

PRESS RELEASE

Transcending styles

05 August 2014, Johannesburg: There's nothing quite like basking in the sun and taking in the view from the comfort of your own home. So it's no wonder that Elouise Steyn, in-house architect for leading wooden window and door manufacturer, Swartland, believes that if you live in picturesque surroundings, or if your home has unique architectural flair, then you should amplify it with your choice of window styles. If you are renovating or building, then read on for an overview on how to choose the right wooden windows that will complement your home's style.

The building blocks

"Start with the basics," says Elouise, who suggests researching your home's architectural style first and foremost so that you choose windows that match its specific design aesthetic. Most house styles fit into two broad categories – modern and traditional.

According to Elouise, modern architecture can refer to the modernist movement of the 20th Century and includes the work of famous architects, such as Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and many more. This movement was the start of modern architecture as we know today. "Modern or contemporary style is characterised by a simplification of forms and subtraction of ornaments," points out Elouise, who is drawn to the clean lines and honest use of materials inherent in this design aesthetic. She adds: "I love the use of industrial elements, such as exposed concrete and steel structures for example, and how timber is often used as a feature to create warmth, whilst other natural materials, like stone sourced from the surrounding area, are also incorporated to connect the building with it's place in nature."

On the other hand, traditional architecture can refer to anything from times long gone by, such as Victorian times for example. "It essentially refers to architecture that is true to the design aesthetic of a specific era in time. Traditional architecture is in essence, indicative of a specific culture, which has been adapted to the local climate of a particular area," she says. Elouise uses the South African example of Cape Vernacular architecture as being a prime example of traditional architecture: "Characteristic traits include simple pitched roofs of thatch or metal sheeting, intimate outdoor areas such as verandas and pergolas, and well proportioned windows flanked by shutters that invite nature into the building."

Through the looking glass

"We tend to forget the impact windows have on our surrounding space – not only do they let light in, but they also provide our homes with security, connect indoor and outdoor spaces, provide protection from the elements, manage air flow, reduce noise levels, and make a style statement," explains Elouise. Whether you have a contemporary house with vast glass panels, or a more traditional

home with smaller, more intimate openings, it's important to carefully choose windows that suit your abode's particular architectural style so that there is an overall coherence between the various design elements.

"The windows used in modern architecture are usually large expanses of full pane glass that do away with vertical or horizontal window dividers, known as mullions, so as not to obstruct the view," says Elouise. She points out how architects specialising in this style often try to achieve a connection between the indoors and outdoors, and recommends using large fold-a-side doors or wide pivot doors to achieve this sense of flow. On the other hand, Elouise notes: "More traditional options, as seen in Cape Vernacular homes, would be Swartland's sliding sash or mock sash windows with accompanying shutters, to add to that homely and inviting feeling that older homes exude."

Whichever style you opt for, your wooden windows needn't be stuck in the dark ages with the troubles of installation and maintenance. Says Elouise: "Swartland's Ready-2-Fit range has really gone the extra mile for customers wanting beautiful wooden windows and doors without all the hassle. Swartland's Ready-2-Fit range of wooden windows and doors are professionally pre-sealed and pre-glazed before they leave the Swartland factory, so that when they arrive on the building site, they are ready to be installed with no further labour required to seal or glaze them. This not only saves the builder and homeowner time and money on installation costs, but it also ensures that the windows and doors are adequately protected against exposure to the elements. It also vastly increases the overall build quality – ensuring that the windows and doors are finished to Swartland's exacting standards and therefore, ensuring that any warranties are upheld."

Even more importantly however, says Elouise, it ensures that these products are compliant with all the standards and regulations required, which is a great benefit to both the architect, the builder and the homeowner: "Swartland continuously tests its products to ensure that they are compliant with the required National Building Regulations. In order to ensure that its windows and doors are compliant with the SANS 613 and 204 (Fenestration Products) Mechanical Performance Criteria, the Ready-2-Fit range of windows are tested for deflection, structural strength, water-resistance, air-tightness, operating forces, and the best possible energy efficiency. As a result, all Swartland's Ready-2-Fit windows have unique mechanical property class designations, from A1 to A4, assigned to them."

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