

LUXURY

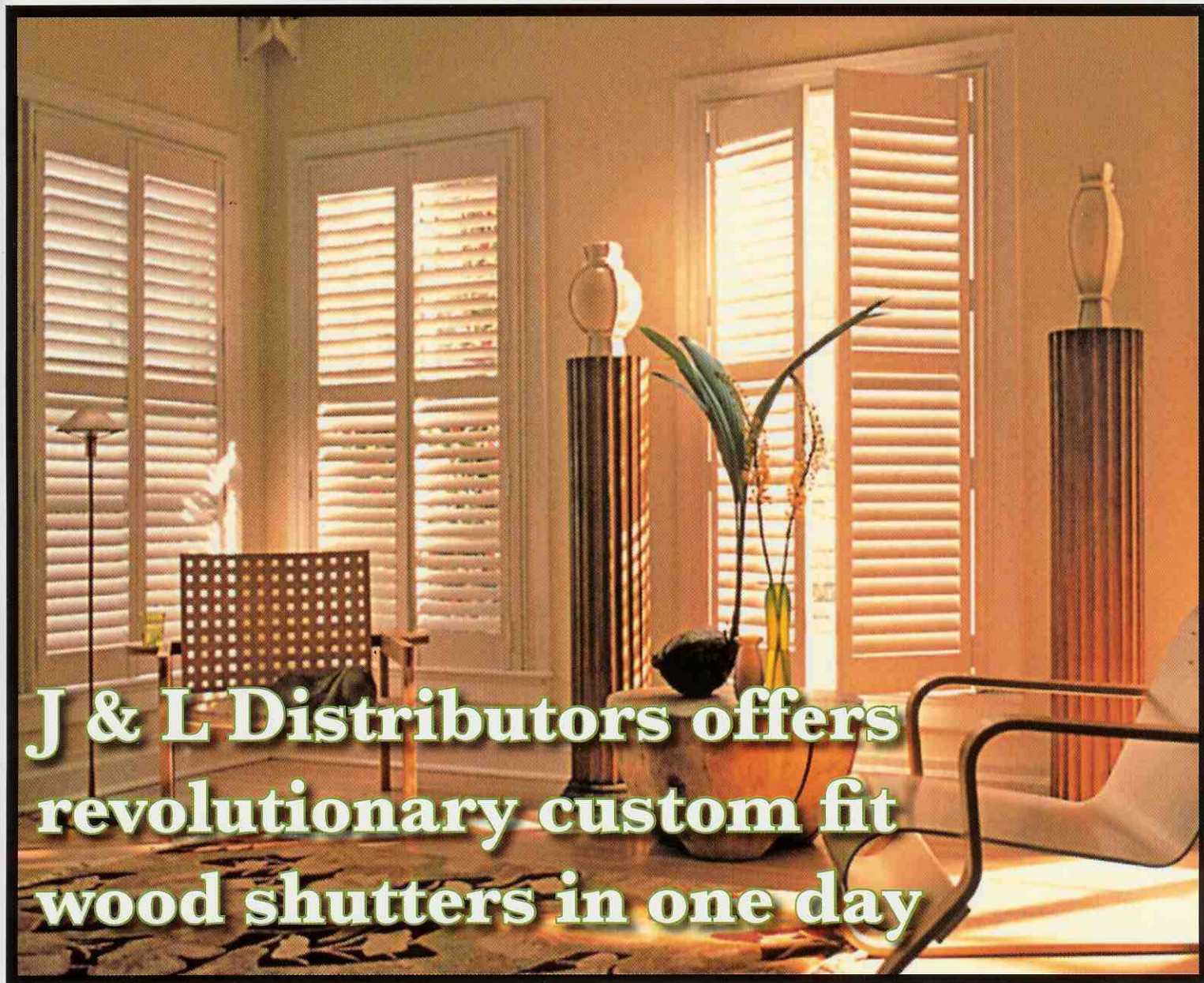
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**J & L Distributors offers
revolutionary custom fit
wood shutters in one day**

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In today's fast-paced society of "I want it and I want it now," customer service has been taken to an entirely new level.

In one day, consumers can purchase and receive goods that previously took several days - even weeks - to receive, especially for custom-made items. From furniture to dry cleaning, the same day service trend has now made its way into the window coverings industry with custom-made shutters now available in one day.

A pioneer in innovative ideas in the window and floor covering industry, J & L Distributors is at the forefront of the "buy it today - get it today" consumer trend with the development of their newest product, Pro Décor Shutters. Made from 100% Basswood, these beautiful, energy efficient, high-quality wood shutters are custom designed for a perfect fit. And the best part, they are in stock at J & L Distributor's state-of-the-art facility in Stafford.

"The main driver in the industry right now is the

J & L Distributors brings innovative product to market... *"wood shutters in-a-day"*

By Patti Parish-Kaminski

lead time - 8 to 12 weeks to make a custom shutter," said James Hoelker, president and founder of J & L Distributors. "The only way to create more of that business is to increase both the service level and product quality, and we've done that with our new product. The consumer trend is to have it today, so we designed a product that consumers can buy today, take home today,

and install it themselves - it's that simple."

