

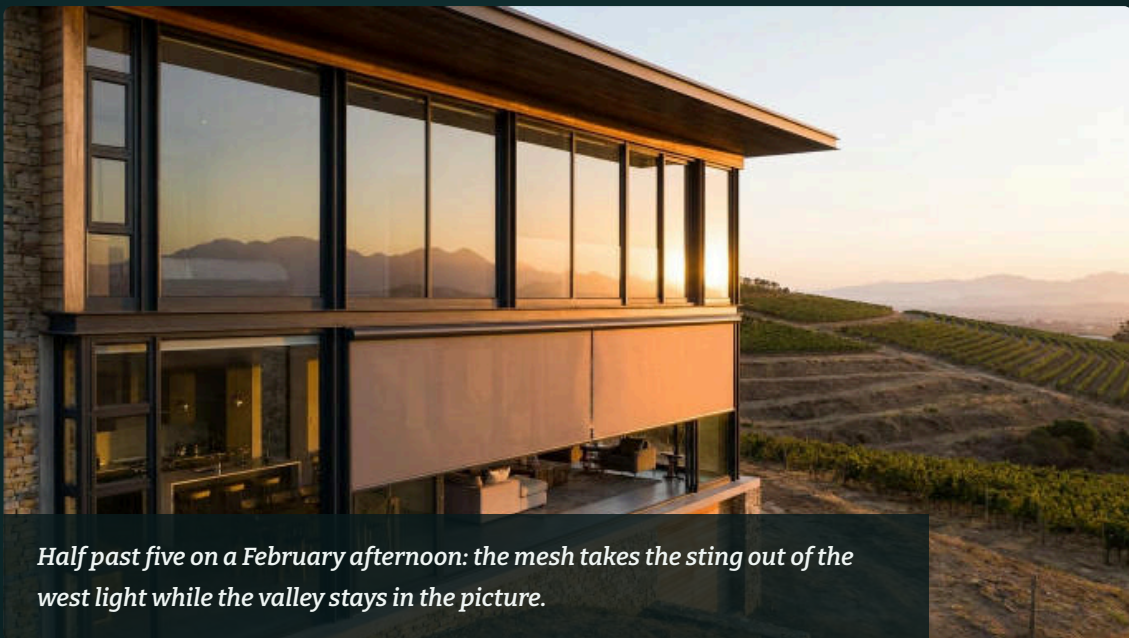
— DURBANVILLE HILLS BLINDS · THE FIELD GUIDE

The Durbanville Hills Light & Aspect Playbook

Most houses up here arrive with the view already won and the shading still to solve. This playbook works through that in order: what your estate will want to see, what the light on this slope actually does across a year, and which product earns which window — with the argument against each one written down next to it.

[Book your free measure](#)

[Or get a ballpark first](#)



Half past five on a February afternoon: the mesh takes the sting out of the west light while the valley stays in the picture.

— WHERE THIS STARTS

Handover day, and not one window covered

A South African builder hands over a finished house with bare glass. That is the norm rather than an oversight — and up on this slope, where the whole plan is aimed at the outlook, it lands harder than most owners expect.

The rooms here are drawn around their view. Wide panes. Corner glass. A lounge wall that slides open onto the stoep. All of it lovely at eleven in the morning, and completely unmanaged at five in the afternoon when the sun comes in low off the west and finds the television, the sofa and your eyes in roughly that order.

There is a second surprise behind the first. Anything fixed to the outside of the house — a shutter, an external venetian, a screen across the patio — counts as a change to the facade, and on an estate that means a form before it means a fitter. Far better to learn that now than after you have settled on a colour.

So the running order of this page is deliberate. Paperwork and building stage first, because they can rule whole product categories in or out before the sun gets a say. Then the light on this particular slope. Then the products themselves, each one with its own objection written down beside it. Walk the house with a notepad as you read. By the end you will have a window list and two ways to price it, and neither of them needs your name.

