

LOUVRES UPDATE//

New releases in the louvres category are meeting growing demand for increasingly refined product, writes Belinda Smart.

THE WINDOW OUTFITTERS

Shelby Stanley, chief marketing officer for The Window Outfitters, and currently based in the company's US branch office, confirms a number of new Window Outfitters exclusive products have recently hit the Australian market.

"Starting in August, we released a trio of new American Made products that we believe are set to revolutionise the Australian shutter market. After copious research over the last year, The Window Outfitters saw space in the market for higher end products emerging. This is in part due to the social and economic shifts that have begun to chip away at the cost advantage Chinese manufacturing has experienced over the last decade, as well as a desire from the Australian market for the exceptional quality and engineering that are synonymous with high-tech western manufacturing."

With this in mind, the company teamed up with what it describes as "the most technologically advanced shutter manufacturer in the world", while also sourcing a range of innovative new products to create a new product range that would fill this emerging gap.

"Additionally, with a unique crating system, as of 1 October, we are offering a four to five week lead time shipping via airfreight rather than sea freight whilst still keeping reasonable prices...an Australian first."

Stanley confirms the range features three products, including "a premium American hardwood shutter, a superbly engineered, commercial grade aluminium shutter and an ultra-modern, wide blade shutter hybrid."

Highprofile Elite - described as a premium American hardwood shutter with solid engineering - provides the largest single panel expanse and heights up to 3.4 metres without a mid-rail. Other benefits of the system include louvre and rail tenons formed from the shutter itself, with no plastic pieces to be seen; it features 134mm blades and double, side mounted rotation bars that give "a bold new look" as well as an 80 per cent view ratio. "These same side mounted rotation bars combined with flat blades give outstanding closure and superior light block."

The Weatherwell Elite - described as an elegant and minimalist aluminium shutter, offers a unique blade rack and pinion system that allows users to lock the shutter blades in any position. "Meanwhile a two-part style construction keeps all working mechanisms and fixings hidden from view giving the sleekest design on the market."

The Shutter-Venetian Hybrid also offers a proprietary framing system that provides the look of a shutter and the versatility of a venetian; unique cordless design providing parents with unprecedented peace of mind and flexibility - the only venetian in the world to be endorsed by Parents for Window Blind Safety and an unprecedented unit size of up to eight square metres, which creates an impressive unobstructed view of up to 97.5 per cent.



OZROLL

Ozroll /Shutter Concepts developed the first cyclone rated domestic louvre system in 2002, which boasts a significant track record; it was one of the few louvre products still standing after Cyclone Larry and Cyclone Yasi ripped through Northern Queensland in 2005 and 2011.

"Since then our CL90 Louvre has enjoyed significant market uptake across Australia, especially in cyclone prone areas, and includes exports to Fiji, PNG, Vanuatu and other nations around the South Pacific," says Ozroll Queensland manager George O'Brien.

The CL90 Louvre has been developed over the last 10 years to provide a flexible solution to most consumers' needs and can be built to incorporate both horizontal and vertical blades in the same panel, resulting in an appealing, safe and legal option for balconies and balustrade installations. The system can also incorporate glass panels or a single glass panel in the lower section and horizontal louvre in the top, providing clear uninterrupted vision from a sitting position and full protection from the sun.

"Ozroll / Shutter Concepts have continued to develop our Louvre product and will release the DLi 90 Louvre system to the market before Christmas 2012," O'Brien confirms.

"This new product has been developed off the back of market demand and aimed at the internal market. The new DLi 90 Louvre system when released will be produced from the same high quality Australian sourced materials as the CL90 and will offer the same flexibility, however it will be lighter and thinner making it appealing for internal installations such as window reveals."

SHEER BLINDS

Sheer Blinds has long been known for its retractable and tiltable external venetians, with its

EV External Venetian series available with 100 mm flat, 80 mm rolled edge or 120 mm wind stable slats as well as a choice of side channels or wire guides, Ladderbraid and Kevlar Hagofixing.

General manager Paul Anderson says the category continues to thrive as concern about environmental impacts drives consumer interest in external shading as an effective method of energy wastage reduction. And with widespread discussion of the carbon tax and attendant issues placing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions top of mind in the market, this trend is increasingly reflected in architectural, building and interior design strategies, he says. "External Venetian blinds not only act to reduce solar glare and transmission, they contribute significantly to the reduction of heat gain through windows. The EV Series operates in such a way that it provides shading and cooling, acting to effectively reduce household energy costs and expenditures".

"External venetians are used for the effective shading of large expanses of glass, and offer visual and design appeal in creating a striking façade using either powder coated aluminium slats. Increasingly sophisticated motorisation means slats can be adjusted from inside buildings by remote control or switch operation and can be incorporated into CBUS and Building Management Systems."

"The design of these blinds enables exterior views while also allowing the entrance of natural light, whilst blocking direct sunlight, a benefit of high importance in our sometimes punishing Australian climate. Incorporation of sun and wind sensors also means optimal operating parameters can be achieved automatically."