The Pro Décor Shutters, designed to appeal to the custom window covering market, have features that provide consumers with the flexibility and customization they want. The standard 3.5" louvers can be customized to several different sizes depending on the type view, and how much of

the view the consumer wants. The shutters feature an invisible and adjustable divider rail allowing the consumer to choose which portion of the shutter will be open or closed. This clear view tilt feature provides consumers with the flexibility to have their shutters completely open, the top half open and the bottom half closed, or any other combina-



WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK TO

tion that suits their individual needs. The shutters are framed with decorative wood molding on three sides and are designed to fit directly into the window sill.

According to Hoelker, easy installation was a driving force in developing the Pro Décor shutters. "When you order custom shutters, the installer comes out to measure, places the order and then comes back to install the finished product. The Pro Décor Shutters are in stock and just slide in the window," he said. "Most sizes have eight screws with the holes pre-set and pre-drilled. It's just a matter of tightening the screws and it's in." Hoelker added that J & L does offer installation for customers who request this service.

Energy efficiency was also a priority in developing the shutters. "With the every-increasing electric bills in this part of the country, the Basswood shutter is the best material you can have for an energy efficient product," said



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- JAMES HOELKER

President and founder of J & L Distributors

Hoelker. "The paint coating on the Basswood provides 1,500 hours of UV protection which is the highest rating in the industry."

The development of this new technology on an established product has placed J & L Distributors at the leading edge of the shutter industry. "Shutters have been around for a long time," said Hoelker, "but to bring them to the point where consumers can actually pull them off the shelf and pop them into their window is a customization process that we developed."

This process included

market research on the colors and features consumers want in shutters along with the dimensions of windows in homes located in the Houston area. With this information, J & L was able to determine the consumer's preferences and needs, and have the right shutter, in the right size, readily available.

"White is the most popular color and the stock sizes that we have available will cover about 78% of the window sizes here," said Hoelker. "The other 22% that we do not stock, we can custom-make to match in six to eight weeks. The good news is that nearly

80% of the windows, we can take care of immediately."

This immediate availability of window coverings is not only attractive to retail consumers, but according to Hoelker, another trend in the housing market is also allowing Pro Décor Shutters to fill a market niche. Home builders are recognizing the value of including window coverings as incentives to home buyers both on homes they have in inventory, as well as on homes where buyers want window coverings installed quickly at or before closing. "We've seen a push to include window coverings in mort-

continues...



REVOLUTIONIZE THE SHUTTER INDUSTRY.

gages for home buyers," said Hoelker. Fulfilling this consumer request has been difficult due to the amount of time it takes for custom shutters to be made and installed. "Now, if a home buyer wants to have the cost of shutters included in their mortgage, because of the immediate availability, this becomes a much easier process."

This focus on customer service and innovation are key elements of J & L's company philosophy of innovative product designs, exceptional quality, professionalism and service excellence. This philosophy has made them a leader in the window and floor covering industry for nearly 20 years, and as evident in their new shutters, is still the driving force today as it was in 1985.

J & L Distributors began in window coverings by serving the multi-housing residential and commercial marketplace, and they became a leader in the industry through innovation. "We've always been a leader with innovative ideas or

product lines. Our Stafford facility is one of only two Hunter Douglas Window Fashions Galleries in Fort Bend County and supplies the complete line of Hunter Douglas products," said Hoelker.

One of the first products that J & L Distributors developed and patented is now standard in the apartment industry. In the late 1980's, the trend in the residential and commercial markets was to use draperies as window coverings which had the desired room darkening effect. The trend moved to the 1" aluminum blinds which were room darkening but easily damaged by residents and then to inexpensive PVC blinds which were more durable but were opaque.

"When I started the company, I wanted to create a product that would combine the best of both worlds – a product with room darkening capabilities that was durable – by developing a product called Aluma-Like. That's how we started the business,"



Homeowners simply screw in four to eight pre-drilled holes to mount the Pro Décor Shutter. J & L Distributors can provide measurement and installation for homeowners, decorators and builders.

said Hoelker.

And now, with their new facility in Stafford built in 2002, J & L Distributors can focus on the retail marketplace with their showroom and knowledgeable customer service representatives. "Our goal with our showroom is to maximize a customer's experience here by providing qualified, impeccable service," said Hoelker. "Our knowledgeable staff can assist with analyzing your needs and providing solutions. And now, with our new Pro Décor Shutters, we can provide customers with solutions the same day."

J & L Distributors' successes with creating innovative product designs combined with exceptional quality and service began with a revolutionary

idea in the commercial mini-blind industry some twenty years ago, and continues today with what can be referred to as a revolutionary idea in shutters. "We think we're on the right track to revolutionize the shutter industry," said Hoelker. Time will tell the extent of Pro Décor Shutters' impact on the shutter industry but if this Fort Bend County company's track record is any indication of the potential success of their new product, the future looks even brighter for J & L Distributors.

J & L Distributors' Showroom is located at 707 Avenue E in Stafford and hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am to 6 pm, and Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm. Call them at 281-403-6733.

The homeowner or installer simply sizes up the shutter and uses an installation kit dependent on your window size, to provide a custom-fit wood shutter for almost 80% of all windows.

