

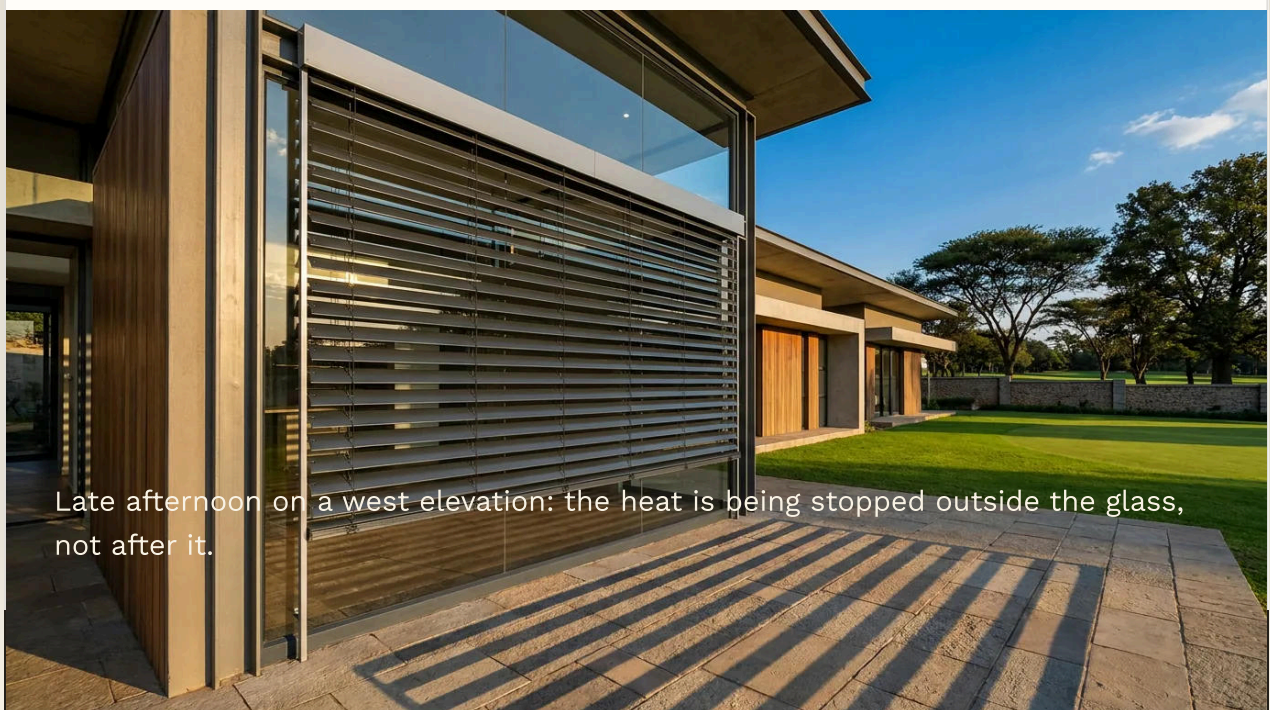
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— THE RIVER CLUB SUN & SHADING COMPANION

Four o'clock on the fairway

Everything we know about the light on this side of Sandton: where it comes from, what it does to each wall of your house, and what we'd fit on each. Free to read, nothing to sign up for.

- WRITTEN FOR RIVER CLUB • SOURCES LISTED AT THE FOOT
- ABOUT A NINE-MINUTE READ



Late afternoon on a west elevation: the heat is being stopped outside the glass, not after it.

— WHERE YOU LIVE

One suburb, two completely different briefs

River Club is a leafy pocket of roughly 2,600 homes south-west of Sandton, most of them large and screened by trees old enough to have arrived with the suburb. The land was farm — part of Driefontein, established in the 1840s — until a private golf club opened its course here in 1968. The houses on the frontage grew up alongside the fairways, which is why so many were designed around a view rather than the sun.

That leaves two separate shading problems in one suburb, wanting opposite answers.

The golf-frontage side. Big view-facing glazing, a low wall rather than a neighbour's roofline, nothing upwind of the patio but mown grass. Wonderful for the outlook — and the glass takes the full afternoon with no borrowed shade to lean on.

The greenbelt side. Ground falling toward the Braamfontein Spruit, Johannesburg's longest river and one of the longest urban greenbelts anywhere. Here the canopy already does half the work: rooms are darker and cooler, and over-specifying blackout is the commonest way to spend on a problem you don't have.

