BBSA
The Authority on UK Shading

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS GUIDE

FAUXWOOD VENETIAN BLINDS

This document has been produced by the British Blind and Shutter Association (BBSA) to highlight the key characteristics of fauxwood Venetian blinds to help you make an informed choice when buying your blinds. The characteristics detailed below represent the state of the art and any relevant standard.

General

As fauxwood Venetian blinds are made from a synthetic material, typically PVC, they are heavier than other types of blinds, including real wood blinds. You may find that raising fauxwood Venetians requires some effort.

While heavier, they are not as rigid as real wood blinds and slight dipping/bowing between the supporting ladders may be visible. To minimise the dipping/bowing, the product will normally have additional support ladders across the width to reduce the unsupported span of the slats. This dipping won't however affect the product's ability to offer shading and privacy.

Colours and finishes

As these blinds are made from a synthetic material, the colour and finish will be more consistent than a real wood blind equivalent. The colour of the slats may gradually fade over time just as any similar synthetic material.

As the headrail is covered by the valance, minor defects in the headrail such as light scratches and marks are deemed acceptable. Headrails will be the closest colour match to the slat colour.

The punched holes in the slats and possibly the ends of the slats may be a slightly different colour to the surface of the slats.

Installation

Unlike natural wood blinds, fauxwood blinds are able to withstand environments with extreme humidity and moisture levels. Such conditions would result in warpage and twisting of the slats on a real wood product. Fauxwood blinds are therefore more suitable for bathrooms and kitchens.

Be aware that fauxwood blinds require some degree of ventilation to prevent excessive heat build up between the blind and the window. This may occur on exceptionally hot days particularly on south facing windows and in conservatories and sunrooms. The result is a loss of rigidity to the slats causing them to twist/deform permanently. It is therefore recommended that the slats aren't fully tilted/closed and allow some airflow through to the window space.

A secondary window covering (e.g. a closed curtain) over the blind in these situations is therefore not recommended as this will result in excessive heat building up.

Light exclusion

Although fauxwood Venetian blinds provide a good degree of light exclusion, they are not blackout blinds and light may enter via:

- **Slats:** There will always be some light filtering through. Expect any gaps between the fully tilted slats to be greater towards the bottom of the blind.
- **Bottom rail:** This may be supplied to rest on the sill. This prevents the blind from swaying should a window be open and reduces the amount of light entering underneath the blind. However, the bottom rail can limit the full closure of the slats at the base of the blind allowing some additional light to filter through at this point.
- **Sides/punch holes:** A limited amount of light will also filter through the punched holes in the slats, as well as around the sides of the blind.

The amount of light coming through may not be consistent across the whole blind.

If you are right next to the blind and the slats are fully tilted, it will be possible to see through the gaps between slats to the outside. This is normal.

Fitting in a bay window

When fitted in a bay window, there will be some gaps where the neighbouring blind headrails meet each other. The size of any gap will depend on several factors including; the shape of the bay, the style of the window and the specification of the blind system. The gaps will be more noticeable when the slats are closed.

Similarly, at the edge of the bay there may be light gaps/ potential loss of privacy depending on the angle of the bay and the adjoining walls.

Always ensure you read and carefully follow the operating and maintenance instructions.

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Finished drop (length)

Due to the set distances of the slat support rungs, achieving the exact drop/length of the blind may not be possible. In order to prevent the blind from being too short, an extra slat may be added to ensure a suitable drop is reached. This may result in the blind having a slightly longer drop than originally ordered.

Raised blinds

When in the raised position the blind may not raise perfectly horizontally and may have a slight bow on the bottom bar. This is due to how the ladder/tapes fold between the slats, the quantity and positioning of the lift cords, and the weight on the product.

Slat alignment

The alignment of slats can vary due to tolerances in the ladder support rungs and so absolute alignment between adjacent blinds cannot be guaranteed. For the same reason, the number of slats in the blind may differ even when the same drop dimension is ordered.

For all Venetian products the number of ladders/tapes is dependent on the width of the blind and will vary. For example a 615mm wide blind could have two ladders and a 630mm wide blind on the same order could have three.

