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Experts can help dress your windows for success

With so many options, choosing may be hard

Mary Shustack
The Journal News

OSSINING — 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.

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 designer Karen Kline, who owns Spice Hill Interiors in Ossining, said 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 said.

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

Spice Hill Interiors

211 N. Highland Ave., Ossining.
914-945-0966.

On LoHud

■ For two video segments on window treatments, visit LoHud.com/video
■ Visit Mary Shustack's shopping blog at Just-browsing.lohudblogs.com

window treatment.

"If I'm designing a room, it's something that's just one element of many," she said. "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 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 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 clients get taken up by appearance and helps them understand the process.

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

"Just get it up and then let the room take form," Kline said.

That allows a style to evolve with the "starter" piece able to be



Karen Kline 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. A window treatment "should not scream at you more than anything else in the room," Kline said. "It should be proportionate and meld with the color scheme."

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 said.

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

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

As she pointed to a dramatic draping that flanks a vignette in her front window, Kline said she liked

working with the imported wool sateen.

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

There is, though, always room to experiment.

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

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

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



Mike Roy/The Journal News

One of the easiest ways to make a home cozy is with window treatments. Karen Kline 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. Page 17