The useful question in River Club is almost never “what blind should I buy?” It is “which of my windows actually has a problem, and at what hour?”

What follows answers it in order: what the sun does here, what it does to each wall, what we'd fit and what's wrong with each option, and what nobody can tell you without standing in the room.

— THE LIGHT HERE

Almost overhead in December. Long and low in June.

Johannesburg sits at latitude 26°11' south. On the December solstice the midday sun climbs to roughly **87° above the horizon** — within a few degrees of straight overhead — and the day runs 05:13 to 19:00. Six months later that same noon sun sits low in the *northern* sky and the day is barely ten and a half hours long.

Two consequences follow, and they explain most of the shading mistakes we're called out to fix.

A roof overhang is a summer device, not an afternoon one. An 87° beam barely clears the sill, so an eave stops it. By four o'clock that sun has swung west and dropped, arriving almost horizontally under every overhang you own. Fixed shade can't follow it; adjustable shade can.

North is the elevation to keep, not kill. Here it's the north window that collects winter sun — a roughly 40° beam reaching metres into the room on a bright July morning. Block it permanently and you've bought a colder house for six months.

The Highveld then adds three of its own, each changing a specification.

- **Fierce ultraviolet.** At 1,753 m under cloudless high-pressure skies, clear-sky summer UV here reaches an index of 13 — a fade-and-fabric question as much as a comfort one.
- **A hard storm season.** Roughly 700 mm of rain falls October to March, largely as late-afternoon thunderstorms, with supercell frequency peaking in October and November.
- **Hail at the wrong hour.** Hailstorms typically last about fifteen minutes and arrive mid-to-late afternoon — the hour your awning is most likely to be out.
- **A dry, frosty winter.** July days reach 18–19 °C and nights drop to around 4 °C with frost common. Gauteng's strongest summer winds come predominantly from the east.

THE SUN OVER RIVER CLUB, BY SEASON

SEASON	NOON SUN HEIGHT	DAYLIGHT	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR GLASS
December solstice	≈ 87° — nearly overhead	05:13 to 19:00, 13 h 47 m	Midday is easy; 15:00 onward is brutal on anything facing west. Early sun reaches south-side rooms too.
March & September	≈ 64°, due north at noon	About twelve hours	The transition weeks. North rooms start letting real depth of sun in; west is still hot late.
June solstice	≈ 40°, low in the north	10 h 30 m	Free heating through north glass. Nights near 4 °C with frost common — insulation matters more than shade.

Solstice altitudes and day lengths are measured figures for Johannesburg; the equinox and June noon heights are the standard geometry for 26°11' S. [Sources at the foot of this page.](#)

— WALL BY WALL

Which of your windows actually has a problem

Walk the outside with a compass on your phone. Almost every River Club brief resolves into these four cases.

WEST · THE HARD ONE

The fairway lounge from three o'clock

If your main glass looks over the course, there's a fair chance it faces west. From mid-afternoon the sun is low, strong and arriving under the eave at seated eye level, and the room keeps radiating heat after it's gone. This is where an interior blind alone struggles: fabric behind glass still absorbs the energy that made it through the pane, then re-emits it inward.

What we'd do: stop it outside the glass if the budget stretches — external venetians or a zip screen — with an interior sunscreen roller behind as the everyday glare layer.

NORTH · THE ONE TO KEEP

Winter's best asset, summer's nuisance

North glass takes high sun in summer, which an eave handles, and low sun in winter, which you want — so the answer is almost never blackout, but something you move with the season. The catch is fade: high-UV Highveld light takes timber, rugs and artwork faster than most people expect.

What we'd do: venetians or a light sunscreen roller — adjustable, never permanent.

EAST · THE EARLY ONE

Bedrooms and an 05:13 sunrise

Midsummer sunrise is 05:13, so east bedrooms take direct low sun an hour before most households want to be awake. There's a second question on the golf side: walkers and cart paths pass closer than a street would, and sunscreen that reads as reflective by day turns see-through once the lamps are on.

What we'd do: blackout in the bedrooms, or a double roller — sunscreen by day, blackout by night, one bracket.

