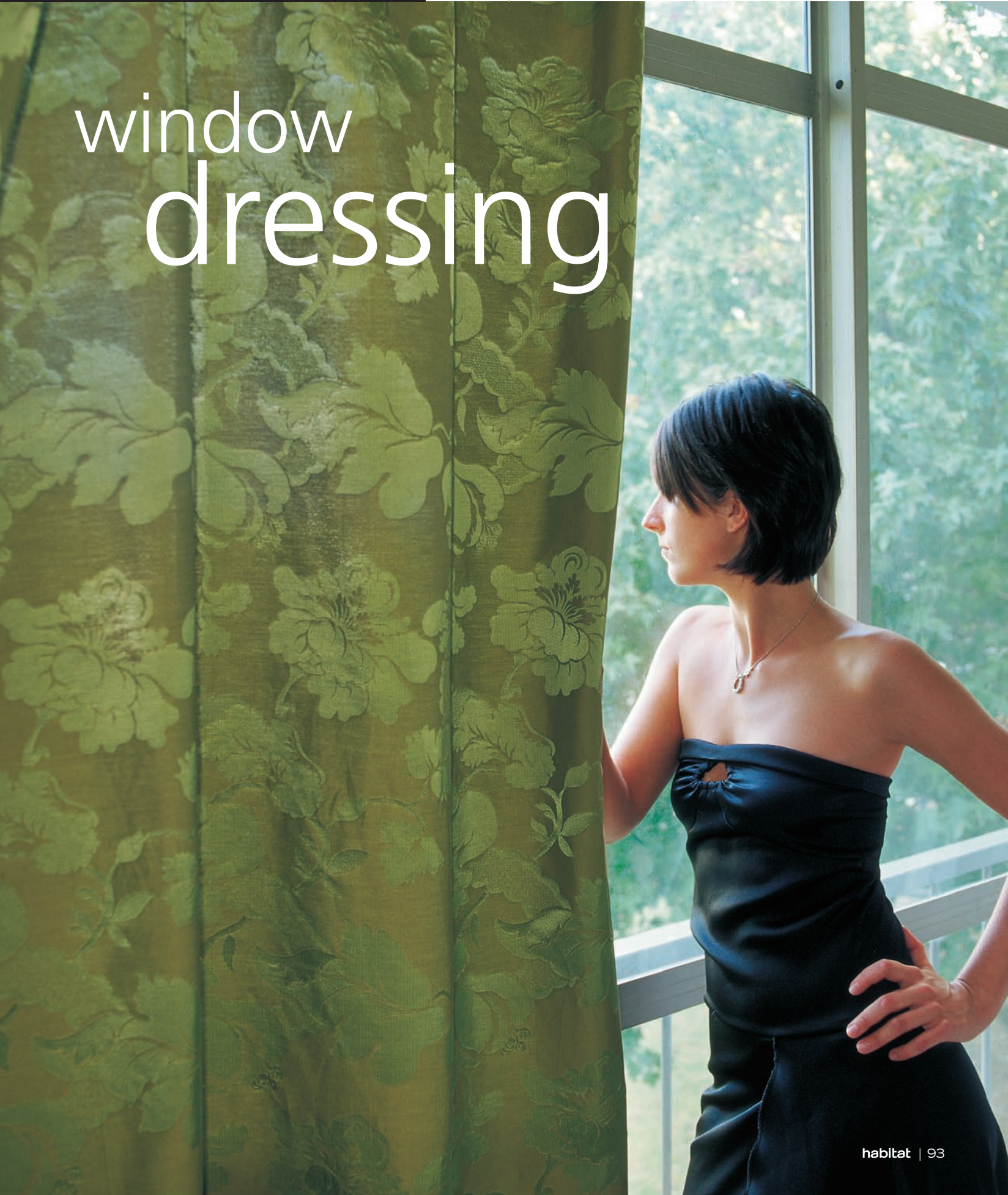


# window dressing







The way you dress a window can greatly influence the style and character of a room. Blinds, for example, offer clean lines and a contemporary look, while curtains contribute softness and warmth.

How you dress a window depends on the function of the room, the position of the window, and your taste and lifestyle. It's a great opportunity to inject personality and life into a space – go for something sleekly modern, such as striped taffeta hung using chrome eyelets, or opt for something more lavish, like jacquard in swags and tails.

"Fabrics such as taffeta are very popular at the moment," says Jan Barker, a consultant at Lahood Window Furnishings.

"It's shiny and glamorous, and adds colour and texture," she says.

There are a number of choices when it comes to hanging curtains, too. The heading of the curtain (the top four inches) can be gathered or pleated in a variety of ways. A French pleat is very structured and will add formality, while a reverse pleat works in any style of house. For a classical look, swags – which drape over the top of the curtains – add romance and softness to a room. Although this may seem old-fashioned, it does work well with the tall, elegant windows in heritage homes, says Jan.

Your choice of curtain rod allows you to enhance the look of the curtains and the overall theme of the room.

Finials – the decorative pieces at the ends of the rods – come in a staggering array of shapes and figures, from contemporary knobs and classic curls to ram's heads and pomegranates.

Wooden rods can be painted to match the walls or curtains, and aluminium rods can also be coloured to blend or contrast. Traditional iron – whether the real thing or an imitation – works well in both old and new homes.

You can choose either a rod and rings combination or a track rod. Wooden rings create a lovely clatter as the curtains are opened, but because rings can't get past the brackets holding the rod up, it's better to use a track rod for long distances, otherwise the rod may sag. Rods can be bent to go around corners, which is ideal for bay windows, as the pulled-back curtains don't bunch in the corners blocking the light and view.

As well as creating ambience, curtains and blinds serve practical purposes that also need to be considered when making your choice. Curtains are best for warmth and you can line them in a variety of fabrics for extra insulation. This is important in colder climates and in older homes where windows can be draughty.

Don't know your French pleat from your eyelets? That's what the curtain experts are there for.

# how to use furnishings



Get the look with Resene Deja Vu and Resene Dynamite.

Use waterborne enamels, such as Resene Enamacryl or Resene Lustacryl on timber joinery to stop the frames from sticking.

Blinds are great for protecting furniture and furnishings from the sun. A sunscreen blind is a roll blind that filters out the light but gives great visibility.

“You can read a numberplate at 50 metres,” says Lahood Window Furnishings managing director Peter Lahood. “And, compared to light fabrics like voiles that break down over time, they’re virtually indestructible.”

Blinds also give privacy while allowing light in. Venetian blinds are very popular and can be painted to blend or contrast with the walls. Jan says the trend is towards a wider blind with blades of around 50mm across.

However, you don’t necessarily have to choose between the two options. Use them together to draw on the advantages of both: the practicality of blinds and the warmth of curtains.

Jan recommends talking to a professional about your window furnishings, as fabrics and shades will be affected by the colour of your walls and the light in the room. A consultant will be able to recommend options that suit your home and lifestyle. The company should also be able to measure, make and install your curtains and blinds to ensure a perfect fit. **H**