

ELLE DECOR

DREAM
CLOSETS!

A WORLD of STYLE

DAZZLING HOMES
in PARIS, LONDON, MADRID,
and BEYOND

WINDOWS: CLEAR CUT

For Susan Marvin of Marvin Windows and Doors, a great window is an open-and-shut case



Marvin windows in a room designed by Pietro Cicognani and Ann Kalla.

Q: Last year, President Obama cited the decision you and your family made to avoid layoffs in tough times—the same decision made by your grandfather George G. Marvin, who founded Marvin Windows and Doors in Warroad, Minnesota, in 1912. Has this been tough?

A: It's certainly been challenging, but we're pulling through. We make a high-end product that requires skilled craftsmanship, so losing experienced employees could affect quality. Employees are our most valuable asset.

Q: What trends are you seeing in windows?

A: Advances in glass and framing techniques allow us to build large windows and glass walls that are very energy efficient. It's increasingly common to see casement or double-hung windows that measure 8 feet by 3 feet, or a 6-foot-square picture window. We also offer a lift-and-slide door that comes in sizes as large as 12 feet tall and 60 feet wide, which provides truly sweeping views. Windows are becoming more and more energy efficient. Fiberglass frames are also a growing trend.

Q: What advice do you have for homeowners shopping for windows?

A: Talk to established independent dealers in your community. They are millwork specialists. They get a lot of training from the manufacturers.

Q: What's preferable: double- or triple-glazed?

A: It depends upon the project. Double-paned windows filled with argon gas are Energy Star-certified and suitable for all climates. Triple-paned windows with argon or even krypton gas provide even greater efficiency.

Q: What if you love your old windows?

A: Unless your window is an actual antique—say, from the 19th century—then you're simply losing too much in energy efficiency and comfort to make it worthwhile to keep them. You can replace those old windows you love with new ones that have the same look.

SHUTTER ISLAND

Hunter Douglas's Palm Beach shutters are ringers for traditional painted ones, but their matte finish is virtually maintenance free. They're also nontoxic and eco-friendly, and they deter mold and mildew even in humid climates. They come in hundreds of configurations, including ones for bay windows, French doors, and track systems. Palm Beach shutters, right; hunterdouglas.com.



MADE IN THE SHADE

Everyone loves a skylight—except on days when the noontime sun bakes the room to a crisp. Velux has the perfect solution: a collection of blinds designed specifically for skylights. The range includes 85 colors and patterns, including blackout shades and designs by Karim Rashid. Velux blinds, left; veluxusa.com.

WHAT THE PROS KNOW

Whether modern or classic, a well-crafted window is the perfect marriage of form and function



ANNE FAIRFAX / ARCHITECT

"You can find a low-priced window that suits your purpose beautifully. I installed Brosco double-hung windows on the protected side of my Greenwich Village house. They are true multipane windows, single glazed, with storms, and they cost one-tenth the price of custom-made. With a good paint job, they're still holding up after 10 years of use." Brosco windows, left; broscowindows.com.



MICHAEL G. IMBER / ARCHITECT

"Asselin is an attractive, traditional window—made by the same company that restored Versailles. These oak-framed windows bring the beauty of Europe into your home, with their fine French craftsmanship and hardware. You can feel it in their weight and function. You get a lot more window for not much more money." Asselin windows, left; asselinusa.com.



PETER STAMBERG / ARCHITECT

"Fleetwood windows have an elegantly thin profile that meets hurricane codes. I chose them for my house on Shelter Island, New York. It's only been two years, but a few hurricanes have rolled through since the house was completed and the windows are as tight as a drum." Fleetwood Norwood Multi-Slide/Pocket Door sliding doors, left; fleetwoodusa.net.



TIM BARBER / ARCHITECT

"I have a love affair with steel windows. They're strong and durable, and they allow more glass than wood frames. I used them in a recent restoration of a Hollywood landmark. I add pull-down copper screens to keep the view clear." Steel windows and doors from E Fabrication, left; 310-562-3573.

BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH