

Ambiance Design

by Michelle Boyles

For more than 10 years, Ambiance Design has specialized in window coverings since day one. President Laura Hawley recalls one thing someone told years ago: it was better to specialize in one thing than to try to be a jack of all trades. That was a key part of the company's original focus and continues to be a guiding principal. House & Home recently spoke with Hawley about the services they offer and the latest technology in window treatments.

What kinds of products and services does Ambiance Design offer?

Ninety percent of what we do [is window treatments]. Fortunately, I've been in the industry for 16 years now and I've done nothing but Hunter Douglas window treatments. I worked for their manufacturing site for seven years. Their roots are in America and they have amazing brands. They own the patent on the glue that holds the cell shapes together. They're able to offer a lifetime warranty so if the glue fails, they replace the shade regardless of the age at no cost. We've had people bring in 20-year-old window treatments and got free shades. Their claim [to fame] is that in 1985, they invented a new honeycomb shade that's called Architella. It offers 50 percent more energy efficiency than a standard window treatment.

Are there different kinds of treatments that help with energy efficiency?

Yes, we have a couple. The first is what we would call the heavy lifter in the industry is the honeycomb shade, especially the Architella. If you can imagine a tube within a tube construction ... it creates three air pockets that generate phenomenal insulation. People lose

as much as 50 percent of their heating and cooling energy right out there windows. If it's a skylight, it's even more. The Architella fabric was the only fabric in the industry that qualified for five-star energy savings. That tells you how energy efficient it is.

We have a Roman shade that can also be highly energy efficient. There's a way that you can double up the liners and it creates that same Architella effect. They can be five-star rated as well and beautiful. You get the form and function of an energy efficient treatment and at the same time, the classic beauty and design of a lot of different fabrics and textures. It's aesthetically pleasing and also does the heavy lifting of conserving energy. Those also can be motorized. We can do all type of colors and textures and still get that energy efficiency.

How else can energy efficient treatments be beneficial for a homeowner?

There's something that people don't think about called day-lighting, which allows you to light your room with natural light instead of artificial light. We have a way that we can schedule motorized window treatments to draw in that natural light, depending on the time of day and time of year. So, you can actually use the

sun to offset your energy use by using a motorized window treatment.

What is your process for working with homeowners?

They normally like to start with a showroom visit. We sit down and have a consultative conversation about what their concerns are so that we can make sure we're a right fit for them. We're not salespeople, we're designers that consult. Here in our showroom, we have all the beautiful options on display. They can see it move, see how it responds, all the different textures and fabrics. We would [then] go to their home, take a final measurement, confirm the fabric options in the home, collect the deposit. Then in 2-3 weeks we're back installing product. Because a lot of this stuff is made in America, we're able to get it really quickly. Even a whole house, we can get installed in a day.

How long do these treatments last?

We offer a lifetime warranty. We will service any treatment, at any time, for life. Eighty percent of what we do is Hunter Douglas. We don't carry any other window treatment vendor here. The other 20 percent is fabrics and wallpaper. So, when we have an issue come up, they take care of us. We're one of their top-five dealers in the region. **H&H**

EXPERTISE: WINDOW TREATMENTS



Laura Hawley, president of Ambiance Design

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