



Drapery Hardware

Have you ever given any real thought to all the different drapery hardware options? Not just flipped through your sample books when a client wants something, but really thought about all the different types out there; decorative, functional, rods, poles, tiebacks, swing arms and more. Here then, is an overview of all types of hardware.

Let's start with the poles. First there's wood. The poles can range in diameter anywhere from 1" up to 3", with a few companies even carrying 4" poles. There are three main types of wood poles: smooth, reeded and twisted (sometimes called rope.) Every company has their own list of finishes, some with more than thirty kinds, but they do seem to fall into specific categories: wood colors (unfinished, oak, cherry and mahogany), solid colors (ranging from matte black to piano white), and companies with great children's lines providing pink, green and blue. Many wood rods have finishes that are designed to make the rods appear to be metal, such as antiqued white with gold, silver leaf and even pewter.



*Photograph 1
Vesta, Inc.
To the Trade Only*

Instead of wood made to *look* like metal, consider one of the multiple options made from metal. Some of the most popular metals are iron, steel and brass, although aluminum and copper can also be found. Metal collections seem to have three distinct looks:

- 1) **Traditional rods.** Typically brass or steel painted brass. They have a high gloss look, come in plain, fluted or roped and are usually paired with pinecone, ball or cut crystal finials.
- 2) **Modern rods.** Plain, often thinner than traditional rods. More often than not, they have a burnished metal look to them and shades of silver and steel tend to be more

popular than brass. Sleek rods are needed in modern hardware and the finials and brackets complete the look. Modern finials are very streamlined. Whether they are made from wood, steel, glass or acrylic, they are smooth, with little or no ornamentation on them. Spheres, long thin cylinders, pyramids, and prisms complete the modern look.

- 3) **High tech rods.** Modern and high tech go together well. One company, Vesta Hardware, distributes the Space Probes Collection, which is a line of metal rods and metal and glass finials with an LED module in them which lights up. The lights come in blue and white, but can be jazzed up further with six different color filters, including pink and purple.

If your client wants something with the look of true forged metal, many companies make wrought iron rods and finials. The rods tend to run a little thinner than other metal rods mostly because of their weight. Wrought iron can be twisted into a number of different configurations including multiple twists, plain round and square. Iron Art by Orion forges their own rods. They offer, along with their twisted rods, square hammered rods and ones that take a twist on the wooden rods looking like metal, by making the metal look like wood and bamboo. Wrought iron rods are usually sold with wrought iron finials in an array of shapes from leaves, birds and arrows to grapes and geometric shapes.

Finials for rods come in a thousand and ten different materials, shapes, configurations and finishes. The most popular finials are made from wood and resin. Resin can be cut and shaped more easily than wood. So these finials tend to be less expensive.

Once they have a finish on them it is often difficult, if not impossible, to tell the difference. Another popular material for finials is glass. These are available in solid round, cut crystal



*Photograph 2
Vesta, Inc.
Space Probe Collection
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and even frosted shapes. What is astounding is the range and number of different types of finials which can be created. One workroom I know recently counted her hardware catalogs. She came up with twenty-one, each with at least 25 to 35 different finials, not including the different finishes that can be put on each one.

Brackets, rings, end caps, drapery batons, and tiebacks, come in plain looks which are strictly functional, or they can be ordered as ornate pieces which add to the overall look. United Supply Co. even has a centerpiece to attach two rods together which is so pretty it should never have to hide behind a center bracket.

So, what if you want your decorative hardware to do more than just hold stationary panels on rings or have valances velcroed® to it? Many companies now offer decorative traverse rods. They seem to come in two different types: "C" rings in which the decorative rings are a traverse system that goes across the rod, and traditional traverse in which the functional hardware is placed in a groove in the rod and the drapes seem to float from the bottom of the rod. Some companies such as Iron Art by Orion have brackets which allow the rings to traverse over them without interference.

Drapery hardware is much more than just functional and decorative rods, brackets and finials. Hardware can be found that will go with any window treatment that can be designed. There are swing arms, which are like half drapery rods which swing away from the wall. Metal, resin, plaster and wood cornices can add a luxurious topper to panels. Many of the newer valance patterns are designed to be installed on medallions in the shape of flowers, squares or fleur de lis.

Large 4" x 8" sconces can hold an informal drapery swag or be used as a bracket for the decorative rod.

Although there are thousands of drapery hardware designs, knowing the basics will help you pick the perfect hardware for your clients.

Photograph 1 and 2 were provided by Vesta, Inc. (To the Trade Only).
Photographs 2 through 6 were provided by Brimar®.



Photograph 3
Carved wood illustration.



Photograph 4
Hand-carved wood finial.



Photograph 5
Clear acrylic finial.



Photograph 6
Resin finial and steel finial.



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