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WINDOW COVERINGS FOR CONDOS



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ONE FACE FOR THE WORLD, ANOTHER FACE FOR HOME

Roman shades have the advantage of offering one color to face the outside and another to face the inside, so they are a good, elegant solution. They are usually constructed of fabric, but woven wood, bamboo and other natural materials can be used. They combine the upscale look of a fabric window treatment with the easy operation of a shade. Options include insulation, blackout, flat or looped folds, trims, valances and bottom-up, top-down raising. \$75-\$350



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Despite restriction on color, options abound

BY CAROLYN PATTEN
Special to The Oregonian

Across the country, condos display a huge variety of architectural styles, from sleek modern towers in Portland's South Waterfront to single-story, freestanding ramblers in Savannah, Ga. What they all have in common, though, is a detail those new to condo living may not have considered.

Because the outside of the condo is considered "common area," the condo rules dictate appearance, including what kinds of window coverings owners can install. The overriding concern is that the windows look uniform from the outside. What this means in practical terms varies only slightly from condo to condo. Blinds, draperies, Roman shades and shutters have to present a uniform face to the outside, with a palette limited to white, off-white, light beige, light gray.

Working within this restriction may seem limiting, but there are really a lot of options. The most important thing to remember is to check with your condo association's rules to see the specifics, and then shop accordingly.

WHAT YOU SEE OUTSIDE IS WHAT YOU GET INSIDE

Solar shades, mini-blinds, vertical blinds, cellular/honeycomb shades, pleated shades, plantation shutters, sheer blinds and wood or faux wood blinds are all possibilities with one downside: They are the same color on both sides, so the white, off-white or light gray you choose for the outside will also be what you see on the inside.

Here's a rundown on the different types, with basic prices for covering a single, 26-by-36-inch window, going from the least to most expensive:

Vertical blinds are the traditional choice for sliding patio doors and large windows. They are even more dated than mini-blinds but relatively affordable solutions for large windows and doors. Options include plain or textured vinyl, fabric, faux wood and valances. \$60-\$350

Pleated shades, also called pleated blinds, look like cellular shades at first glance, but are simple fabric shades. They are generally not completely opaque, so silhouettes can be seen from the street. Options include cordless operation and bottom-up, top-down raising. \$75-\$170

Solar shades, or solar screens, are a type of roller shade and come in a range of screen openness factors, allowing you to choose the degree of light filtration. A good choice for rooms with views, they reduce glare and improve energy efficiency by limiting solar heat gain. Options include texture, valances, cordless operation and remote control. \$64-\$125

Wood and faux wood blinds have a casual appearance that works with more relaxed furniture styles. Options include rounded corners, cloth tapes, valances, cordless operation and remote control. \$85-\$230

Sheer blinds, also called sheer shades, have a refined, elegant appearance. They feature a light filtering material between hanging fabric or vinyl vanes. When the vanes are closed, light and views are blocked. With the vanes open, light is filtered through sheer fabric. Options include levels of light filtering, fabrics and remote operation. \$300-\$800

Cellular/honeycomb shades combine good insulation, crisp appearance and various degrees of light control. Options include textures, valances and bottom-up, top-down raising. \$90-\$200

Plantation shutters, also known as inther window shutters, are the ultimate in custom window coverings, and a good visual match with most decorating styles. Composite wood and vinyl are more durable than traditional wood shutters. Options are usually limited to the number of panels, the frame and the type of tilting mechanism. \$200-\$250



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RESOURCES

Blinds and other window coverings are available at a multitude of stores, from big-box chains to blind specialty shops.

Bed Bath & Beyond
Stores in Beaverton, Portland, Tigard and Hillsboro
800-462-3966
bedbathandbeyond.com

Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft
Stores in Portland, Milwaukie, Beaverton, Hillsboro, Gresham, Oregon City, Tigard and Vancouver
888-739-4120
joann.com

Pottery Barn
310 N.W. 23rd Ave.;
503-525-0280
and 8619 S.W.
Washington Square
Road, Tigard;
503-443-1159
potterybarn.com

ONLINE

Country Curtains
800-957-1237
countrycurtains.com

The Curtain Rod Shop
877-245-4724
thecurtainrodshop.com

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