

outdoor shutters:

add
a

personal touch



Copper Moon Woodworks' Nantucket model with an iron Texas star applied to the center of each shutter.

By Karen Appold

Home renovation is at a record high, as is new construction. Aside from changing colors, there aren't too many affordable ways to add personal signatures to a home's exterior.

Custom-designed shutters offer a fresh, new option, says Ken Wnek, owner of Copper Moon Woodworks. "We are often asked to design shutters that meet requirements that off-the-shelf shutters are not suited for," he says. Shutters desired for unique architectural elements and beyond run-of-the-mill louvered and raised-panel shutters are designed for particular home designs.

One customer had large floor-to-ceiling windows measuring approximately 10-feet high by 6-feet wide. He wanted the shutters to cover the

entire window when closed. Copper Moon Woodworks specializes in handling custom requests like these.

RED CEDAR RULES

Copper Moon Woodwork's shutters are constructed from various wood species, depending upon the desired finish. Shutters which are to be stained and retain a furniture-like

are made from western red cedar.

Vixen Hill also manufactures shutters from western red cedar. "Our in-house mill re-saws large cedar blocks or cants to obtain the best vertical wood grain," says Christopher Peeples, owner of Vixen Hill. "The planks are then splint-stacked and air dried in a special building for 6 months. When dry, the cedar is

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—Ken Wnek, owner of Copper Moon Woodworks

wood grain are offered in mahogany, Wnek explains. Applications in which shutters are to be painted or left to weather for a grey/patina look

milled to precise dimensions and machined for specific shutter components. Vixen Hill's drying and milling processes yield cedar component parts

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Shown are Gothic & Shards Closeups. Various decorative elements by Copper Moon Woodworks can provide a distinguishing touch to shutter design.

don't forget custom shutter hardware

Shutter hardware is like the icing on a cake. It doesn't seem right without it. The majority of newer homes that use shutters as part of the exterior décor do not include shutter hardware, says Daryl Derstine, owner of Classic Accents. A generation of homeowners has grown up appreciating shutters as a historic amenity, but that hasn't extended to the hardware dimension.

Perhaps that is because aluminum and vinyl shutters were easily produced and marketed, but corporate America didn't pick up on the hardware aspect, Derstine says. It could be likened to refurbishing a Victorian home and removing the gingerbread.

Now the gingerbread is available in a variety of materials and so is the long lost shutter hardware. Classic Accents manufactures vinyl shutter hardware.

“The historically accurate vinyl hardware easily attaches to wood or vinyl shutters, completing the look that will bring a smile to the discriminating homeowner and capture the attention of any home buyer.”

-Daryl Derstine, owner of Classic Accents

Ken Wnek, owner of Copper Moon Woodworks, says ledger-type mounting systems designed specifically to be used with its shutters are available. If traditional mounting hardware such as hinges and shutter dogs are required, he has a list of suppliers that offer an assortment of sizes and styles.

Although Copper Moon Woodworks manufactures all of its shutters, decorative hardware such as the hinge fronts on its Gothic shutters are made by a master blacksmith in Canada, Wnek says.

Vixen Hill offers low-end and high-end shutter hardware priced and designed for different budgets. “Although we don't manufacture hardware, we search for the best hardware at the best prices,” says Christopher Peebles, owner of Vixen Hill. “If it doesn't exist, such as stainless steel or bronze hardware for salt-air environments, we'll find a way to get it made.”

--Karen Appold

SHUTTERS



Vinyl shutters with Classic Accents hardware. The owner of this farmhouse added louver operators for authenticity.

Below: Classic Accents' colonial latch and strap hinges add the finishing touch to this gable accent window.



Shutter hardware from Classic Accents.

that are very stable and resist cracking and delaminating.

Additionally, the natural rot and insect resistance of cedar allows Vixen Hill's shutters to endure for decades. And, because cedar has a high strength to weight ratio, it is ideal for shutters which are edge hung. The wood is also a joy to paint or stain because of its porosity, Peeples remarks.

SHOPPING FOR QUALITY

Shutter quality should be judged based on the material (wood grain versus colored metal or plastic), aesthetic effect (design and plastic versus wood on a million-dollar home) and construction method (use of quality joining techniques to assure strength and longevity), Wnek says.

Peeples says that many shutters don't have good joinery. A shutter should be held together by design rather than glue and metal fasteners. Pegged mortise/tenon joints are essential for good design. If the tenons are blind pocketed, that's even better because it prevents the connection of components from weather exposure.

TAKE CARE

Because Copper Moon Woodworks' shutters are constructed of wood, those which are stained for a rich wood-grain effect should be sealed with a penetrating protective clear coat. The clear coat should be reapplied every several years or as necessary. Painted shutters only require a fresh coat of paint when needed and weathered cedar shutters can be sealed with a clear coat after the desired patina is achieved or just left unsealed.

Peeples adds that occasional scrubbing is required to rid shutters of dust

and dirt.

CHALLENGING REQUESTS

Peeples says his greatest challenges are large arc-top louver and panel shut-



Left: Simple arch top board and batten shutters add soft lines to this window facade. Larger sizes can be reinforced with a "Z" brace or cross rail diagonal gusset. Photo courtesy of Vixen Hill.



Left: Paneled shutters from Vixen Hill come in several panel styles and profiles that are custom sized to a window's openings. Hardware is available for stone, stucco, brick or wood siding.

himself. "Although he had originally designed a shutter, he decided that our mission style was better suited for his home," he says. A rich, brown stain was applied to the mahogany shutters which gave them a furniture-like finish. "With the pewter clavos (a decorative hardware element) the shutters were stunning."

PICK YOUR PREFERENCE

As you strive to make your home reflect your personal tastes or if you need shutters for non-standard windows, shutter manufacturers have many available options and will customize them to meet your needs.

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ters. Victorian mansions and the larger modern variety have been difficult because of their sheer size and use of curved windows.

Vixen Hill designed special machines and fixtures to build a few desired pairs or risk losing the entire shutter order. "I took a great deal of time to work out the mechanics of the fixtures, but we can now build all three curve tops: circle, eyebrow or Gothic," Peeples says. "Additionally,

"Our in-house mill re-saws large cedar blocks or cants to obtain the best vertical wood grain."

—Christopher Peeples, owner of Vixen Hill

we can make them up to 12 feet high and in pair widths of up to 6 feet."

Wnek recalls a client -- an architect -- who ordered custom shutters for a new home he designed and built for