

BUYERS' GUIDE SHUTTERS

Bright and bold or simply stained, wooden shutters are not only one of the most popular window dressings right now, but the most practical too

Words: **Yvette Murrell**

Long before our homes had glass windows, there were shutters – although we've moved on from simply propping up solid wooden boards in window openings. They've been a popular choice for years, with our love peaking of late, and for good reason. While often associated with hotter climates, shutters are great in the UK, too, keeping interiors well insulated when closed as well as cool in summer. Ideal for kitchens, wooden shutters are much easier to keep clean than fabric options. For bedrooms or bathrooms, light and airflow, as well as privacy, are better controlled with this type of window treatment. Attractive from both the inside and outside, well-maintained shutters could even add valuable curb appeal to your home.

Buying tips

Whether you plan on fitting shutters yourself or have a professional installer do it, they must be made to measure. Most styles are produced in around 8-10 weeks, with express services taking 3-5 weeks, so consider the lead times when ordering. Some companies offer a home consultation service to talk through the design options and measure up your space for you, but otherwise you will need to provide correct dimensions yourself. This is vital to get right, so follow any instructions carefully. Measurements will be different depending on your window's position and shape and whether you want the shutters to fit in the recess, be exactly the same size as the window opening, or cover complex bay windows.

Design decisions

The most popular style tends to be tier-on-tier, where you can control the opening and closing of the upper louvres separately to the lower ones, but other options are worth considering too. Full-height shutters are self-explanatory, whereas café style only covers the bottom half. Bespoke designs are also possible for awkward-shaped openings and tricky angles. Don't forget the tilt rod mechanism either – the part of the shutter that actually moves the louvre. A regular push rod at the front is a more traditional option, but you can also opt for a hidden tilt rod for a sleeker look. As for the colour, it would seem the possibilities are endless. Wood stains or a white wash are great for a classic minimal or natural look, but bolder colours will make a contemporary style statement.

Need to know

Without cords hanging down, shutters pose no hazard for children. It is wise to check if your design will come with a UV-protective stain and if not have it added. This will help keep up the appearance and quality. If you plan on having shutters fitted in your bathroom, a vinyl sealant is essential to ensure they are waterproof and prevent the wood warping or rotting.

Pricing

The cost is determined by the shutters' size and shape as well as type of wood. Elm has a lovely natural grain and colour, but will be more costly than hardwood or MDF. Expect to pay from anywhere between £150 and £450 per sq m.



↑ These self-fit full-height concertina shutters from California Shutters can be pulled back to fully reveal the windows behind. They can be customised in all Dulux and Farrow & Ball tones and cost from £166 per sq m.

↓ The Pearlwood tier-on-tier style shutters in a Pure White paint finish from Plantation Shutters. Price on application.



↖ Made from smooth polymer rather than wood, the San Jose Premium shutters in French Grey from Blinds2go are ideal for bathrooms, as they are fully waterproof and have a discreet rear tilt rod to lift the louvres. Priced £362.96 per sq m.

↓ Luxaflex full-height shutters are shown here in a classic Espresso finish, creating a warm look. Prices start from £268 per sq m for faux wood paneling.



↑ Windsor tier-on-tier shutters from Hillarys are available in four pale hues, including Bright White (shown). Priced from £416, including professional measuring and fitting.

↖ Solid-panel shutters, such as this Apollo Shutters design, offer a more traditional look but are very decorative. Prices start from £271 per sq m for MDF shutters, while real wood costs from £397 per sq m. **KBB**

