

PRESS RELEASE

Make an impact with mouldings

Interior mouldings and trim are no longer used to just cover up small defects. Today, they can also be used to highlight and complement the décor of any interior space, as well as adding architectural interest to plain walls and ceilings. Rendus Odendaal from leading manufacturer of windows, doors and mouldings, Swartland, offers an overview on all you need to know about mouldings and trim.

24 August 2016, Johannesburg: Have you ever felt like your home's interior décor was missing something, but you just can't put your finger on it? Well, then it's time to take a look at the use of interior mouldings and trim. Says Rendus Odendaal from leading window, door and moulding manufacturer, Swartland: "Interior mouldings and trim, such as those from Swartland's Col Timbers range, can be used to great effect to create design elements that instantly add a touch of sophistication to your home's interior."

The basic types

He says that before you get started, it is important to be able to differentiate between all the different types of mouldings and trim – these include:

- **The cornice:** Otherwise known as crown mouldings, cornices are used to fill the gap between the wall and the ceiling. It is one of the most commonly used mouldings, and the width of a cornice can vary, depending on the size of the room, the height of the ceiling and the grandeur of the décor.
- **The picture rail:** Running horizontally along the wall, parallel to the cornice, a picture rail should be installed at the same height as the top of the door. A narrow moulding, a picture rail was traditionally used to hang pictures from it using string and hooks – this way, the masonry wasn't disturbed by any nails or screws. Today, however, picture rails tend to be valued more for their decorative aesthetic than their traditional function.
- **The dado rail:** A dado rail is a moulding that is fixed horizontally along a wall about 75cm from the floor. Aesthetically, it divides the wall into two parts – the top and the bottom – which can be useful with regards to décor as you can decorate the two parts in two different, yet complimentary styles. Usually boasting a height of around 75cm, the dado rail was traditionally used to protect the wall from chairs and other furniture bumping into it.
- **The architrave:** This is essentially a moulded frame used to surround a doorway, window, arch or fireplace. Also known as casing, architraves can go a long way to dressing up a window or a door to truly complete the picture. A frame around your fireplace can turn it into a focal point of the room – here, architraves will be used to form the vertical sides of the surrounds, while a simple or dramatic horizontal mantle affords an area on which to display framed pictures or objets d'art.

- **The plinth block:** This is a decorative rectangular block of wood on which an architrave will stand on for added stability and good looks.
- **The skirting:** Also known as baseboards, skirtings are an essential moulding – they are installed where the wall meets the floor, and help protect the wall from scuffs caused by shoes, furniture, brooms or vacuum cleaners.

Sizes, profiles and materials

Mouldings and trims come in a wide variety of sizes and profiles – the choice of which is largely dependent on the style preferences of the homeowner. However, Rendus notes that the following rule of thumb can be used when making your selection: “The higher the ceiling and the bigger the room, the larger the mouldings and the more intricate their profiles should be. This is because large, ornate mouldings tend to add warmth and intimacy into an otherwise expansive space. For smaller rooms, it is better to use simplified profiles and narrower trim to create the illusion of added space, rather than emphasizing the compact outline of a room with oversized skirting boards or visually lowering the ceiling with heavily intricate cornices.”

Today, most mouldings come in 3m and 3,6m lengths, and they are available in a wide variety of materials, including moulded foams, plasters, plastics, and of course, wood. Rendus notes that different applications will require different materials, but when choosing, it is important to choose the very best material you can afford: “There is nothing more beautiful than genuine timber mouldings, which can be either painted or stained so that you can see the natural grain of the wood through. Alternatively, to bring down the cost, you can also use mouldings made from composite timber, such as medium density fibreboard, which is a lot less expensive, and especially suitable for mouldings and trim that will be painted.” He says that the benefits of timber mouldings, such as those from Swartland’s Col Timber range, includes the fact that they are far more durable and hard-wearing than other materials, the edging is always crisp and neat, and there is a very wide selection of profiles to choose from.

He notes that when choosing timber mouldings and trim, it is important to take note of who manufactures it: “Any manufacturer worth its salt, such as Swartland for example, will ensure colour consistency in their hardwood timber, which is essential if you have chosen to leave the wood exposed by simply varnishing or staining it. In addition, check to see the green credentials of the manufacturer – Swartland for example has sourced its hardwood from renewable sources and it upholds strict sustainability policies that help protect the environment. Also, to minimise natural movement, Swartland kiln-dries its wood to an 8% moisture content, which keeps it in perfect balance with atmospheric conditions.”

Tips and advice

Adding moulding and trim to your home’s interior has been around for centuries, however, in the past, it was included as a largely functional installation. Today,

the opposite is true – mouldings and trim are, for the most part, used for decoration. Here are a few design tips for those looking to install mouldings and trim in their home:

- **Symmetry:** Symmetry is a very important design aspect when installing mouldings and trim, notes Rendus: “The profile of the mouldings used in the house should all be either the same or very similar, and the colour of the mouldings should complement the general style of your home’s décor. This allows for a unified and visually pleasing finish.
- **Colour contrast:** Colour contrast between your walls and floor is key to a successful moulding or trim installation, notes Rendus: “For a visually appealing transition between your floor and walls, creating contrast using colour is important. Painted trim, particularly white due the increased demand for lighter, brighter interiors, has become very trendy in most new houses.”
- **Highlight part of a room:** A room’s main feature, such as a fireplace for example, can often be overlooked as it can be overshadowed by other design elements in the room. Rendus notes that mouldings can be used to make these kinds of features stand out a little more: “For example, dado rails can be used to ‘guide’ the eye towards the fireplace, which can in itself, be spruced up using architraves and plinth blocks.”
- **Accenting archways:** Archways and other forms of entrances can often seem a little plain. Rendus explains that by adding moulding, you can make them more visually appealing, turning them from something plain and unexciting, into a feature in their own right.
- **Create the illusion of space:** Adding interesting cornices to your room will make your guests look up at it – and this simple act will make the room appear larger than it actually is. “Creating the illusion of added height is a great trick for making a room seem larger than it actually is. This is particularly useful if you want to use a darker colour scheme, as darker colours tend to make a room feel smaller. Using lighter cornices to create vertical interest will offset this optical illusion.”

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