

ASK THE DESIGNER

Transform your space with window treatment

By Jean Bisnaire, Niche Decor

?I don't really need window treatment for privacy in my family room but I really do feel the room needs it ? what do you suggest??

There are many more reasons for building window coverings into your décor than just privacy. Window treatments have been used for centuries to warm up draughty castles, define spaces, block extreme light, and add colour and texture to interiors.

When people move into a home, they often rush to cover the window with generic blinds, shutters and curtains. In this mad dash to find the cheapest, most functional solution, they end up limiting their options for future décor.

Window treatments such as blinds, roman shades, woven shades, and draperies have many advantages. They can be used to insulate windows. They are also used to protect furniture and hardwood floors from the damaging effects of the sun. Your particular situation may differ, but most people do need the privacy good window coverings afford.

Exactly how much privacy you need will determine the type of covering you choose.

Is the room in question where you dance in front of your mirror? You may need more privacy there than in your laundry room.

Always think of the amount of sun that beams through the windows of the room: if it's a den that no light ever directly enters, then why go through the trouble of covering up the windows with blinds or shutters when simple drapes will add more warmth and texture to the décor.

Drapery panels in particular can add great aesthetics to the décor of any room. Here are the various elements they can enhance and why you should incorporate them into your space whether or not you need privacy.

Textures ? with the use of various fabrics and materials you can add great texture to your space. Want to bring in a natural element of the outdoors? I particularly love using woven shades in combination with drapery panels to layer and texture a room. Imagine them both the same colour tones or draw attention to your windows with dark woven shades with the use of a lighter drapery to anchor the space. It's a natural yet multi-layered look. You can add texture through the use of various fabrics.

Silk and linen have completely different effects on a room. One will bring more formality to the room while the other makes it more causal.

Picture the ?wow-factor? in a room with a solid cotton sofa, subtle striped chairs, and a tone-on-tone geometrical pattern on the window treatment. It doesn't have to be bold, but to avoid your space looking flat ? window treatments are the best way to add texture.

Layers ? you can easily pull in other materials included in the existing decor to tie it all in with the window treatment. Whether it's a certain colour, pattern or material ? the repetition in your décor will create the unity needed to give your space a finished, polished look.

Colours ? using drapery panels, you can either enhance or complement the colours in your space. Want to keep a cozy, subtle palette? Match your draperies to your wall colours. Want to enhance the colours in the space? Use a colour that is bolder than your walls or furniture and even consider banding them with another accent colour pulled from the decor of your room. With the play of colours you can visually soften or create impact. The drapery or window treatment is second only to your wall colour in the impact department. Use it enthusiastically to create a visual focus in the space.

Balance ? you can use drapery panels to create balance and symmetry in the interior. I had a client who moved into a space where the window was off center. She had her sofa prominently placed in front of the window so we simply ran the window treatment equally on both sides from the wall. It covered more window on one side than it did the other, but it made her window look balanced overall, therefore setting the whole space into a perfect balance. This trick can be used with small or short windows ? just take the drapery panels higher; this instantly draws the eyes upward, creating the illusion that the window is actually larger than it really is.

Materials ? with the vast amount of designer fabrics and materials available the world is your oyster! This is the part you can really have fun with. You're not limited to the ready-made panels available at your local décor store ? now you can have access to thousands of fabrics from various suppliers that can easily be custom-made into window treatments of your choice.

Hardware ? with the selection available through our suppliers, the selection is impressive. You can opt for traditional rods, rectangular modern rods, natural wooden rods or even use a ripplefold rod where your panels always look perfectly rippled. My advice is to keep things in scale. If you have 20-foot ceilings, avoid using rods with a 1? diameter or else they will look lost and out

of place.

Feel free to send me your comments or questions to askjean@nichedecor.ca
And remember to create that casual elegance to come home to.