



THE FALSE BAY FIELD GUIDE • KALK BAY

The False Bay Window Field Guide

How the east-facing morning glare off the water, the salt air and the summer south-easter change what belongs on each window of a Kalk Bay home — written for this stretch of coast, not lifted from a catalogue.

[Book your free measure](#)

[Or get a ballpark first](#)

- ✓ Free in-home measure & written per-window quote
- ✓ Specified for False Bay salt & morning glare
- ✓ Child-safe cords & motors as standard

START HERE

Why Kalk Bay is a shading problem of its own

Kalk Bay is a village pinned between a mountain and the sea, and nearly every window in it looks east across False Bay.

The houses tell the story – restored Victorian shopfronts along Main Road, the red-roofed Fishermen's Flats stacked above the quay, and older cottages climbing the slope behind them. What they share is an aspect: on this *western* shore of False Bay, homes face east and south-east onto the water. So the sun you fight here is the low, hard morning sun coming straight off the bay – the opposite of the Atlantic-seaboard suburbs, where it's the west-afternoon glare that does the damage.

Two other things shape what we'd specify, and they show up before the fabric ever does. The first is the openings themselves: very little in Kalk Bay is a standard size. Heritage frames, deep stone reveals and out-of-square additions are the norm, which is why an off-the-shelf blind rarely fits and made-to-measure isn't a luxury here – it's the only thing that sits square. The second is the air. Salt rides every onshore breeze, and it decides the hardware long before it decides the colour. This guide walks a Kalk Bay house with all three in mind, window by window.

THE LIGHT HERE

A morning sun off the water, and a mountain that steals the afternoon

Kalk Bay sits at about 34.1° south. In the southern hemisphere the sun rises in the east, tracks across the *northern* sky, and sets in the west – so it's your north-facing windows that catch sun through the year, and, on this shore, your **east-facing** glass that takes the low, raking morning light straight off False Bay. That water throws a second helping back up as glare, which is why an east room here can feel harsh at 8am and calm by noon.

The season changes the angle more than most people expect. Worked out from Kalk Bay's latitude, the midday sun stands roughly **79°** overhead at midsummer – nearly vertical, easy to shade – but drops to about **32°** at midwinter, low enough to push deep into north-facing rooms with welcome winter warmth you may not want to block. And the steep mountain immediately behind the village cuts the late-afternoon sun off many of the lower cottages, so their real problem is the morning, not the evening. Cape Town's summer UV runs very high to extreme (index 11–14 from about October to March), and that is what fades fabric and loads heat through unshaded glass – so on

an east window the job is usually “kill the morning glare while keeping the harbour view,” not “make the room dark.”



EAST (AM GLARE)

NORTH (MIDDAY)

WEST

WINDOW BY WINDOW

Which way the window faces changes the answer

EAST-FACING

The hard one here

The harbour side, and the reason most Kalk Bay homes exist. Low morning sun off the water plus reflected glare – bright and hot early, easy by afternoon. The job is to knock the dazzle back without throwing away the view, which is where a sunscreen mesh earns its place over a plain blackout.

NORTH-FACING

The sun-catcher

High and easy to shade in summer, but the low winter sun reaches right in. Temper the glare without losing the warmth you actually want in July. Sunscreen keeps the light and view; blackout is for the north bedroom that has to stay dark past an early summer sunrise.

WEST / UPHILL

Mostly shaded — except up top

For the lower cottages the mountain behind cuts the late sun early, so west rooms are calmer than you'd think. Homes higher up the slope and along Boyes Drive are the exception and do take a hot late afternoon – worth flagging at the measure.

SOUTH-FACING

Little sun, more weather

Barely any direct sun, so glare isn't the issue – damp, draught and the south-easter are. Here the win is a thermal, privacy or wind answer rather than a sun one, which points at cellular or a well-sealed fit.

WHAT WE'D SPECIFY, AND WHY

The recommendations, with both sides of every trade-off

Every choice below is a trade-off, so we've put both sides of it. Tap **Add** on any recommendation to drop it into the ballpark tool and the free-measure list further down – so you carry what fits straight into either path, with no retyping.

The harbour view: a sunscreen roller, not a plain blackout

Most of the glass in a Kalk Bay home exists to see the water, so an opaque blackout across the living-room windows solves glare by throwing away the reason the window is there. A single smooth sunscreen mesh cuts the morning glare and UV and keeps

the harbour visible as a soft silhouette. Openness is the dial — a 3–5% weave is the usual view-keeping choice; a tighter weave stops more glare but shows less through.

