

Dressing your windows for success



Choosing from many options can be daunting, but experts are ready to help you put it together

Mary Shustack
The Journal News

A new home offers a blank slate for decorating, though it might first feel a bit stark.

One of the easiest ways to cozy things up — or freshen up when it's time to sell — is to pay attention to the window treatments.

Swags and panels, blinds and shades can help set the tone of a space, make the surroundings feel lush and luxurious or bold and modern.

No matter which theme is chosen, window treatments are instrumental in helping transform a house into a home — and adding value to the space, as well.

Navigating the world of window treatments can be daunting, though.

After all, just take a look at "The Design Directory of Window Treatments" by Jackie Von Tobel (Gibbs Smith, publisher, \$60). The book is nearly 600 pages long, is accompanied by a CD-ROM and explores more than 350 individual components that can be used when decorating a window.

But Karen Kline, a designer who owns Spice Hill Interiors in Ossining, says the category also offers a unique opportunity.

"Window treatments can be strictly utilitarian but more often, they are probably the best way to add texture and softness to a room that otherwise is all hard surfaces," she says.

So start the process, whether it be with silk drapes or wooden shutters, sheer panels or stretches of brocades.

Following are just three of the many places in our area to shop for window treatments:

Spice it up: Spice Hill Interiors

Having worked in interior design for nearly 20 years, Karen Kline knows what makes a winning window treatment.

"If I'm designing a room, it's something that's just one element of many," she says. "It should not scream at you more than anything else in the room. It should be proportionate and meld with the color scheme."

And that thoughtful approach is one she's now bringing to a wider audience.

Kline, most recently working with private clients through her Croton-on-Hudson home, opened her first retail showroom in September.

And a walk into Spice Hill Interiors imparts a sense of style, bolstered by a wall of window-treatment choices including everything from splashes of flowers to subtle stripes.

Kline, though, doesn't let a client get taken up by appearance and helps them understand the process.

When starting, for example, Kline might suggest a client opt for a basic woven blind, something that is functional if not fancy.

"Just get it up and then let the room take form," Kline says. That allows a style to evolve with the "starter" piece able to be dressed up or down.

Sometimes, though, she dives right in.

"If there's a privacy issue, it needs to be addressed sooner rather than later," Kline says. Windows that face the street or neighbors need to be properly covered.

Kline gets a feel for all the considerations of a project during an in-home consultation, and the \$125 cost is applied to future work.

"Usually what I ask somebody is to give me a few adjectives on how they'd like the room to end up," Kline says.

Then she offers suggestions. "I don't want to make anything unless I've seen the space," Kline says. "Measurements are critical in this field."

Kline, who also studied psychology and was also a lawyer, graduated from Parsons The New School for Design.



On the Web

For two video segments on window treatments, visit www.lohud.com/video



Photos by Mike Roy/The Journal News

Karen Kline, top, of Spice Hill Interiors in Ossining stands in front of some of the window treatments she offers at her retail outlet on North Highland Avenue. Among the offerings, both from Romo: a brown wool sateen treatment, right, and a checkerboard pattern with metal grommets. A window treatment "should not scream at you more than anything else in the room. It should be proportionate and meld with the color scheme," Kline said.



Experts are ready to help dress up your windows



Mark Vergari/The Journal News

Neil Gordon, owner of Decorating With Fabric in Monsey, says his staff offers in-home consultations. "We'll have to see what the room looks like, how the light comes into the room, how they're living in the room, how they plan on living in the room, tying in, perhaps, the area rug on the floor, pulling out certain colors," he said.

WINDOWS, from 1G

As she points to a dramatic draping, which flanks a vignette in her front window, Kline says she likes working with the imported wool sateen.

"I think they're really beautiful without any adornment," she says.

There is, she says, always room to experiment, though.

"Kitchens are sometimes good opportunities to do something a little bolder," she says.

In the end, she says most customers appreciate a little advice.

"I think people are generally open to hearing what I think is going to be right."

Spice Hill Interiors, 211 N. Highland Ave., Ossining. 914-945-0966.

It's all about the material: Decorating With Fabric

For those who feel they don't know anything about window treatments, Neil Gordon has a suggestion: Use the words window fashion instead.

"When you think of window fashion, you really think of how you're decorating your window," he says.

Gordon, the owner of Decorating With Fabric in Monsey, is ready with countless options. Hundreds of swatch books fill his showroom, complemented by hardware and embellishments,

shades and blinds.

The design staff offers in-home consultations.

"We'll have to see what the room looks like, how the light comes into the room, how they're living in the room, how they plan on living in the room, tying in, perhaps, the area rug on the floor, pulling out certain colors," he says. "That's how we then determine what colors we'll bring in so there's a variety of ways of doing it."

There's also an on-site workshop, and all installations are completed by the company.

"We have control from day one until the day it's installed," he says. "We have a real niche."

