

Seeing the light: A fascinating read on blinds



Shades feature energy-efficient designs and are now available in a wide array of fabrics, pleat sizes, colours and textures.



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**DESIGN
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As I contemplated what to write this week, I casually mentioned to my High Park running group that I was planning to discuss blinds and their importance.

Immediately my friend Laura exclaimed, "That's boring"! The rest of the group agreed.

With the gauntlet thrown down, I saw this as a challenge to make the topic of blinds, if not exciting, at least remotely interesting.

Window coverings and blinds in particular are an important part of the function and décor of our spaces.

So what's the problem? Blinds may not be sexy, animated or extreme but they do hold real power.

We've been covering our windows for centuries. Before the 1600s, tapestries were used to cover both walls and windows to maintain heat within and to limit dampness in stone castles or palaces.

Interior window shutters were used later through the 1700s paired with glamorous drapery, again not really for privacy but to maintain heat inside.

Glass windows as we know them today are a relatively new invention and having natural light within homes wasn't really "a thing" until Victorian Times with the popularity

of architectural structures like the Crystal Palace at London's World Fair.

From this the idea of having a lot of windows took off, as did the need for privacy from the teeming streets of burgeoning industrial cities.

But maybe history holds no interest for you as far as it relates to blinds so let's get personal.

Remember that first apartment you rented that had no blinds at all? To avoid your creepy neighbor, you either ended up covering the window with garbage bags or yes, even the Canadian Flag. See? You notice blinds when you DON'T have them.

So here is a quick, blind checklist of what to look for depending on what window you need to cover. I can promise you that every option has personality and will contribute to your space.

For large windows in condos where you need sun and UV reduction consider roller screens. These are modern and slick and come in lots of colours.

For more texture on a window or to warm up the feel of a room select a Mandalay style, or Silhouette by Hunter Douglas.

It features horizontal veins or lines within the blind mixed with a sheer fabric. These veins move like a shut-

ter but its much lighter looking.

Blackout blinds do exactly what the name implies: no light can penetrate its surface. This is good in bedrooms where darkness is required at any time of day.

Matchstick or bamboo blinds are made of thin wood or woven grasses and add texture to the blind and can add pattern to a room.

Shutters are still popular and make an excellent choice in bathrooms or places that you want good privacy and easy operation. An alternative to shutters is wood slat blinds.

They look like shutters only they are operated on a pull string. Less durable than shutters these blinds are cost effective.

Still not convinced? Check out a few websites such as www.merablinds.com, www.alluredecor.ca or www.hunterdouglas.ca to see how blinds can add to the look and comfort of a room.

And this is the mastery of blinds — they provide that elusive concept of comfort by altering heat and light, texture and sound.

All this in one simple product and yet we don't celebrate the simplicity and power of the blind!

Fascinating, right? Now the next time your home is baking in the hot sun and you wonder why your electrical bill is so high, maybe you will reach for the blind rather than the thermostat!

— Jane Lockhart is a celebrity designer, author and television personality who appears regularly on the Marilyn Denis show. For more information, visit



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