case study

innovative sunscreen enhances luxury home

An energy efficient dark sunscreen fabric provided the solution for window coverings for a luxury home in Sydney's southern suburbs. Dawn Adams reports.

When Blinds In Style was asked to consult on the best window coverings for a new home in Ramsgate Beach, its interior design manager and business partner Kirk Fitis recalled a fabric he first saw at the BMAA Super Expo last year.

The homeowner sought two main features for a downstairs living area that looked onto a lap pool and an expansive garden setting. They wanted great visibility and a reduction in heat transfer through the window.

"KOOLBLACK ticked both those boxes," Fitis says.

While E-Screen with KOOLBLACK Technology was not yet available in Australia, the home owner was willing to wait for its arrival as the building was still under construction.

THE FABRIC

This new fabric was developed after Mermet USA joined forces with the BASF chemical company in 2007 to develop KOOLBLACK Technology for window shades. The result of their work was a technology that enhanced energy reflectivity for dark coloured yarn by increasing its near infrared reflection (NIR).

Using this technology, the energy efficiency of dark sunscreen fabrics reached levels comparable with light colours while retaining inherent benefits such as superior view through and exceptional glare control.

Mermet marketing manager Jennifer Elmer said its Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) was similar to a light coloured sunscreen fabric. "SHGC is a factor that shows how effective a glazing system, glass and window covering, is at blocking heat from solar radiation," she says. "The lower the SHGC, the higher the protection from heat gain. In fact, KOOLBLACK shows up to 23 per cent improvement in SHGC compared to standard dark screen fabrics."

PLANNING

To produce the window coverings, Fitis worked with the home owner at each planning stage for the architect-designed home, which was being built from scratch.

“I worked with him every step of the way,” he says. “For example, we decided the blind should sit in a cavity rather than be mounted on the wall or ceiling.” As a result, the size of the cavity needed to be addressed to ensure there was enough room for the blind to rotate and sufficient space to accommodate the fabric when it was completely rolled up.

Fitis recommended motorisation and plans were made to incorporate the electrical work required during construction. “If you’re building a lovely home, the last thing you want are chains hanging around,” he says. “And with big blinds, chains can be difficult to operate.”

When the glass was installed in July 2013, the first measure for this job was taken. Production, from factory to completion, took three weeks after the final measure with installation completed in December last year.

“In this instance, the blinds were made before the owners were ready for them to be installed,” he says. It’s a strategy he likes to put into effect to ensure customers are not waiting for their blinds to be made when they’ve already moved into a home. “No one wants to wait for their blinds and live in a house that’s like a fishbowl,” he says.

PRODUCTION

Blinds In Style produced 12 roller blinds in four metre drops to accommodate the high ceilings. The windows to be covered spanned 26 metres in an L shape, one section looking onto the lap pool and the other, onto the garden setting.

KOOLBLACK