

world of window treatments

By Jena Tesse Fox

HA+D gets the lowdown on the art of framing windows for hospitality spaces. The trick is all in the balance between form, function, style and substance.



1. Solarweave

Pictured here is the private label of roller shades that Total Window manufactures under the trade name Solarweave Collection at the Delano Hotel in Miami Beach.

www.totalwindow.com

A WINDOW can make or break a hotel room, filling it with light and forming a frame for the city beyond. But what goes around that window is just as important as the light and the view, and a good window treatment is a vital part of a hotel experience.

There are plenty of factors to consider when selecting window treatments for a hotel, says Jesse Stolow of Total Window, Inc., including space, budget and even location. "If we're doing something outside, weather and wind are issues," Stolow says. When working on an outdoor installation at Treasure Point Resort's clubhouse in Puerto Rico, Stolow and his team had to pick fabrics that were weather-resistant. "You can't use silk outside, for example," he says. "The type of treatment that we went with was indicative of the style and functionality they needed to get shades out of the way quickly during storms so that they wouldn't be a danger to public."

A recent and significant trend in hotel window treatments is automated shades and blinds that can be opened, closed and adjusted with the touch of a button. "The extension of home automation has moved over to hotel rooms," Stolow says. "The challenge is, for lack of a better term, to make them dummy-proof." While people might be familiar with their own personal remote controls for their home appliances, a remote control for a window shade may be completely alien to a hotel guest.

"In a room with motorized drapes, guests might not know what to do and start pulling on the drapes." To solve that problem, manufacturers have installed overrides on the windows. "If someone goes to pull the shade, the motor will disengage so the person can operate it manually. Housekeeping can come in and reset it later."

QMotion is a motorized shade company that offers an automatic shade that can be operated manually as required. "You don't have to leave the remote in the room, and the occupant can still pull it down," says Ben ►



Kutell, business director of QMotion. "Or you can leave the remote and let them [operate the window] from the bed."

The remote control is also something to consider in its own right. "The challenge is making the remote control something that won't disappear," Stolow says. "You can do wall switches or radio remotes. Touch screens are very big now in terms of integration: You can operate the air conditioning, the lighting and the windows all at once."

Structural and electrical issues can also factor into a hotel's readiness for automatic shades and blinds. Sometimes, Stolow says, the whole building can operate under one system, or each room can operate independently on its own. Frequently, the designer has to work with the architectural firms when figuring out what works best. "We don't usually deal with the builder," Stolow says. "We deal with architectural and design firms. A lot of systems now are integrated into the building. Treatments might be hidden inside a wall, so when it's lowered it looks seamless."

When the architects and designers are looking for something that high-tech, the treatment designers have to work directly with the electrician who is designing the structure. "It's more than just measuring and installing fabric," Stolow says. "It can be a lot more complex than just drilling a hole in the ceiling."

Kutell agrees. "It comes down to the use of space, and there's a cost element as well," he says. "If the space isn't used much and the shades will be down (or up) much of the time, then they don't need a sophisticated control." ❄

2. Symphony Collection

These somber and stylish curtains feature Fabtex's Symphony Collection in the Opus 46 tri-stripe Ginger Snap pattern.

www.fabtex.com

3. ADO Elite Collection

The sheer Whisper fabric is featured in the Pearl color and is 100-percent polyester. The solid Contempo fabric is seen in the Toffee color in 100-percent Poly Trevira CS.

www.ado-usa.com

4. Solarweave Roman Shade

Total Window installation of motorized roman shades in a Miami Beach private home. Also suitable for commercial spaces.

[Photo by John Stillman]

www.totalwindow.com