— BEFORE ANYONE QUOTES

The estate, and the builder if he is still on site

Clara Anna Fontein, Graanendal, Welgevonden and most of their neighbours run an architectural or aesthetics committee, and holding the streetscape together is exactly what it is for. Exterior shading sits squarely inside that mandate. External venetians, roller shutters, zip screens, folding-arm awnings: colour, fixing method and sometimes projection normally need sign-off before anything goes up.

None of that is a fight. It is a form and a lead time. We read the guideline before quoting anything visible from the street, and we will deal with the managing agent or the trustees ourselves if you would rather not spend your Saturday on it.

If the house is not finished, the second conversation matters more than the first. A blind that drops out of a slot in the ceiling, or a wired motor serving a four-metre pane, has to be planned while the bulkhead is still open. Before the ceiling closes it costs a five-minute discussion and a tidy recess. After the plaster, the paint and the cornice it costs chasing, patching, and a compromise you will look at every day for a decade.

Anywhere between slab and handover is the single best moment on the whole build to have a measure done — even if the blinds themselves only go in six months later.

— THE LIGHT, BRIEFLY

Where the sun sits, and why the west wall is the expensive one

All of it rests on one piece of geography. Durbanville lies at roughly 33.8° south, so the sun spends its entire daily run in the *northern* half of the sky — east at breakfast, north through the middle of the day, west by supper. The south wall of your house never takes direct sun. Not in January, not ever.

What the season changes is height, and height is what your eaves respond to. At midsummer the midday sun stands close to overhead, on the order of 79° up, so an ordinary roof overhang is already shading a north window at the worst hour. By midwinter that same sun runs low, around 33° above the northern horizon, and reaches deep into north rooms from morning through to afternoon. That is free heating. For most of the year you want it in, not out.

The west is where the tidy picture falls apart. Late-afternoon summer sun arrives low and level, walks straight under any eave, and lands flat on the glass at the hottest hour of the day. Add Cape Town's ultraviolet, which sits in the very-high-to-extreme band from roughly October to March and commonly reads 11 to 13 on the index: at that level it fades fabric

and loads genuine heat through bare glazing. Which is why the west takes up more of this page than the other three walls together.



— WALKING IT

Four walls, four different problems

Go clockwise from the breakfast side. At each stop write down which rooms sit on that wall and how many hours of the day you genuinely spend in them. That pairing settles the product faster than any brochure.

STOP 1 · EAST

Bright early, off duty by ten

First light lands hard and low, then the wall clocks off for the rest of the day. Kitchens and east bedrooms want that opening hour taken down a notch and nothing further — a sunscreen mesh or a light-filtering cellular does precisely that much without leaving you in gloom by lunchtime.

STOP 2 · NORTH

The wall that heats the house for free

Your architect pointed the living space here for a reason. Summer sun sits high enough for the eave to cope; winter sun comes in low and warms the rooms at no cost. Shade the glare and the UV with a mesh that keeps the valley in the picture, and hold true blackout back for north bedrooms that have to stay dark past a 5:30 sunrise.

STOP 3 · WEST / NORTH-WEST

STOP 4 · SOUTH & SHADED

The problem wall, every summer

Low, level sun under the eave at the hottest hour of the day, summer after summer. Interior fabric on its own is arguing with heat that has already arrived. The serious thinking and most of the budget belong on this elevation, and ideally on the outside of the glass.

No sun, and a wet winter

Never any direct sun, and through a wet Cape winter these are the rooms that run cold and hold moisture — more so in a tightly sealed new build. Specify for damp rather than for sun: powder-coated aluminium and sealed-finish fabrics, not raw timber or an untreated weave.

WHAT WE SPECIFY, AND WHY NOT

Seven recommendations, each with its own objection

Seven calls we keep making across these estates. Every one of them carries the case against it, said out loud, because a recommendation you can argue with is worth more than one you cannot. When a call fits a window on your list, tap **Add**: it drops into the ballpark tool and the measure form below, so nothing gets typed twice.