The honest trade-off: a sunscreen is not a privacy blind after dark — once your lights are on and the sea is black, people on the street can see in more than you'd like. That's exactly what the day-night double below is for.



A sunscreen roller on a Main Road window: one flat sheet of mesh softens the reflected morning glare while the street and sea stay visible through the weave.

Bedrooms above the strip: a blackout roller — or a day-night double for a view worth keeping

A bedroom above the busy harbour strip needs to stay dark past a bright summer dawn, and a blackout roller does that cleanly. But where that same room owns a harbour view you'd rather not lose by day, a double day-night roller carries a sunscreen and a blackout on one bracket — sheer for the view in daylight, blackout down at night — without two blinds fighting over one heritage opening.

The honest trade-off: the double roller is a slightly deeper headbox and a bit more cost than a single blind – a real consideration on a shallow heritage reveal. If a room only ever needs one of the two jobs, a single blackout roller is the tidier, cheaper spend.

Privacy on a walking street: day-night (zebra) blinds

The terraced houses along Main Road and the lanes off it look straight onto a street full of walkers, and that's the classic case for a day-night zebra blind. Its alternating sheer and solid bands let you dial privacy up or down without plunging the room into the dark – line the sheer bands up for light and the harbour, slide them to solid when the street gets busy.

The honest trade-off: a day-night is a light-and-privacy manager, not a true blackout – a sliver of light still crosses the sheer bands, so a bedroom that must be pitch dark still wants a blackout. It's the answer for living rooms and street-facing windows, not the one for a nursery.



A day-night blind on an odd heritage opening: align the sheer bands for the harbour by day, slide them to solid for privacy when the street fills up.

Salt-facing rooms: aluminium venetians, powder-coated and sealed

Where you want to steer the low morning light rather than simply block it – a kitchen, a study, a bathroom looking at the water – a slim aluminium venetian lets you tilt the glare off the bay at any hour and shrugs off salt air far better than a raw-timber slat would. This close to the sea we treat marine-grade powder coating and stainless fixings as the baseline, not an upgrade, because ordinary brackets, chains and cassettes corrode fast in salt-laden air.

The honest trade-off: even coastal-grade coatings age faster by the sea – an occasional fresh-water wipe-down keeps them moving, and we'd rather tell you that now than pretend any seaside hardware is fit-and-forget. Beautiful as timber venetians are, they're the wrong call in a damp, salty, sea-facing room.



Sealed aluminium venetians in a deep stone reveal: tilt the slats to aim the morning light off the water, and the coastal-grade finish copes with the salt that would mark raw timber.

Dry heritage interiors: timber venetians for the character rooms

Set back from the salt – a lounge, a landing, a study one room in from the sea – timber venetians are hard to beat for a Victorian or Edwardian interior. The warm slat suits the period, and away from constant spray it holds up well while filtering the light beautifully. In the right room they do more for the character of a Kalk Bay cottage than any other blind.

The honest trade-off: timber and salt-damp don't mix – put a timber venetian on a front-row sea-facing window and it can warp, mark and stiffen. That's the aluminium venetian's job; keep the timber for the dry rooms and it will reward you.



Timber venetians in a dry, set-back heritage room: the warm slat suits the period and, away from the salt spray, keeps its looks.

Draughty and valley-wind rooms: cellular honeycomb as the buffer

A cellular honeycomb blind traps a layer of still air against the pane in its hexagonal cells, which slows the heat crossing the glass in both directions. In the wind-scoured

valley homes toward Fish Hoek and Clovelly – where the summer south-easter funnels hard – and on a cold south room, that trapped-air layer takes the edge off draught and temperature swings. It's the quiet all-rounder where a window's problem is comfort, not glare.

The honest trade-off: a cellular is an insulator and light-softener, not a heat-*blocker* for a scorching, unshaded pane – for raw sun you're better stopping the heat outside the glass. Right room, wrong hero if you point it straight at hard morning sun on its own.

High, awkward and out-of-reach heritage windows: motorise them

Kalk Bay's cottages are full of tall, odd, hard-to-reach openings – a stairwell window over a steep flight, a high gable pane, a wide sea-facing span where a hand-chain spoils the view. Motorisation is often the practical answer there: one button for an awkward window, and battery motors that retrofit into heritage walls without chasing cables through old stone and plaster.

The honest trade-off: motors cost more and the power has to be planned – on a standard, easy-reach window a neat manual blind does the same job for less. Motorisation earns its keep on the high, wide and awkward glass, not on every window in the house.

