

PRESS RELEASE

Pushed to the side

Fold-a-side doors are very sought after amongst homeowners, architects and renovators alike. Cobus Lourens from South Africa's leading window and door manufacturer, Swartland, offers some insight and advice on what to look for when investing in these gorgeous doors.

25 May 2016, Johannesburg: The fold-a-side door has become a stylish must-have addition to many well-dressed homes around the globe. They amalgamate high performance with good looks, and offer homeowners a range of other benefits to boot. Says Cobus Lourens from South Africa's leading window and door manufacturer, Swartland: "Sliding doors or French windows only open up partially to the outdoors, however, thanks to their concertina design, fold-a-side doors can open up a space entirely to the outside – easily transforming from a wall of glazing to a wall of well... nothing... to create a seamless flow from the indoors to the outside."

He says that it is this particular quality that makes these doors such a popular addition: "Being able to open up completely to the outdoors allows a home's exterior space function as an additional living space. Even when closed, they offer an expansive view to the outdoors, pulling in tons of light, thanks to their floor-to-ceiling glazing, and since the eye is immediately drawn outside beyond the walls of the home, they tend to make the indoor space in question seem much bigger than it actually is. The rule of thumb is that the cleaner and wider the view to the outdoors, the bigger the indoor space will appear."

Cobus notes that there are many other benefits to fold-a-side doors: "You can use fold-a-side doors to open up a section of a wall to the outdoors, or they can be used to open up the entire expanse of the wall. They can even be installed in a corner formation, where two sets of doors meet in a corner. Not only does this create the illusion of added space, and increase the natural light flow in a space, but installing one of these doors can also save time when building as they are quick and easy to install."

When choosing your fold-a-side doors, Cobus says you should consider the following:

Effortless functionality: Fold-a-side doors require a solid rolling system to help them operate easily and smoothly. The doors should be perfectly weighted and balanced, facilitating an effortless opening and closing action.

Frame power: Stacking doors should come fully assembled in a frame, ready to be installed (glass excluded). It is crucial to check the frame – it should be thick enough to ensure stability, but thin enough for a slick and contemporary aesthetic. Swartland's Fold-a-Side Doors for example boast a 90mm x 70mm frame for added strength. The frame should also boast adjustable doorframe

stiles to accommodate the inevitable movement of the wood, thereby minimising the wood's standard swelling and shrinkage action.

Consider a slim fit: For more contemporary settings, Swartland's Fold-Side Slim Fit Doors have been designed to easily replace any existing sliding doors, with a minimum of effort. These new 611mm x 2 032mm size doors come in 3-door and 5-door configurations.

Standard or custom-made: You can either opt for off-the-shelf fold-a-side doors in standard sizes, or if the aperture in which you want to install them is very large or boasts an unusual measurement, you can choose to have custom-made to fit your particular requirements. Swartland's Fold-a-Side Doors for example, come in a wide range of configuration and sizes – they are available in 813mm door widths, and come in 3-door, 4-door, 5-door and 6-door configurations.

Check out the hardware: Have a good look at the tracks, locks and bolts that come standard with these doors. Swartland's Fold-a-Side Doors for example, boast only the highest quality brass hardware, cylinder locks and bolts for optimum security and longevity.

Signed and sealed: Because fold-a-side doors are much larger than standard doors and windows, they are more susceptible to the effects of wind and rain. As such, they need to be designed to withstand high levels of wind pressure, as well as vibrations caused by noise and air movement. As such, it is imperative that they are well sealed. The bottom of the door and the sill of Swartland's Fold-a-Side Doors for example, are sealed with waterproof PVA. These doors also boast rubber seals for exceptional insulation – maintaining the desired temperature indoors, and keeping the wind and the cold out when necessary.

Made for South African conditions: Good quality wooden stacking doors should be made from kiln-dried timber, as it allows the moisture content to be controlled more easily than if timber is air-dried. It also helps to maintain the properties of the timber within various climatic conditions. The ideal moisture content for the South African climate is timber with a moisture content of 8% - to achieve perfect results, Swartland kiln-dries all its wood in its own kilns.

Choose a green material: Timber is a great choice of material for fold-a-side doors – it offers the natural beauty of a living material, it boasts excellent longevity if properly maintained, and it is a great thermal insulator. Furthermore, if the timber is sourced from strictly monitored sources, such as the hard wood used by Swartland, it is also deemed as a renewable resource and offers excellent environmentally friendly credentials.

Check out the guarantee: Find out what kind of guarantee the doors come with. For example, Swartland's Fold-a-Side Doors are available in its Cape Culture range, which come with a 10-year guarantee, and in its Winsters range, which come with a 5-year guarantee.

Use a professional: Fold-a-side doors are an investment, and it is crucial that they are installed correctly for their correct operation, as well as to ensure a professional end result aesthetically. As such, it is highly advisable to hire a professional to install the doors for you. Swartland also offers its customers access to a full service back-up team comprising specially trained and highly qualified artisans to help you with anything you may need assistance with.

Save time and money: Why not choose fold-a-side doors that are pre-glazed and pre-sealed – Swartland's Ready-2-Fit range of fold-a-side doors are professionally sealed and glazed before they leave the 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 time and money on installation costs, but it also ensures that they are adequately protected, and that all warranties are upheld.

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Released on behalf of Swartland Wooden Windows and Doors (www.swartland.co.za), by The Line (www.theline.co.za, ant@theline.co.za).