

PRESS RELEASE

Design is in the detail

Virtually any home can be enhanced by the inclusion of architectural detailing achieved through the installation of decorative mouldings. Dylan Miller from Swartland, a leading manufacture of wooden windows and doors, and the Col Timbers range of decorative mouldings, offers some insight into how mouldings can add character and style to any space they grace.

26 June 2014, Johannesburg: Decorative mouldings can be used to great effect to create a sense of grandeur or simply to add a subtle decorative touch to any home. Says Dylan Miller from Swartland, a leading manufacturer of wooden windows and doors, and the Col Timbers range of decorative mouldings: “The impact that well chosen and professionally installed mouldings can have on a space is often underestimated – if well executed, they can really transform a space from mundane and boring, into a truly finished space that exudes elegance and class.”

He says that today, decorative mouldings are made from a variety of materials, including Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) and polystyrene, but that the best quality ones are made from genuine solid wood. Says Dylan: “Solid timber decorative mouldings may be on the upper end of the price spectrum, but they are the best quality that you can get, which will ensure their longevity and supreme good looks.”

Genuine hardwood is a must if you want to stain or varnish the wood so that you see the natural grain through. “Hardwood mouldings is great for a pure warm timber finish for a classic look. They offer longevity of use due to the inherent density of timber, and Swartland’s hardwood mouldings also offer colour consistency for an overall streamlined effect,” explains Dylan.

If, however, you intend to paint the mouldings with a solid colour, then he says that the more affordable solid Pine timber mouldings are a better choice, as they are less expensive and you can’t tell the difference once they are painted: “Pine is ideal for a paint finish, as the opaque colour will inevitably hide the knots in the wood.”

Different types of mouldings

Dylan offers an overview on the most common types of standard mouldings:

- **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 another incredibly popular 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.

Things to consider

When investing in timber mouldings, Dylan offers his following top tips on things that should be considered:

- **How is the wood dried:** To minimise natural movement, Swartland kilndries all the wood used for its Col Timbers range of wooden mouldings so that it has an 8% moisture content. This is directly aligned with our local climes, and ensures that the timber remains within perfect balance with atmospheric conditions to guarantee the perfect combination of performance and craftsmanship.
- **Decide on a complimentary style:** It is imperative that the style of the mouldings you choose complement the architectural and décor style of your home. For example, Col Timbers' range of premium mouldings complement both Victorian or modern styles. The range comprises classic profiles that will suit more traditional homes. Alternatively, you can choose super simple profiles for more contemporary homes.
- **Combine mouldings for added drama:** You can make impressive trim features by combining various moulding profiles. Combine smaller mouldings to create larger, more imposing profiles – this allows for endless possibilities for customisation, and smaller mouldings have the added benefit of being easier to work with as they are easier to cut and allow for more flexibility on irregular walls. The easiest way to add your personal touch and value to your home is by replacing your skirtings – try increasing the height of the moulding from the 44mm to 140mm or

220mm in a style of your choice to give your home a more luxurious and glamorous look and feel.

- **Examine mouldings before you buy them:** Mouldings can vary dramatically with regards to aesthetics and quality, so it imperative that you examine them closely when selecting them. If you intend on staining the mouldings so that you see the natural grain of the timber, be sure to ensure that the mouldings you choose have a similar grain pattern, and that the wood is a similar tone. Swartland's hardwood mouldings for example boast colour and grain consistency for an even aesthetic throughout.
- **For DIY installation:** There are two very useful tools if you are installing your own mouldings. The first is Miter clamps, which are special clamps that will hold mouldings in place until the glue dries. These handy little clamps are basically bent spring steel the sharp points that grab the mouldings and squeeze them together. They are perfect for holding small pieces of mitered moulding together while the glue dries and for clamping cornices while you pin them together. Micro pinner are the other incredibly useful tool – it is a finish nail gun that shoots super thin pins. The small diameter of the pins leave smaller holes than traditional nails and are almost invisible after you fill them. Plus, the tiny pins allow you to nail very small parts without splitting the mouldings like thicker nails would do.
- **Always buy a little more than you need:** Moulding is usually sold in standard 3m and 3,6m lengths. Before you buy any moulding, it is important to carefully measure the area in question and determine the perfect lengths you will need in order to minimise waste. However, add on a little extra to take into consideration the wastage caused by joints and miter corner cuts.
- **Treat the mouldings before installation:** You will save lots of time and effort if you prime, stain or paint the strips of moulding after cutting them to size and before you install them. Be sure to paint both the top and bottom sides of the mouldings in order to prevent warping, and let it dry thoroughly before installing. Once installed, you will probably have to do some touch-ups, but the majority of work will be done.
- **Measure twice and cut once:** Measure the walls carefully, mark the proper length on the moulding, then measure the wall again, and measure the moulding profiles again – and only then, cut the moulding with the proper miter angle.
- **Fill in the gaps:** For a truly polished finish, be sure to fill in all the small gaps between mouldings and the wall with filler. Use a wood filler compound to fill any indentations made in the surface of the mouldings by nails, between the different lengths of moulding, and between the floor and the mouldings. Wait for the various fillers to dry, sand down until smooth and seal with your choice of sealant.

ENDS

Released on behalf of Swartland (www.swartlandco.za) by The Line (www.theline.co.za, ant@theline.co.za).

