

LET THERE BE LIGHT

The art to good interiors is always about the light – but when you live by the coast nothing underlines life by the sea more than making the most of natural light

YOU CAN spend a fortune on the latest textiles, dress your windows in high style but natural light is the key to a good interior – and it's that rare thing in interiors, it's free...

Pick a bright day and wander room to room – and ask yourself – am I making the most of the naturally available light? Rooms change with the time of day and the seasons, but while most of us will plan our garden around the points of a compass – and even consider how the house faces when buying, it's often something that's quickly forgotten when you move into your house.

So back to that tour of your house – some rooms are used more during daylight hours – and some may want to be darker or at least shaded from naked sunlight – even the most modern computer hates the glare – but in bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens – and even bathrooms, light plays.

Your windows will control the light coming into your house – and how you cover them will determine how you control that light. In the winter it might also be about retaining heat, and it's surprising how many people use the same

window dressings during the summer to block the glare of sunshine – plunging the room into darkness. Even if you don't want to swap them twice a year, you can create window dressings that will work all year round.

Of course if you are lucky enough to have a view – maybe you don't need window dressings at all. High tech glass can be used that will obscure you from the view when you want some privacy while giving you the full un-obscured view.

'Lighting is so fundamentally important to how we feel inside our home and work spaces – it has a massive effect on how we embrace the day, affecting our mood and ultimately what we can achieve,' explains Karen Chugg from Intelligent Abodes. 'In these brighter early summer months being able to make the most of our daylight is great, but it also has its downsides – so how can we manage natural and artificial light effectively in our homes?

Karen Chugg is very interested in the significant effect of lighting in our environment – not just for practical reasons but for how it makes us feel. Karen explains: 'Daylight is the ultimate ▶



left Nothing could be easier than throws: Coastal Blue Stripe Throw by Marquis Dawe
right Fresh American cushions in classic nautical stripes and seaside patterns in a range of happy colours from £57 each at dashandalberteurope.com



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Using the classic blues and whites, this dining room from Jonathan Adler creates the perfect coastal look without over doing it.
uk.jonathanadler.com



The perfect party platters: nautical-themed paper plates from oakroomshop.co.uk



Window dressings? What window dressings? Invisible automated blinds help make the very most of your view and natural light.
intelligentabodes.co.uk

light source – harnessing it ‘intelligently’ means controlling energy costs and helping create an appropriate look and feel for a space. It needs to be maximised but ideally with control. Isn’t it depressing having to shut the sunlight out on a lovely, bright day because of glare and ending up with a dark and gloomy effect? Alternatively, seeing a treasured piece of furniture fade under the regular glare through a window is to be avoided. Getting the balance right between lighting and shading – using curtains or blinds and appropriate artificial lighting when necessary – is so valuable.”

One answer is installing automated lighting systems which include daylight sensors. These automatically adjust overhead lights to the differing amount of sunlight.



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Coastal-inspired interiors don't need to be blue and white. Bed linen from The Fine Cotton Company. thefinecottoncompany.com

The clever use of shades – automated, of course - can also reduce glare, direct light, maintain privacy, block UV rays from damaging furnishings and enhance the overall feel of a room. Look out for the Lutron range which has revolutionised the roller blind market with their precision motorised systems, whisper quiet drive operation and blinds which align perfectly for a beautiful balanced look to a row of windows. Pre-set buttons on the light switch or a keypad mean that on a bright, sunny day the shades can be set to descend just to the right level to maximise the daylight but protect you and your furniture from glare, heat and sun damage. A quality Venetian blind like Lutron’s will allow independent control of lift and tilt with pre-sets to a predetermined position. And with all their automated blinds, if you are away from home - one press of the button on your smart phone and all is sorted. Lutron’s modern fabrics include ‘sheer’ which will maintain the view while diffusing UV rays that may damage furnishings and ‘dim-out’ materials to 100% opaque ‘blackout’ fabrics – each allows varying amounts of sunlight to pass through depending upon the location of a room, the direction it faces, time of the year etc. Dual sided shades will reflect sunlight and UV rays while still allowing views to the outside.

Automated systems can recall your favourite pre-set shading positions, be set to a timer or be overridden with a keypad or remote control to suit the weather conditions or different activities taking place in the space. There’s so much you can do with a little clever technology to make the absolute most of the natural and the artificial light in your home – getting the balance just right, whether you are at home or away. ♦