could even schedule them to activate at certain times. "With products such as Luxaflex PowerView motorisation, you can control shading, temperature, energy-efficiency and privacy via your phone or tablet," he says. "Automation can be incredibly useful, especially if you have a large space or hard-to-reach windows," adds Jasmine.

Curtains are a brilliant way to bring softness to a space. "The layers of fabric feel luxurious and provide some movement, as opposed to more structured blinds," says Frances Cosway, design director at White Pebble Interiors. "Linen sheers ▶



OUTSIDE VIEW

External blinds and awnings don't just extend your living space, they can boost energy efficiency too, says Scott Hall, external product manager at Helioscreen. "Preventing the sun from directly hitting windows and glass doors is one of the best ways to control indoor temperatures," he says. "External blinds in a sunscreen fabric can reduce solar heat gain by up to 90 per cent without impeding views. In turn, this reduces the need for airconditioning and thus your carbon footprint. It's most important to shade glazing on the northern and western facades as they receive the most direct sun."



that slightly pool on the floor look wonderful in a relaxed coastal living room, while pinch- and triple-pleat headings have a more structured, polished look that suits formal spaces. I always pool curtains 15 millimetres, unless it's in a high-traffic, open-plan living area leading to outside."

"Curtains with minimal heading deliver softness and a lovely textural element. You can also play around with colours and tones to really lift a room," says Jasmine. "Roman blinds are terrific too: they're incredibly practical, great for windows that don't have a lot of space around them,

"Well-chosen window treatments are an investment that can add value to a property and make a house a home." Neale Whitaker

and you see all the lovely fabric when they're drawn."

If you want softness and superior light control, say for a bedroom, consider layering window treatments. "A combination of sheers and blackout curtains eliminates light, which can help improve sleep and give a room a sophisticated finish," says Frances. Worried about indoor air quality? Consider Ikea's 'Gunrid' curtains. These are made from recycled PET (plastic bottles) and have a special coating that breaks down common indoor air pollutants.

For optimum temperature control, shade windows from the outside. "An exterior sunscreen-style blind will block 98 per cent of UV rays, heat and glare before they

have a chance to enter the home," says Matthew Walsh, general manager at Blinds Online. "That's particularly important in Australia, considering the temperatures we have to contend with."

"For flexible light control, an exterior straight-drop awning is your best bet," says Amelia Taylor, head of product design at Wynstan. "Folding-arm awnings are perfect for increasing your useable living space. This kind of awning opens up for shade or shelter and simply folds away when not needed." Pivot-arm awnings, which extend and retract in an arc, offer

excellent sun protection and allow a breeze to pass between the awning and the window.

"Zip-style awnings are ideal for outdoor rooms. Since they don't take up a lot of space, you can also use them to shade windows next to fences or pathways," says Amelia. Another appealing option is a retractable roof system, which can also accommodate extras such as LED lighting.

Opt for motorisation for those outdoor coverings and you'll never have to contend with cranking again. Better yet, connect exterior window treatments to sun, wind or rain sensors so they open and shut according to the weather. Best-dressed windows on the street? Done. **H&G**

Pirouette Shadings, \$2074 (151x181cm, supply only), Luxaflex Window Fashions. **OPPOSITE TOP** From left Plantation shutters from Melbourne Plantation Shutters, room designed by Jasmine McClelland Design. Gunrid air-purifying polyester curtain, \$59/pair (145x250cm, supply only), Ikea. Moda Slate & Ebony double-roller blind, from \$74 (255x250cm, supply only), Blinds Online.

BLIND APPEAL

Neale Whitaker, interior design expert and brand ambassador for Luxaflex Window Fashions, shares his top picks for fabulous blinds.

Patio doors Vertical blinds with individual fabric panes that you can walk through whether they're open or closed, such as Luxaflex LumiShades.

Casual living rooms Soft-vane, sheer-backed blinds, such as Luxaflex Pirouette Shadings, add softness, boost privacy and filter light.

Sophisticated living rooms Luxaflex Luminette Privacy Sheers are a two-in-one design that combine the beauty of sheers with superior light and privacy control.

Bedrooms Maximise darkness and cover any light gaps with blackout blinds and fabrics, such as Luxaflex Duetto LightLock Shades.

Wet rooms Waterproof shutters are an excellent choice for humid areas such as bathrooms and laundries. Luxaflex PolySatin Shutters, for example, are designed not to blister, peel or fade.



For Where to Buy, see page 176.