SOUTH · THE QUIET ONE

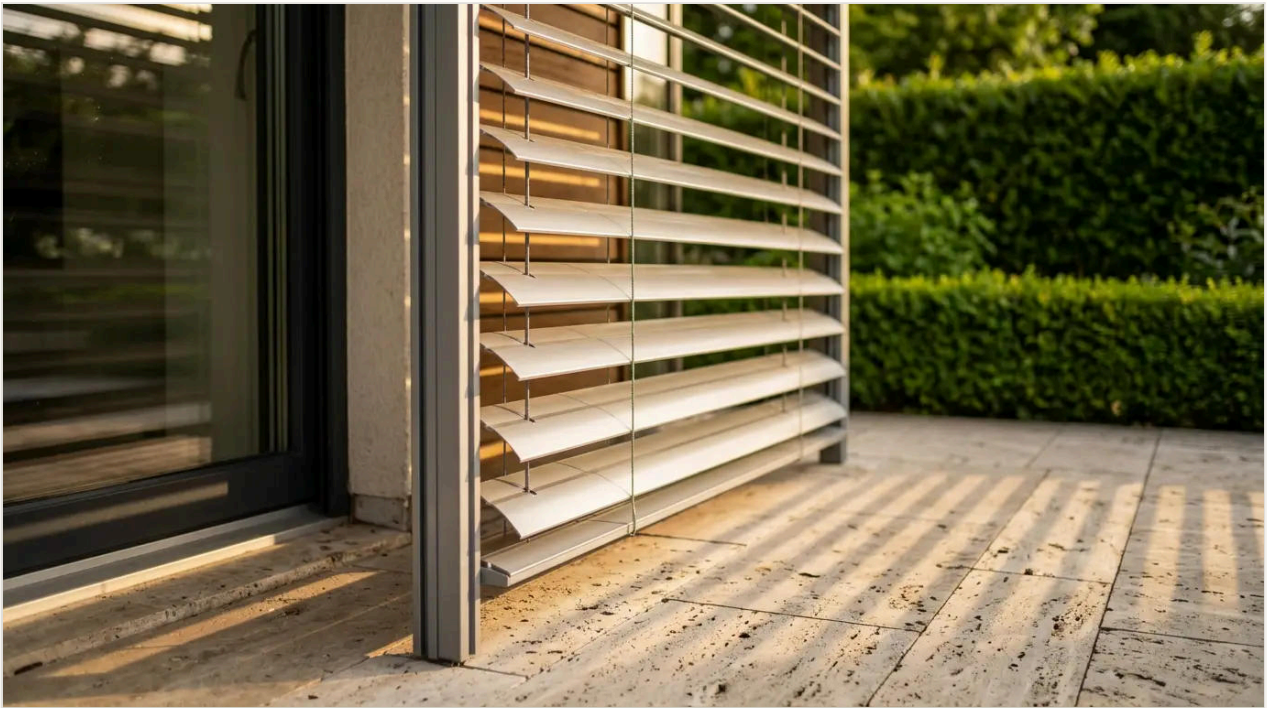
Even light, and one summer surprise

South rooms get soft, even light most of the year and rarely need heat control. The surprise is midsummer: with the sun south of the equator in December it rises and sets south of the east–west line, so a south room catches raw low sun early and again near sunset — the two moments people forget when they decide “nothing needed here”.

What we'd do: the lightest thing that solves privacy.

Seven products, and what's wrong with each of them

Every option below is right somewhere and wrong somewhere else. Tap “add to my window list” on anything that sounds like your house — it'll be waiting, ticked, on the form below.



FOR A WEST OR NORTH-WEST FACADE

External venetian blinds

Wide aluminium slats in guide rails, mounted **outside** the glass. They beat an interior blackout roller for one physical reason: they stop the sun before it reaches the pane, so the heat never gets in. Tilting them keeps the fairway view while cutting glare — a closed roller can't.

The honest catch: comfortably the dearest shading here, needing a motor and wind sensor to be safe outside, and cleaning because it lives in the weather. On a modest west window a sunscreen roller does most of the job for far less — we'll say so.

[Read the product page](#)



EVERYDAY GLARE, AND BEDROOMS

Sunscreen and blackout roller blinds

One smooth flat sheet on a tube. A 3–5% openness sunscreen kills glare and much of the UV while leaving the fairway readable; blackout does what the name says. In an east bedroom, both on one double bracket is the honest answer to an 05:13 sunrise.

The honest catch: a sunscreen is only private while it's brighter outside than in; after dark that reverses. And an inside-reveal roller leaves a light gap at the edges — fine in a lounge, sometimes not in a bedroom.



ROOMS THAT MUST HOLD THEIR TEMPERATURE

Cellular honeycomb blinds

The fabric folds into rows of hexagonal cells that trap still air against the glass, and that works both ways — slowing heat in through a west window in January, and heat out on a 4 °C July night. Here you get both problems in one house.

