

PRESS RELEASE

Windows buyers guide

Windows are a big investment, so it is important to ensure that you make the best purchase decision for your home and your needs. Cobus Lourens from leading window and door manufacturer, Swartland, offers some advice for those in the market for windows for their home.

30 May 2018, Johannesburg: Whether you are involved in a new build, a renovation project, or you just want to update your home's windows, you are looking at a sizeable cost. It is therefore essential to do some research in order to ensure that you choose the best windows for your budget, your home and your lifestyle requirements.

Says Cobus Lourens from leading window and door manufacturer, Swartland: "Installing high-end windows is a costly exercise, however, if chosen wisely and ensuring that they are well maintained, they will last for many years, improve the aesthetics of your home's interior and exterior appeal, enhance the comfort and value of your home, and if they are energy efficient, they can even save you money on your utility bills." Here are his top considerations that you need to research when investing in new windows:

Window styles

Cobus says that there are six major window styles to choose from, including:

1. **Top hung windows:** Also known as awning windows, top hung windows are hinged at the top of the frame, while the bottom of the window opens by swinging outwards. When open, the glass pane slopes downwards and can be left open when it rains, which is great for ventilation.
2. **The sliding sash window:** Sliding sash windows feature two movable panels, or sashes, which slide vertically to open and close the window, but they remain inside the frame so they don't protrude out to the exterior or interior of the house. When positioning the two sliding sashes in the centre of the frame, one creates equal openings at the top and bottom giving the best cross-flow ventilation of any window.
3. **The mock sliding sash window:** Mock Sash Windows open in the same way as normal top-hung awning windows, but when closed, they offer the same visual appeal as traditional sliding sash windows, but they come in at a much lower price point.
4. **Full pane window:** Full pane windows offer minimal obstruction to any outdoor views. They come in a variety of configurations, from single- to double-, and triple-pane formats, but all of them boast large panes, with slender frames. These windows are mainly side hung, except if there is a small top opener, which will be top-hung.
5. **Horizontal gliding windows:** These windows boast large panes or sashes, which slide open horizontally for maximum ventilation and minimal obstruction of any views.

- 6. Small pane windows:** Otherwise known as cottage pane windows, small pane windows boast a multi-pane window format where each sash is usually divided into two columns and five rows of glazing. For the most part, these windows are side-hung, and come in single, double, three and four sash formats. However, they can be easily made up to fit any space required.

Energy efficiency

Choosing the most energy efficient windows can end up saving you a small fortune over the long-terms, explains Cobus: “Windows are the thinnest point between the interior and exterior of your home. This is why it is so important to choose energy efficient windows, such as those from Swartland, for your home.”

However, aside from the obvious financial benefit, installing energy efficient windows is a legal necessity says Cobus: “In South Africa, the SANS 10400 National Building Regulations have been amended in the form of the XA appendices, in order to further enforce and regulate energy efficient practices in the built environment, with the long-term benefit of reducing overall energy consumption and CO2 emissions. By law, the windows you choose must be SANS 10400-XA-compliant, as a new build without compliant windows will not pass the building regulations and will be deemed unfit and hence, illegal.”

Swartland continuously tests its products to ensure that they are compliant with the National Building Regulations, explains Cobus: “All Swartland’s windows are SANS 613 certified and compliant. They have all been tested for deflection, structural strength, water-resistance, air-tightness, operating forces, and the best possible energy efficiency.”

There is a lot of jargon involved in fenestration and energy efficiency, however, there are two terms that you will hear over and over again, which will help you make a good decision – these are R-values and U-values. Cobus offers a simple explanation for both:

- **R-value** measures a window’s resistance to heat flow – as such, the higher the R-value, the better.
- **U-value** measure how well the window prevents heat from escaping a building. The lower the U-value the more efficient the window.

Material

It is imperative to look at what the window frame is made from, says Cobus: “There are a variety of materials currently on the market, including vinyl, steel, aluminium and wood. Each material boasts its own set of positive and negative aspects, but the two most popular materials for energy efficient window frames are without a doubt wood and aluminium.” Here is Cobus’ roundup of the pros and cons of each of these materials:

- **Timber windows**, such as Swartland’s timber window frames for example, offer the best insulative value and the highest cradle-to-grave

environmentally friendly credentials. The rich and warm aesthetics of timber also makes them visually very attractive. However, they also require comparatively a little more upkeep than other materials.

- **Aluminium windows**, such as Swartland's KENZO range for example, may not be the top performing material in terms of heat transfer and loss, however with slight adjustments in your glass choice, you can still create a good energy-saving window. Aluminium is a very strong material that requires hardly no maintenance at all. Also, since aluminium is so strong, you can make window frames with exceptionally thin profiles, allowing for maximum glazing and views to the outdoors.

Chose a trusted brand

As with any purchase, it is important to select a brand that has a long and proven track record of manufacturing top quality products and offering good after-sales service, notes Cobus: "Choosing a trusted brand offers consumers peace of mind that they are investing in a quality product, and that they can count on the guarantee that is provided. Swartland has been in the business of manufacturing windows and doors for over 67 years, and it has built up its reputation by continuously providing quality products that set the benchmark with regards to quality, aesthetics, energy efficiency and price."

Buying from a fly-by-nighter might save you a bit of money in the short-term, but it can cost you dearly in the long-term. Cobus says that the proof of the pudding really lies in the manufacturer's guarantee and willingness to go the extra mile: "To test the dedication and long-term ethics of a brand, it is a good idea to look at what kind of guarantee that they offer on their products. Swartland for example, offers an impressive 10-year warranty on its Cape Culture Collection of wooden windows and doors! In fact, Swartland is so committed to ensuring good service and product selection that it offers in-house architectural support in all areas to be of service to homeowners and architects, thereby ensuring and advising on best practices in order to avoid any problems."

ENDS

Released on behalf of Swartland (www.swartland.co.za) by The Line (www.theline.co.za).