

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Fenestration trends for 2014**

*Fenestration plays a major part of the look and feel of any building. Cobus Lourens from leading wooden window and door manufacturer, Swartland, offers an overview on what is driving fenestration trends today.*

*09 August 2013, Johannesburg:* Fenestration is a fundamental element of architectural design – defining both the outside appearance of a building, as well as its interior atmosphere. Cobus Lourens from leading wooden window and door manufacturer, Swartland, says: “The style of your home will largely dictate the style of windows you choose to include. If it is a Victorian-style home for example, you will more than likely select wooden windows with a more traditional feel – such as sliding sash windows for example. For more contemporary homes, streamlined window frames, with a sleek, minimalist appearance would be more suitable. However, styles aside, fenestration design is being directed by a number of other market drivers.” He offers an overview on the hottest trends driving fenestration today:

#### **1.) Energy efficiency**

As the cost of electricity is increasingly on the rise, so are more and more homeowners looking for ways of improving the energy efficiency of their homes. Cobus notes that windows play an extremely important part of improving your home’s insulation: “Between 20% and 30% of a building’s heat loss and gain can occur through doors and windows. Choosing quality fenestration products, such as Swartland’s wooden windows and doors for example, can equate to great savings regarding your electricity bills over the long term, as well as being an environmentally responsible choice, and one that conforms to the current National Building Regulations.”

Swartland presently sets the benchmark with regards to energy efficiency in windows and doors, says Cobus: “Swartland is at the forefront of performance improvements in South Africa with regards to composite gaskets, double-glazing, and the use of water-based coatings on products. Not only are its windows and doors designed to offer the best insulation qualities currently on the market, but they are also manufactured from a very green and renewable material – wood. This ensures that Swartland’s windows and doors are an outstandingly environmentally-friendly choice, as well as being some of the most energy efficient on the market.”

In fact, a recent SAFIERA (South African Fenestration and Insulation Energy Rating Association) test confirms this, stating that Swartland’s double-glazed windows are one of the most energy efficient tested windows currently on the market in South Africa.

#### **2.) Green building regulations**

In November 2011, new building regulations were introduced in South Africa as part of the steps taken towards greater energy efficiency and energy usage in buildings. SANS 10400-XA relates to energy usage in buildings and it is mandatory by law, whilst SANS 204 relates to energy efficiency in buildings and is an international best practices standard that is intended to be phased into mandatory standards within the next 10 years.

Swartland's innovative Ready-2-Fit range of wooden windows and doors are compliant with the new building regulations, explains Cobus: "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, it ensures that these products are all fully compliant with all the National Building Regulations, as well as the Consumer Protection Act.

"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 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 values, from A1 to A4, assigned to them."

### **3.) Ease of maintenance**

Nobody wants to spend lots of time and effort maintaining their home's windows. Fenestration products that require minimum maintenance, while still offering an attractive aesthetic, are by far the most popular choice today. In the past, wooden windows required lots of maintenance, as they had to be sanded down regularly and re-sealed. However, with the introduction of water-based sealant, Cobus notes that this is a thing of the past: "Water-based coatings are by far the best option on the market for sealing wood – they are the easiest to maintain and apply, and they boast a wide range of other benefits too."

After extensive research, Swartland found that Maxicare water-based coatings, sourced from a top German manufacturer, offers the best protection, durability, and ease of maintenance currently on the market. Cobus lists the benefits of the Maxicare water-based wood sealant:

- It is eco-friendly.
- The coating offers increased flexibility.
- Excellent durability - if the wash-and-wipe maintenance programme is followed, there have been reported cases where this sealant has lasted for up to nine years in the harsh conditions of the Arizona desert no less!
- The sealant is fast-drying – making it not only easy, but quick to apply too.

- It is UV-resistant, non-flammable and lead-free.
- It is stain- and water-repellent.
- In the darker hues, it contains heat-reflecting pigments, which results in a lower surface temperature of the wood – thereby reducing movement in the substrate.
- To protect the wood against fungus and dry rot, it contains powerful anti-fungal agents.

#### **4.) An outdoor-indoor flow**

One of the easiest ways of opening up your home to the outdoors is by installing fold-a-side doors. Fold-a-side doors, such as those available from Swartland, are a kind of folding door that comprise various “sections” or hinged doors that can be opened and pushed aside so that they stack in a concertina-style on either one or two sides of the opening. The fact that they can be opened and neatly stacked away to the side makes them a great option for maximising the free-flow of space between the patio and the indoor living areas, and creating a feeling of openness that marries the two spaces.

Says Cobus: “Sunny days call for long, lazy lunches in the garden and late-night entertaining under the stars, and by installing fold-a side doors in your home, entertaining outside couldn’t be easier. Otherwise known as stacking or concertina doors, fold-a-side doors allow you to open the interior of your home to its outdoor surrounds – creating a seamless indoor-outdoor flow. Furthermore, their floor-to-ceiling composition will make the most of your home’s outdoor views and let in an abundance of natural light into your interior spaces.”

#### **5.) Maximising natural light**

Unlike days gone by, when windows were small and the interior of residential homes tended to be dark to keep them cool in the hot African climes, today – the more natural light that a home can let in, the better. Says Cobus: “There is no better form of illumination in any space than natural light – an interior awash with natural light looks bright, warm, inviting, and just generally more appealing than a dark interior. With the introduction of various forms of window glazing and other forms of insulation, it is possible to let the sun’s natural light stream into your home, while still remaining cool in summer and warm in winter.”

He says that fenestration is being used in a variety of interesting ways to ensure that natural light is maximised indoors: “There are any number of ways that windows can be included in the design of a home to maximise the influx of natural light – they can be stacked alongside or above one another, included in angled recesses, or custom-built to fit a particular space. The possibilities are really endless!”

#### **6.) Organic materials**

In line with the “green” trend, increasingly more homeowners are opting to use materials with an organic flavour to them in the design and manufacture of their home. Cobus explains: “Wood is currently experiencing a huge revival in the built environment. There are very few building materials that boast the environmental benefits of wood – compared to alternative building materials, the manufacturing of wooden building products produces less air and water pollution, requires less energy across their lifecycle, and generate less CO2 emissions. Simply put, wood is a fantastically green building material – it is a sustainable material that boasts low embodied energy and low carbon impact, it is durable and long-lasting, with great insulating qualities, and it is aesthetically beautiful to boot.”

He says that the concept of green building has become increasingly mainstream over the last few years as more and more consumer become aware of the benefits of choosing eco-friendly building options: “Green building pivots on choosing materials that reduce a building’s energy consumption and decreases the negative impact it makes on the environment. Apart from the long-term financial rewards inherent in making environmentally-friendly options – going green is also a good way of doing your bit for the environment.”

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