A note on the outside of the glass: on a genuinely hot, unshaded elevation the surest fix is to stop the sun *before* it reaches the pane – exterior shading such as roller shutters sits on the outside and blocks the heat outdoors, and we can quote that on request. The roller shutters we fit are shading products for sun, heat and glare; they are not security-rated shutters, which are a different product. Never treat a shading shutter as a way to secure a home.

HERITAGE & THE ODD-WINDOW REALITY

Deep reveals, out-of-square frames and a protected streetscape

Kalk Bay is a conservation-minded village, and it shows in the windows. The City of Cape Town's heritage guidelines for Kalk Bay and St James set out to keep the architectural character intact – the local stone walls, the terraced gardens and the vistas that run from Main Road down to the sea – and the fishing community has fought hard to hold onto it. In practice that means anything visible on a street-facing heritage elevation is worth checking before it goes up. Whether a specific home needs formal sign-off depends on that building's grading and its street, so we treat it as a question to settle per property rather than a blanket rule – and we're happy to keep exterior choices sympathetic to the streetscape.

Inside, it's the openings that catch people out. The restored Victorian and Edwardian buildings, the 1940s Fishermen's Flats and the older mountainside cottages carry deep stone reveals, non-standard sizes and frames that have gone out of square with age and piecemeal additions. Standard-size blinds simply don't sit true in them – which is the whole reason we measure and make each blind to the individual opening rather than the nearest catalogue size.

BEFORE WE COULD QUOTE

What a photo and a floor plan can't tell us

This guide gets you most of the way to the right blind for each window. The last stretch only an in-home measure resolves – and on this coast it's the stretch that decides whether a blind still works in five years or rattles loose in one:

- ✓ Exact reveal depth on each out-of-square opening – whether a blind sits inside the heritage frame or has to face-fix above it, which is rarely obvious from a photo of an old, uneven reveal.
- ✓ The fixing substrate behind the plaster – old stone, soft brick or timber – which decides the bracket, and whether a heavier motorised or double-roller unit can hang safely in a heritage wall.
- ✓ How much salt spray your position actually takes – a front-row harbour window wants a higher coating grade and a rinse routine than a unit set a street back, and we'd rather match the hardware to the exposure than over- or under-spec it.

- ✓ How exposed the window is to the south-easter – a real question in the Fish Hoek and Clovelly valleys, where the wind funnels, and one that changes whether an exterior option is even sensible.
- ✓ Whether your street elevation falls under the local heritage guidelines – worth confirming before any external or street-visible fitting, so the choice stays sympathetic and sign-off-friendly.

TWO WAYS FORWARD

Ready to price it? Two honest ways to start

Want a ballpark first? Pop your rough sizes into the tool below and we'll send a budget range by the next working day – no visit, no obligation. Not sure how to measure a deep heritage reveal, or you'd rather it was done properly? Leave the sizes: our consultant measures every window free and you get exact per-window pricing. The free measure is the one we'd point you to – the ballpark is just there if you like a number in front of you first.

Book your free expert measure

The one we'd recommend. A consultant measures every window, checks the light, the reveal, the salt exposure and the wind, brings fabric samples, and leaves you with a written, itemised, per-window quote.

Or take a rough figure first

Quiet, and it holds you to nothing. Add each window and a budget range comes back the next working day. Not sure of a size? Leave it out and name the room instead – or book the free measure and let us do the measuring.

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

Where the local facts come from

The climate, geography and heritage facts in this guide are drawn from the sources below. The midsummer and midwinter sun angles are worked out from Kalk Bay's latitude of about 34.1° south and the standard solar declination, so they're calculated rather than quoted; everything else is cited.

- ✓ Kalk Bay location, latitude (~34.1° S) and its position on the western shore of False Bay: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalk_Bay and capetown.travel
- ✓ Southern-hemisphere sun path (sun in the north; east glass takes low morning sun): harvestingrainwater.com and yourhome.gov.au
- ✓ The south-easter ("Cape Doctor") – season (~Oct–Mar), how it funnels off False Bay and picks up moisture: capetownmagazine.com/cape-doctor
- ✓ Cape Town summer UV index (very high to extreme, ~Oct–Mar): nomadseason.com and weatherandradar.co.uk

- ✓ Salt-air corrosion and coastal-grade powder-coating / stainless fixings on seaside hardware: servicelinksa.co.za and titon.com
- ✓ Kalk Bay heritage: Victorian/Edwardian stock, the 1940s Fishermen's Flats and the City heritage guidelines for Kalk Bay & St James: theheritageportal.co.za and kbha.co.za