

How to Save Big Money on Plantation Shutters

Insider Tips for Buying Shutters
Pay a Little....Get a Lot



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“SHUTTERCATION” Shutter Education

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What’s the Difference Between Real Wood and Faux Wood?

About 15 years ago we started to see shutters being manufactured from synthetic materials like polymers and foams. It used to be shutters were built by craftsmen and artisans. Today several manufacturers are mass producing the parts out of wood and polymers, making the manufacturing process much more stream-lined and more precise. Today’s shutters are much higher quality and much less expensive than just 10 years ago. At first glance, wood shutters and faux wood shutters look the same. However, upon further inspection, the true differences are revealed.

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What are the Benefits of Real Wood Shutters?

Real wood shutters provide a wider range of stains and colors and are ideal for specialty shapes. They also tend to look more authentic. There’s nothing quite like a beautifully finished shutter in a deep stain.

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What are the benefits of Faux Wood Shutters?

Faux wood shutters are impervious to most environments including damp air and open windows. Faux wood shutters never need re-finishing.

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How do I get the Best Finish?

The answer is rather odd. It mostly depends on the country of origin. If you order real wood, and it’s made in the US, you’re likely to get an inferior finish due to EPA regulations on painting. The best finishes seem to come out of China. From China we get complete shutters, and we get pre-made parts. Several companies order the parts made in China and then assemble them to the ordered size here in the US. This cuts down delivery time. Faux wood shutters seem to always have superior finishes regardless of where they are made. Products made in Mexico seem to have very poor workmanship and poor finishes. **Always ask your shutter consultant where your shutters are being manufactured.**

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Are the Hinges and Hardware Important?

- a. Yes. There are several different types of hinges including different colors and sizes. There are also hidden hinges available from a few manufacturers and “Post Hinges” available from Italy. Stay away from the post hinges as they are very weak.
- b. The magnets are important provided they work well. They come in many different styles, and the manufacturers like to tell you their magnets are better. There are a few companies using a “Ball Stud” system that seems fine.
- c. The staples on the tilt bar are vital. Most people seem to think the tilt bar is for opening and closing the shutter. It is not, it’s for tilting the vanes. Many people have experienced the staples coming out or breaking. Today’s shutter manufacturers use stainless steel staples made just for shutters. It’s very rare to see one break today.

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What type of Frame should I use?

There are several different types of frames. There are 3 basic categories. Deco, Z Frame and L frame. Each comes in several different designs. Since every window is different it’s up to your shutter consultant to help you to determine which is best for your windows. There are also special frames for sliding glass doors, bay windows and arch windows. Most manufacturers will offer a wide variety of frames. Most popular is the Z frame. They make most any window look like a million bucks!

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What about Warrantees and the different Brands?

This can be confusing so make sure you ask for it in writing. What I’m about to tell you is what I believe to be the most important thing I can teach you about shutters:

Always check out the manufacturer and try to find out the owners name. Why? I did this several years ago to a new shutter company who was telling customers they had been in business since 1991. I did a check on the owner and found out that he had been convicted 2 times for fraud in the window covering industry and barred from being in the window covering business. Today that same man manufactures the worst shutter I have ever seen.

Brands you can trust? Norman Shutters is the best. There are several other good shutters that are sold nationwide. Polycore, Polycraft and Cambridge are all brands I like. Onyx is a very nice shutter and so is Comfortex. Sunland also makes very nice shutters and they offer 71 different colors.

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What about delivery times?

Shutters take some time to make. Anyone who is promising shutters in a day or a week is cutting corners. The best shutters take 6-8 weeks and come from China. There are several good US made shutters that take 3-4 weeks. Once you see the difference in cheap shutters made in a week compared to high quality shutters for only a few dollars more, you'll be sure to order the higher quality shutters. Put temporary paper shades up. You can order them from www.ezhangshades.com for just a few dollars per window.

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I Leave My Windows Open at Night, Is That OK?

Yes, if you buy a faux wood shutter. Never leave a real wood shutter open to the night air. It will prematurely age it, and the paint will peel.

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How can I find a Certified Shutter Consultant?

Your local Certified Shutter Consultant is decovan of South Orange County <http://www.decovan.com>

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How about Costco and Home Depot?

Both sell shutters. You would think they sell them for less. However you would be incorrect. A shutter you can buy from a certified local shutter consultant for \$20-\$22 per square foot sells for \$27-\$32 per square foot at Costco or Home Depot.

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Does the Installer make a difference?

Yes, I've known of a job in which a carpenter was at the house when a shutter company arrived to install the shutters. The shutter installers asked the carpenter how to use a nail gun and if he knew how to install shutters. He watched as they tried to install the first shutter. After one shutter was up and at a 15 degree angle he went to the homeowner to let her know the installer needed to stop before he ruined her home. Ask about the installer and his experience.

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Do shutter retailers need to be bonded and have contractor licenses?

In some states like California, Arizona and New York, a contractors' license is required. Several other states have special contractor permits. Always check to see if they are in compliance with your state's regulations. Bonding is different in every state, check with your local insurance person for clarification.



