



Want that custom look but off the shelf? Try these tips:

- » Opt for more fullness by purchasing more panels of fabric
- » Splurge on your curtain rod and finials
- » Add trim to co-ordinate your ready-made draperies with your existing decor

Curtain Call!

READY-MADE OR CUSTOM DRAPES? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Let's talk drapes. This is probably the most underrated, understated decor essential — the key word here being essential. Without window coverings, a home looks oddly unfriendly — the views unframed, the rooms unfinished. As a designer I believe drapes bring aesthetic warmth to your home, tying the architecture of your home with the furnishings and decor that fills it. Beyond aesthetics, drapes also provide practical purpose, delivering darkness on demand, while keeping your home cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

So, now that we've made a case for drapes, let's address a common curtain conundrum: custom drapes or ready-made?

Nothing fits quite like custom. You can select the specific material, style and pattern specific to your space — and like custom-made clothes, you'll wait weeks or even months before your window coverings are ready, and you'll pay a premium price. Ready-made drapes, on the other hand, can give you the quality you want at a price you can afford. Here's my case for ready-made.

Time is on your side: If you're like most people out there, then instant gratification

is a big selling feature. Ordering custom drapes takes time, from shopping suppliers, to your consultation, to your measuring appointment, to the weeks or months it can take to actually make them. Their ready-made counterparts, on the other hand, will come home with you on the first date. Cheeky! Browse online for your preferred style, material and colour/pattern, confirm the length and width you'll need, then grab your wallet and keys.

Measuring up: If shopping for ready-made drapes, consider their fullness. Your drapes should be one-and-a-half to three times the width of your window. Less fullness means a more tailored appearance, while more fullness lends a more luxurious look and feel. Easiest solution: work with a very experienced designer or drapery company like Specialty House Manufacturing to get the right results.

Money matters: Speaking of luxury, you don't get couture off the rack. But you also don't pay the hefty price tag. Enough said!

Splurge or save? Opt for a more economical window covering and spend the big bucks where it really counts, like on a statement sofa.

Trends: Not everyone is a trendsetter, or even a trendspotter for that matter. Rod pockets or French pleats? Solid or tone-on-tone? Vibrant or muted? With custom-made drapes, the options are quite literally endless — which can be good or bad, depending on your style sense and decision-making ability. A big benefit of ready-made window coverings is that the trend hunting and design work have already been done for you.

Style selection: My go-to for affordable and trending fabrics is Alendel. The company's new 2017 collections cover the full style spectrum, from Nantucket charm to the highly textured High Point line to faux leathers and velvets and animal-inspired Wild Things — oh my!



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