Cut-down blinds

These are competitively priced standard-sized blinds that can be trimmed to fit your window. If you choose this option, be aware that the slats' ends may not be stained or painted. Also, the cords that raise, lower and tilt the blind and the ladder cords and tapes may be in different positions if you order for multiple windows.

Fitting inside the reveal (window recess)

To allow for operating clearance, the width of the blind must be narrower than the width of the reveal. If there are any obstructions in the reveal, e.g. tiles at the base, the blind will need to be made to accommodate the narrowest width.

Reveal (recess) not dimensionally consistent

A fauxwood Venetian blind is made square but reveals are often not. The head of the window and/or sill may not be level and the distances between the side walls of the reveal often vary.

The distance from the edge of the reveal to the window may also vary, so blinds will either be fitted to run parallel to the window or to the edge of the reveal.

Motorisation

There is a wide range of motorised solutions available for your comfort and convenience and each system will have its own characteristics. Some points to consider are:

- **Speed and alignment:** Blinds in the same installation may not travel at the same speed and may not line up if stopped during the travel of the blinds due to mechanical and electrical tolerances.
- **Noise:** Some noise will be emitted from the motor operating the blind particularly on 240v powered blinds. Quiet motors may be available.
- **Wiring:** Some surface wiring may be required. Where 240V mains power is involved, a competent person, who can certify the works, will be required to provide a power feed unless the blinds can be powered from a plug inserted into an existing socket.
- **Motor protection:** For safety reasons, most motors are fitted with a thermal cut-out to protect them from getting too hot (usually from over-use). When cooled sufficiently, the motor will start working again.

Smart Home Hub

Where a smart home hub is used the signals to the blinds may occasionally be interrupted by other wireless devices in the home such as smart speakers or doorbells. This can affect the operation, or seamless operation of the blind.

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Child safety

Blinds with cords or chains could pose a risk of strangulation to young children. The BBSA recommends inherently safe products - (safe by design).

If you choose a product with additional child safety devices these must be securely fitted as advised. For further information on window blind safety visit **www.makeitsafe.org.uk**.

make it safe™

Visual product inspection

When checking the overall visual characteristics and aesthetics, the following should be observed:

- Viewing distance and lighting

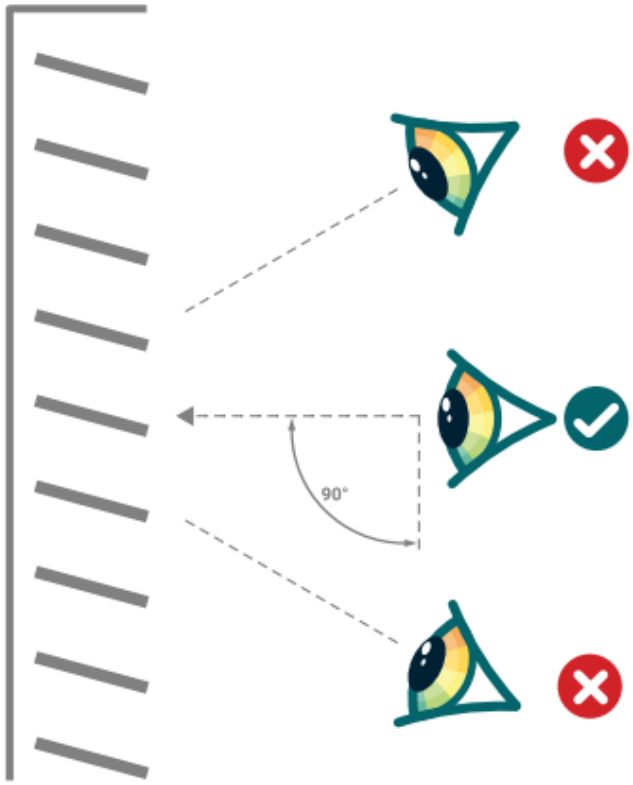
3m for exterior products in diffuse daylight;
2m for interior products with lighting suitable for normal room use.

- Viewing angle

Perpendicular to the surface being checked.

- Viewing aids

Naked eye (and any corrective glasses if applicable).



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