

FRESH LOOKS FOR SHUTTERS WITH COLOUR AND FABRICS

by Nick Garratt of The New England Shutter Company



AFTER YEARS OF POPULARITY OF VARIOUS different shades of smooth, minimal white wooden shutters, there are clear signs that an increasing number of people are looking for more colour and texture for their window coverings.

The rising trend for fabric covered shutters may be partly to do with the desire for something different – as well as a growing boldness for using colour in the home.

Both designers and home owners now have greater scope for mixing beautiful natural solid woods with exciting fabrics of their choice. A rich oiled American black walnut for example works well with printed linen, creating an organic feel. The fabric panels within the wooden panel can be removed and replaced at little cost, meaning an investment in a bespoke shutter solution really does pay off.

Solid wood panels with fabric inserts make not only for striking window shutters, but can also be used for wardrobe and cupboard doors, or even bed heads. And for a rather grand finish, louvered shutters covered in a patterned fabric, matched with either wallpaper, curtains or soft furnishings really make a statement.

Another strong trend at the moment is for neutral coloured, suede covered shutters, which create an eye-catching effect through their texture rather than their colour. At the other end of the spectrum, bright leather or suede makes for a much more dramatic look, particularly in a large room.

Brightly coloured faux leathers are frequently requested for kitchens in particular, as they often provide a much needed splash of colour and are easily wiped clean.

In the marine industry, faux leather has been used for a number of years for yacht interiors, and now we see an increasing demand for shutters and Venetian blinds covered in this water-resistant, UV stable material. The trend however is now for lighter colours with texture, rather than the traditional darker colours.



Softer pastel shades of paint, fabric, leather or suede are increasingly popular for children's bedrooms. The nature of louvered shutters makes them an ideal and durable choice for blocking out light when needed, while making the most of our precious hours of daylight in winter.

The desire to bring light and air into our homes also extends to larger commercial endeavours. Here we are seeing a trend

for high quality roof coverings; restaurants and hotels wishing to create an atmosphere of natural light often choose a bespoke shutter solution such as shaped louvered conservatory shutters. Offices and work spaces in general often require adjustable solar shading and privacy. Any combination of style and finish can be used on tracking systems in larger areas.

Although shutters are available in a large range of solid woods, the growing ecological consciousness among consumers has boosted the popularity of sustainable tulipwood. This wood is grown in the Appalachian Mountains in the USA, where at least three new trees are planted for every one that is felled. Tulipwood is also very light and strong, with a lovely natural grain which makes it ideal to paint or stain. When manufactured from high quality natural materials, shutters not only absorb heat in the summer, but insulate against the cold during the winter months, which is a growing consideration in the current economic climate as they also can help to keep fuel bills down by helping to exclude draughts.

In today's climate, the phrase 'don't move, improve' seems to resonate through our design decisions. Solid wood shutters continue to be a hugely popular choice, and reflect not only our changing tastes and technologies but also create a beautiful architectural detail."



*Nick Garratt
Founder and Director
The New England Shutter Company
Tel.: +44 (0)20 8675 1099
www.tnesc.co.uk*