Gordon seems almost destined for the home-decorating business. Longtime Rocklanders will remember Gaylin's, a Nanuet housewares and decorating store operated by his parents for some 30 years.

Gordon knows customers have to rely on his expertise: "You can't see what you're going to buy from me until the day we install it."

So he's always sure to ask questions about light, privacy, use, decorative taste and budget.

Although the work is custom, it doesn't have to be expensive.

He says, for example, a 42-by-54-inch faux wood blind for a single window could cost \$150.

And there are even a few techniques that benefit those counting their pennies.

"You can, for example, use a more expensive fabric that you've

perhaps fallen in love with but perhaps use it on a cornice, which takes very little fabric as opposed to swags or jabots which would take a lot of fabric."

That's not only thrifty but trendy.

"I think a lot of window treatments are becoming simpler in design," Gordon adds. "We're not seeing as heavy a window treatments as we've once seen before. I have a whole category now that I call poles and panels."

Decorating With Fabric, 302 Saddle River Road, Monsey. 845-352-5064; www.decoratingwithfabric.com.

Make a statement: Bed Bath & Beyond

Take the escalator up to the second floor of the cavernous Bed Bath & Beyond in Elmsford.

There, shoppers find a staggering array of drapery and trims, hardware and accessories.

Shop alone — or call on one of the staffers for advice.

They're ready, and able, to give it, says customer-service manager Frank Fornari.

"We will ask them what their intent is," he says, giving an informal tour of the department.

There are dozens of vignettes, often set up around a bed.

It's easy to see which style one might prefer — and then signage explains the pieces needed to recreate the look.

"Look at the display," he says. And then, "look at the components."

He points to a particularly elaborate scene, then deconstructs it easily. "You're just looking at panels, sheers, valances," Fornari says.

One thing popular here is a scarf, a more modern take on a swag. "It creates sort of a custom look," Fornari says.

If the window treatment is to be tapped on as an energy-efficient component to a room, for example, look for heavier fabrics like a brocade or those with linings, Fornari says.

Window treatments can also add grandeur to a room. One with tiny windows can suddenly seem lofty.

"I can raise that valance so you have that illusion of height," Fornari says.

Prices can vary, as expected. A scene featuring the fall-friendly print, Harvest Manor by Crossill, has pieces that sell between \$49.99 and \$124.99.

Others can be found for more, and less.

To Fornari, it's a simple process. "I kind of approach it from the same perspective," he says. "It's like putting an outfit together."

It's an easy way to go. "You could really just make such an impact."

Bed Bath & Beyond, 251 Tarrytown Road, Elmsford. 914-345-2701; www.bedbathandbeyond.com.

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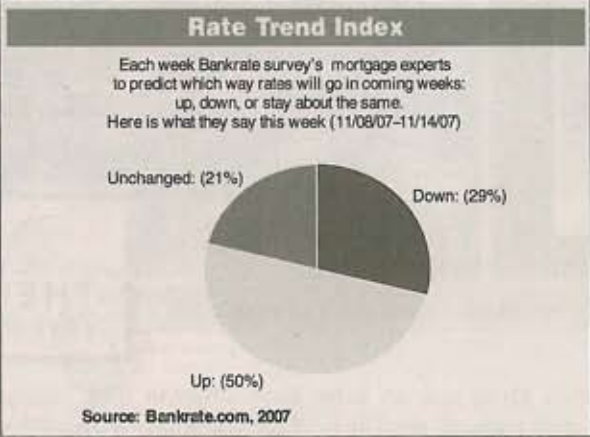
Mortgage Guide From Bankrate.com

Rpt/Apr Fees	% Down	APR	Program	Rate	Disc/Orig Pts	Cr Rpt/Apr Fees	% Down	APR	Program	Rate	Disc/Orig Pts	Cr Rpt/Apr Fees	% Down	APR
845-638-1800 STATE FARM BANK				877-734-2265 TRUSTCO BANK				914-345-1808						
\$0/350	5%	5.89	30 yr FRM	7	0/0	CALL	5%	7.76	30 yr Fixed	6.25	0/0	\$0/0	10%	6.3
\$0/350	5%	6.05	15 yr FRM	6	0/0	CALL	5%	6.62	30 yr Jumbo/Fix	7.25	0/0	\$0/0	10%	7.3
\$0/350	5%	5.77	1 yr ARM	6.375	0/0	CALL	10%	7.77	15 yr Fixed	6.125	0/0	\$0/0	10%	6.13
\$0/350	5%	5.86	3 yr ARM	6.25	0/0	CALL	10%	7.74	15 yr Jumbo/Fix	7.125	0/0	\$0/0	10%	7.13
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National Mortgage Index			
	30 yr fixed	15 yr fixed	5 yr ARM
This week	6.34	6.04	6.18
Last week	6.29	5.99	6.22
Last year	6.32	6.02	6.16

Source: Bankrate.com, for more information visit www.bankrate.com. Bankrate national averages are based on 100 largest institutions in the top 10 markets in the United States.



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