1. On view glass, mesh before blackout

Covering a valley-facing pane with opaque fabric cures the glare by deleting the view — a bad bargain on this slope. Sunscreen mesh makes a better one: it strips out most of the glare and UV yet leaves the vineyards and the mountains readable through the weave. The number that matters is openness. Around 3–5% is the sweet spot we specify most on wide Hills glazing; tighter weaves block more heat but dim the picture.

The catch: after dark the physics flips. Lit room, black valley — and suddenly the mesh reads like frosted glass from outside, in the wrong direction. If a room is used at night and overlooked, plan a second layer; the day/night double at number 2 is that plan on one bracket.



Openness in practice: the weave holds back the glare while the valley stays legible behind it.

2. Bedrooms with a view: run two fabrics on one bracket

A summer sunrise here lands before 5:30, and a north or east bedroom with only a sheer becomes a very pretty alarm clock. Where the room owns a view worth keeping, the day/night double roller carries a sunscreen and a blackout together — mesh up for the morning outlook, solid down for actual sleep — instead of two separate blinds arguing over one window. Where the view doesn't matter, skip the double: a single blackout roller is cheaper, simpler and just as dark.

Weigh it up: the double costs more and its headbox sits a little deeper off the wall. It earns that only when both fabrics will genuinely be used; a guest room that sleeps four visitors a year doesn't qualify.

