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THE ASID ARIZONA NORTH CHAPTER

WINTER 2008/09

"Designed and fabricated by Ravi Design, Vancouver, BC. "The light quality in this side of the home was so beautiful, it inspired us to create window coverings that not only retain that beauty but somehow change it, experimenting with fracturing, filtering, bending and dispersing light. Covering windows without sacrificing light quality." – Ravi Pankhania

# BECOMING "LIGHT-MINDED"

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Window Treatments have a tremendous impact on the décor and mood of a home. It is important to understand the many decisions that need to take place to create the perfect window treatment. One must think about fit and function, privacy and view (to enhance a beautiful view or hide an unsightly one), light control, and of course, the beauty of the treatment and the impact it has on the overall design of the home.

Here in Arizona, when it comes time to make a decision on how to treat a window, light control is one of the considerations that is foremost on our minds. Unfiltered sunlight can do much damage to fabric, carpeting, furnishings and artwork. And yet sunlight, or lack thereof, can greatly affect our mood as well as our health. The challenge, then, is to consider how each room will be used, as well as the needs and lifestyle of the client, in order to find the right window treatment for each situation.

There are many window treatment options available for light control. Some include window tinting, roller shades and awnings for the outside of the home, as well as shutters, blinds, shades and draperies for the inside of the home. Since my area of expertise lies in soft window coverings, I'd like to offer a few suggestions to help achieve the right amount of light control for each room when a soft treatment is specified.

## Location

Consider the location of the window in the room. The light and heat coming in east and west facing windows can be quite intense compared to north facing windows. Choosing an insulating lining for your west windows, for example, will greatly reduce harmful UV rays. The lin-

ing/interlining should be a decision made carefully. (See next point). Also, consider where you would like the drapery, shade or valance installed. Your client may not want any of their view obstructed. Make sure there is enough room for the drapery or shade to stack off the window.

## Lining

There are many types of linings available and it's very important to choose the right one for the job. I recommend choosing high quality linings because it offers the best protection of the face fabric from the damaging effects of the sun, as well as improves the drape and body of the fabric. Lining options range from light filtering to dim-out to black-out. Adding interlining (a flannel fabric sandwiched between the face fabric and lining) will provide more insulation and dimming qualities but it does not make the treatment a total black-out treatment.

Always check how your face fabric and lining/interlining will look together by hanging a sample in the client's window on a sunny day. Ask your workroom for samples of their stock linings. At The Elegant Window, we offer large lining samples to our designers, which are surged around the edges. A grommet is placed in the corner so all the lining samples can be held together by a ring. Then, when a lining and/or interlining is chosen, it can be taken off the ring and layered with the face fabric in the client's window. I suggest using a skirt hanger to hold the lining and face fabric together which makes it easier to hold it up to the window.

Why is it important to check the lining and interlining with the face fabric? When the sun comes in the window, the lining/interlining can change the color of the face fabric, especially if the face fabric has a light colored background. For example: If your face fabric



has an ivory background and an ivory lining and natural interlining is chosen, the face fabric will look yellow when the sun comes through. In this case, you would need to choose white lining and interlining.

Black-out lining is used for many reasons: it offers complete light control, prevents light bleed-through which can wash out or change the colors of the face fabric and it eliminates shadowing, especially important on valances. Using black-out lining in a theatre room or a bedroom is a great option. If you are designing draperies and want them to be completely room darkening, you will have them lined with black-out lining but you must also plan to have a board mounted valance or a cornice to block the light that will sneak in above the drapery. You should specify generous overlaps and be sure the drapery extends beyond the window and to the floor so light won't sneak in.

French black-out is another great option for room darkening window treatments. With this method, four layers are used in one treatment. First you have the face fabric, then interlining, then black lining, then your regular lining. This offers a very high end and luxurious look to your draperies. Also, the more layers used in the window treatment, the more it will improve the windows "R-Value" (the ability of a product to keep the heat and cold out) and reduce Solar Heat Gain (SHG = the amount of heat that passes through a window).

If using black out lining on roman shades, you need to inform your client that pin holes of light may be seen where the rings are stitched on. To minimize this, use interlining in-between the face fabric and the lining, or try using

the new Apollo black out lining (well, it's nearly complete blackout). It's soft and very forgiving of those little pin holes.

Roman shades lined in blackout lining can be completely room darkening if they are outside mounted and reverse mounted, meaning the shade comes off the back of the board instead of off the front. If done this way, the shade lays flat against the wall on either side of the window and blocks the light. Hobbled roman shades can also provide complete blackout if they are outside mount and reverse mount and if they are made using the flat back method. Whenever a reverse mount shade is specified, a small valance is also needed to hide the lifting mechanism.

Though valances are purely decorative and not used for light control, I prefer to line valances in blackout lining to prevent shadowing at the hemline and pleat areas. If a facing or "decking" is used on the back of the valance near the hemline, the shadow resulting from this can be quite distracting.

Another reason to use blackout lining is if your fabric has a woven motif on the face and the back has many threads running across the width. If you use regular lining with these types of fabrics, you'll see shadows from all the threads. Embroidered silk has the same issue – threads on the back of the fabric can be seen when the fabric is hung in front of a window.



Designed by Alisha Newman of IBD Studio, Queen Creek, AZ; Fabricated by The Elegant Window – This operable drapery is interlined and blackout lined to help control the intense sunlight that comes through the window. The valance is also blackout lined.

## Sheers

Sheer window coverings are used to diffuse light and give a softer look, but do not provide privacy at night. Sheer and semi-sheer fabric used in contemporary settings is a trend we're seeing right now in window coverings. For example, sheer roman, tucked roman or relaxed roman shades are very popular. When using sheer fabrics for shades, be sure your workroom uses clear rings and clear ribs, and uses cords that closely match or blend with the face fabric. These necessary items will become practically invisible.

Sheer Ripplefold draperies have a very contemporary look as well. This style of drapery also stacks back in a minimal amount of space so your client will still be able to enjoy the view. When choosing a colored sheer fabric, take a large memo sample to the client's home, scrunch it up a bit and then check the color in front of the window. The color is darker when fullness is factored in and you want to be sure your client understands this.

## Layering

Layering your window treatments, which is also a popular design trend right now, may be a great solution. Layering consists of a sheer layer, a black-out layer and a decorative layer. The black-out layer could be a drapery or a shade. When designing a layered treatment, you are truly giving your client every option – light diffusing with the sheer, room darkening with the blackout lining and the decorative layer as the finishing touch.

## Motorization

Motorization is the perfect solution for window coverings on hard-to-reach windows as well as very large windows that would be heavy and difficult to open and close each day in order to filter or block out the sunlight. Motorized window coverings can be programmed to open and close at certain times each day which helps manage heat gain in summer months and heat loss during the winter.

Designing the perfect window treatment with your client's needs in mind does indeed take careful thought and planning. Keeping light control in mind, or becoming "light-minded", will allow your client to more fully enjoy the beauty, functionality and comfort of their home.