

LET THE SUN SHINE IN

Explore the latest window treatment options

by Marcia Weidner-Sutphen



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHADE TREE INTERIORS



As long as I can remember, I have always been on a budget, and I have always tried to do everything on my own, including decorating. Lately, though, I have had very little time to invest in any do-it-yourself home project, so I am more open to hiring someone else to do the work for me. Last year, I found a very reliable and affordable professional painter, and this year I'm looking forward to working with a professional landscaper, who is pretty handy with a hammer, too!

When I purchased my home in 2003, I knew that the sellers would be taking their living room curtains on move out day. That didn't leave me much time to figure out what to do with a large picture window, and because I'm a threat to myself with a tape measure, I asked a friend, who I knew was good with numbers, to install cheap plastic horizontal blinds in the most beautiful room in my house.

SEVEN YEARS IS TOO LONG TO LIVE WITH UGLY. I told myself that the blinds would be a temporary fix. Yeah, right. For several years now, I've put up with their broken slats and gaps along the top, middle and bottom. I even tried to Scotch tape them back together, but that didn't solve the problem. My two indoor cats – who regard the blinds as something in their way – haven't helped the situation either. Over the years, they've fought tooth and nail for windowsill space; they've tangled the cords and they've chewed on the slats in an effort to look out at the same time. So, I have decided to hire a professional, someone who comes highly recommended and who is trained in the art of window dressing, because I know that I cannot complete this project on my own.

KIM UPDEGRAFF, OWNER OF SHADE TREE INTERIORS, TO THE RESCUE! At first, I had mixed emotions about my free consultation with Kim. I had no grandiose window treatment ideas in mind, but what if she did? What if Kim, my

KIM'S DECORATING JOURNAL

Top five window treatment tips from Kim Updegraff, owner of Shade Tree Interiors:

EMBELLISHED ROMAN SHADES in any room provide simple elegance, form and function.

GO CUSTOM in rooms where you spend the most time.

To add height to a room, **RAISE WINDOW TREATMENTS** as high as possible above the window.

Instead of rods, use **DECORATIVE MEDALLIONS** for hanging valances and draperies.

MEASURE EVERY WINDOW even if they look identical. Any difference, even a quarter of an inch, can mean the difference between a properly fitting blind and a poorly fitting blind.

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LIVING IN STYLE



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHADE TREE INTERIORS

designer, suggested Roman shades or Venetian blinds, festoons, swags or Jabots? Honestly, I had heard of these window treatments, but I could not for the life of me describe them. Anyway, who was I trying to kid? I would not be able to afford her services or her swags. Let's face it: I was not prepared, emotionally or financially, to have my very own professional window fashion designer.

Or so I thought. When Kim arrived at my home I quickly learned that it was okay to stop my designer midsentence to ask, "What's a Jabot?" And that it was okay to be honest about my expectations and to let her know that my choices would probably be based on my budget. In the two hours we spent together, Kim listened to what I had to say about what I liked and didn't like for my living room window. She also assessed the room's décor to learn about my personal style and taste before she made her suggestions. It was the kind of treatment that made me feel that I was worth it. It was the kind of treatment my window deserved, too.

SO MANY SOLUTIONS, SO LITTLE TIME.. Kim ruled out glare and room darkening as my primary concerns. And since I had no upholstered furniture in front of the window she ruled out UV protection as well. Instead, she focused on solving two of my biggest problems: drafts and my two cats' penchant for jumping up on the sill to look outside.

Kim and I talked about honeycomb cellular shades, a popular product used for their practicality and energy-saving properties. We also talked about wood blinds — even though I didn't think I could afford them! After looking at the two product samples, I still could not make up my mind; I liked both of them.

At Shade Tree Interiors, a blind or shade for a 36-inch window typically costs anywhere from \$100 to \$500. According to Kim, it is the foundation or "functional"

aspect of all window coverings. The next level costs anywhere from \$300 to \$1,000; it features one layer of soft treatment including valances, cornices or panels. The third level, for multiple layers of soft treatments with decorative trimmings, will run a consumer \$1,000 or higher. Kim's prices include her two-hour consultation, measurements, product, installation and service after the sale.

MY WINDOW, MY CHOICE .. A Jabot or swag, one of the most expensive soft finishing touches or decorative treatments, is referred to as the "form." In my situation, it was decided that a foundation would work nicely and serve both purposes.

I liked the cellular shades for several reasons. They had a soft uniform look without any visible slats or strings. Also, with their top down/bottom up option, I would be able to lower or raise the shade with just the touch of my hand. Also, Kim said that they would provide a diffused light in the room, in addition to being slightly more energy efficient than the wood blinds.

Kim suggested that the cellulars be mounted flush with the trim and be kept in the down position at night so the cats would be unable to jump up on the sill. In the morning, I could raise the shades for the cats so that they could look out.

I TOLD MYSELF THAT THE BLINDS WOULD BE A TEMPORARY FIX. YEAH, RIGHT. FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, I'VE PUT UP WITH THEIR BROKEN SLATS AND GAPS ALONG THE TOP, MIDDLE AND BOTTOM.

After my final selections were made, Kim e-mailed me a complete and accurate invoice. Much to my surprise, the two treatments fit nicely in my price range. Now all I had to do was pick one. As I contemplated my choices, I could hear Kim's reassuring voice saying whatever choice I made, it would be the right one, and that I'm worth it.

"People work harder and are more stressed than they ever have been," Kim says. "What better way to reward yourself than having a beautifully designed home that you come to after a long day."

I couldn't have said it better, and even though I thought I would get the wood blinds if I could afford them, the cellulars won me over.

For more window treatment options, please call 610.777.7288 or visit ShadeTreeInteriors.com.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STAFF AT SHADE TREE INTERIORS?

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LIVING IN STYLE



FABULOUS
OPTIONS
IN WINDOWS & DOORS

Before you hire your very own decorator and order those custom-made window treatments, it's a good idea to take a close look at your windows, because you might want to think about upgrading them, too.

This job is best left in the hands of a professional. "Homeowners replace windows and doors for different reasons," says Joni A. Dennis, vice president of marketing at DeLuxe Window & Door, West Lawn. "For some it's for the aesthetics, and for others it's for the energy-saving qualities."

The Dennis family has been in the business of window and door replacement for 61 years. "We listen to what is important to our customers and help them decide what is best for their home and budget," explains Joni, who is joint owner with her brothers, Michael J. Dennis, vice president of sales, and Harry M. Dennis, Jr., vice president of accounting.

For instance, DeLuxe will recommend packages that are designed to provide the precise level of comfort, thermal performance, security, sound deadening and UV protection.

They measure and haul away a customer's pre-existing window and install a custom-made window made specifically to fit the opening. For example, if a window opening is 36" wide, DeLuxe will have the

replacement made 35 7/8" wide for the tightest fit possible. They also insulate and caulk around the perimeter to ensure maximum energy savings.

For increased security, DeLuxe offers burglar and noise-resistant glass that is 78 percent more energy efficient than regular insulating glass. "It also reduces UV radiation by 99 percent, which helps protect furniture, carpeting and artwork," says Joni.

Popular decorative features include wood-grain laminates, two-tone color options, internal grids, grooved glass and internal mini-blinds.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DELUXE WINDOW & DOOR

Custom windows can range in price anywhere from as low as \$185 to as high as \$1,500 per window.

A new front entrance and maybe a patio door, too – custom ordered to complement your new windows and curtains – would be icing on the cake.

For more window and door options stop by DeLuxe Window & Door located at 2101 Penn Ave., West Lawn, or give them a call at 610.678.2654. You can also check them out on the web at deluxefamily.com.

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