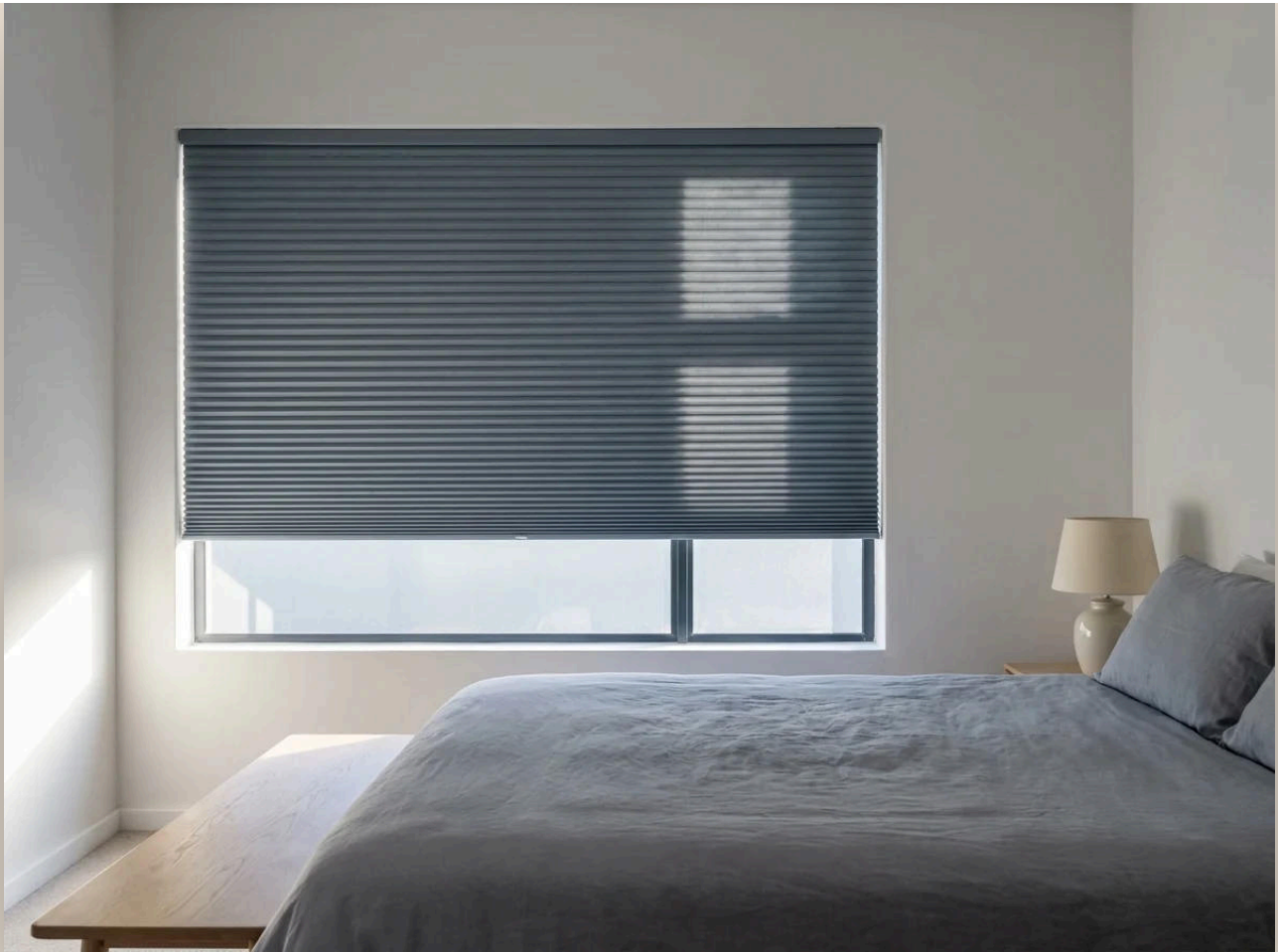


One bracket, two jobs: bands aligned for the morning view, offset for darkness and privacy at night.

3. Temperature problems want cellular, not just cover

Some rooms up here are less about glare than about temperature — the south study that never warms up in July, the upstairs room that cooks by evening. A cellular blind's pleated cells trap a cushion of still air against the pane, slowing heat in both directions. Winter warmth stays in; some of the summer load stays out. In a well-sealed new build the difference is genuinely felt, not just claimed.

Point it at the right problem: cellular insulates, it does not repel. Aimed alone at a bare west pane in February it will slow the heat, not stop it — that job belongs outside the glass, at number 5.



The pleats hold a layer of still air against the glass — a quiet insulator for the rooms that run cold in July or hot by evening.

4. Where light needs steering, aluminium venetians

Kitchens, studies, bathrooms: rooms where the sun moves across your working day and you want to tilt it away rather than shut it out. A slim aluminium venetian gives that adjustment by degrees, and its powder-coated slats are indifferent to steam and winter damp — which is exactly what a south-facing bathroom in a new build asks of it. Timber slats are lovely; keep them for the dry, ventilated rooms.

Weigh it up: slats collect dust and want the occasional wipe, and a very wide venetian gets heavy on the lift cord. Past about two metres of width, either split the run into two blinds or let a motor do the lifting.

5. The west wall: spend the money outside the glass

Here is the one rule of thumb we will defend all day: heat you stop outside never becomes heat you manage inside. An external venetian or a shading roller shutter intercepts the low

afternoon sun before the pane, so the glass never loads up and re-radiates into the room. An interior blockout, however good, only argues with heat that has already arrived. On a big west pane the difference is obvious by mid-afternoon — and external slats can still tilt to keep the view while they work.

The counter-argument: exterior systems cost more than interior blinds, and anything on the facade needs your estate committee's sign-off first (see the estate section near the top of this page). If either rules it out, the fallback is a high-performance sunscreen inside, backed by a blockout for the evenings — honest second prize, still worth having.



Interception, not absorption: slats outside the pane turn the afternoon sun away before the glass ever warms.

6. The stoep answers to the wind first

On a Hills terrace the south-easter, not the sun, usually writes the spec. The summer breeze that funnels up the valley most afternoons is milder than the coast gets, but it is plenty to worry an open awning. A zip screen — fabric tensioned in zipped side channels — holds taut

through it and turns an exposed stoep into a room you can actually sit in at six in the evening. The folding-arm awning is the gentler cousin: generous overhead shade on still days, retracted out of sight the moment the wind picks up.

The counter-argument: an awning left open in a gust can be damaged, so on an exposed terrace fit the wind sensor that retracts it automatically rather than trusting memory. And a zip screen's framed channels are a visible, fixed element on the facade — some estate guidelines welcome that look, others don't, so check before you fall in love with it.

7. Motorise the glass you can't comfortably reach

Double-volume panes, sliding walls, anything above the stair: the newer builds up here carry glass no chain should be asked to serve. A motor moves a whole wall of shading on one press; battery units retrofit cleanly without chasing cable through finished plaster. Add a sun sensor on the west and the shading tracks the afternoon by itself; add a wind sensor outside and the awning looks after its own retreat.

Weigh it up: motors, sensors and power routing all cost money, and a standard-height window you can reach in slippers gains nothing from any of it. Motorise where reach, size or automation genuinely pay — not by default across the whole house.

One straight disclaimer on roller shutters: ours are sun-control products. The slats roll down outside the glass to stop heat, glare and light — they are not security-rated, and we will never sell them to you as if they were. Security shutters are a separate, certified product; ask and we'll quote one on request.

— THE LAST TEN PERCENT

Five facts that only exist in the room

Everything above narrows the field honestly, and then stops. Five physical facts decide whether a blind sits right for ten years or argues with its window from the first week, and not one of them survives the trip into a photograph or a plan:

- ✓ What's actually behind the plaster — brick, concrete, steel or hollow bulkhead decides the bracket and the fixing, and whether a heavy motorised unit over a wide pane can hang there safely at all.
- ✓ The true depth of each reveal — whether a blind can sit neatly inside the opening or must face-fix above it, a question the frameless corners and sliding walls of the newer builds here ask constantly.
- ✓ How each window really meets the sun on the day — plans say “north”, but the actual eave depth, a neighbour's wall and the slope itself shift what a given room needs, sometimes by a whole product category.
- ✓ The wind exposure of your particular stoep — two terraces a street apart can want entirely different exterior products, and the sensor question is answered standing on yours, not in general.
- ✓ Power for anything motorised or concealed — battery or wired, where the cable runs, and what must be agreed with the builder before a ceiling or bulkhead closes on a home still under construction.

— TWO WAYS FORWARD

Your window list is made. Now price it — your way

If you walked the lap with a notepad, you now have rooms, rough sizes and a product against each. Type them into the ballpark tool and a budget range comes back by the next working day, no visit involved. Or skip the tape measure entirely: the free in-home measure gets every window measured properly and priced exactly, per window, in writing. We'd steer you to the measure — the ballpark exists for the people who like seeing a number first, and plenty do.

Book your free expert measure

A consultant walks the same lap you just read about — measuring every window, checking fixings, orientation and your estate's guideline, with fabric samples in hand — and leaves you a written, per-window quotation to consider in your own time.

Measure visits across the Hills and the neighbouring estates run on a limited weekly diary, and the nearby slots go first — booking a little ahead simply gets you the morning or afternoon you'd prefer.

Or get a rough ballpark first

Non-binding and quiet. List each window below and a budget range comes back by the next working day. Missing a size? Note the room and leave the number blank — or hand the whole list to the free measure and let us hold the tape.

ROOM	WIDTH (MM)	DROP (MM)	FIT	PRODUCT
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SOURCES

Check our homework

Nothing above about the local climate or geography is taken on faith — each claim traces to the references below. The two sun-height figures are our own calculation from Durbanville's latitude (about 33.8° south) and standard solar declination, so treat those as worked arithmetic rather than a citation.

- ✓ Durbanville's position and latitude on the Tygerberg Hills, north of Cape Town: latitude.to and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durbanville

- ✓ Why the sun sits in the northern sky south of the equator, and what that means for window orientation: yourhome.gov.au and greenpassivesolar.com
- ✓ Durbanville's warm-temperate, winter-rainfall climate (~669 mm a year, June the wettest month): climate-data.org
- ✓ Cape Town's summer UV index running very high to extreme from roughly October to March: nomadseason.com and weatherandradar.co.uk
- ✓ The summer south-easter ("Cape Doctor") and its afternoon run up the Tygerberg valley: capetownmagazine.com and winewithseth.com
- ✓ The Hills' lifestyle estates and their architectural controls (Clara Anna Fontein, Graanendal and neighbours): rabie.co.za and pamgolding.co.za
- ✓ The rolling Durbanville Hills / Tygerberg valley wine terrain itself: wine-searcher.com