The honest catch: you can't see through it. A light-and-temperature product, not a view product — so it belongs in bedrooms and studies, not across your best outlook. It also stacks into a deeper headbox than a roller.



THE PATIO, ON THE GOLF SIDE

Folding-arm awnings

Shade you can put away — the whole argument on this elevation. You want cover over the table at four o'clock in February and it gone in June, so the winter sun reaches the back of the house. A fixed pergola can't make that choice.

The honest catch: fabric on arms is the most weather-exposed thing we fit, and the storm season peaks in the very hours you'd have it out. We won't fit one on an open fairway elevation without a wind sensor.

[Read the product page](#)



A COVERED PATIO YOU WANT TO USE MORE

Zip screens

NORTH ROOMS, KITCHENS, BATHROOMS

Aluminium or timber venetian blinds

The most literal answer to a north elevation, because the slat angle — not the blind's height — does the work. Tilt down in December to throw glare off the ceiling; open flat in July to let the low sun warm the floor.

The honest catch: more moving parts than a roller, more surfaces to dust. On wide spans they get heavy to lift, and timber slats don't enjoy a steamy bathroom — that's an aluminium job.

ANYTHING HIGH, WIDE, OR OUTSIDE

Motorised blinds & automation

On a stair void, a clerestory or a run of stacking doors, a motor is what makes a blind get used daily instead of left down all summer. It also unlocks the safety case outside: a wind sensor can only retract an awning if there's a motor.

The honest catch: the power has to arrive somewhere, and in an older River Club house that can mean a roof-void route or a battery motor. On a low, reachable window a chain is cheaper and lasts longer — we'll say so rather than sell you a motor.

[Read the product page](#)

— OPTIONAL, AND FREE

Want this marked up for your house?

Tell us which rooms or elevations are the problem and we'll send this guide back with our notes against your windows. No visit booked, nobody phoning you.



— BEFORE ANYTHING IS DRILLED

Estates, body corporates and the sixty-year line

River Club is a mix — large freehold homes, gated estates and sectional-title schemes side by side. Inside an estate or a scheme, the trustees or aesthetics committee usually have a view on anything visible from outside: a cassette colour, an external venetian's shade, a headbox breaking a facade line. We don't know your scheme's rules and won't pretend to — but we'll put a spec sheet together for that submission, free.

There's a second piece of paperwork almost nobody knows about. Under section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act, **no structure older than sixty years may be altered without a permit** from the provincial heritage authority — and the trigger is age alone, not whether the house is a declared heritage site.

The course opened in 1968, so the oldest houses on the frontage reach that mark from roughly 2028. Most aren't there yet, and a blind inside a reveal isn't a facade alteration anyway. But if yours is one of the earliest and something is going to be fixed to an outside wall, ask before the holes are made.

Five things this guide genuinely cannot tell you

Everything above is true of River Club. None of it is true of *your* house until somebody has stood in the room — and these five answers, each needing a tape measure and a pair of eyes, decide the specification.

01

The exact reveal depth, and what the top fixing lands in

Whether a blind fits inside the reveal or has to face-fix outside changes the product, the light gaps and the price. So does what's above the window — a lintel, a brick course, or a plasterboard bulkhead with nothing behind it. Five minutes on site; guesswork from a photograph.

02

What your trees are already doing at four o'clock in February

River Club's canopy shades a great many windows for free, the greenbelt side more than the fairway side. Knowing which need nothing at all is worth as much as knowing which need external venetians — and that judgement is made standing in the room at four o'clock, not read off a plan.

03

Where the motor power can actually go

In a house built in the late sixties or seventies and extended since, there's rarely a neat cable route waiting. Sometimes the roof void solves it, sometimes a battery motor is the honest answer. It has to be traced, not assumed.

04

How exposed your patio really is, and where a wind sensor must sit

A fairway-side patio has far less upwind obstruction than a walled garden, but exposure varies with the trees, the boundary and how the house sits. A sensor mounted in the wrong pocket of still air won't protect the awning it's wired to.

05

What the existing frames are — and which side the ground falls to

Original sixties and seventies aluminium or steel frames take fixings differently to a modern replacement, and a renovated section may have both in one room. If your stand falls toward the Spruit, the low side also sits colder on a still winter night — pushing some rooms toward cellular blinds.

— TWO WAYS FORWARD

Have us come and measure — or just get a range
first

Both start on the form below. Neither costs anything.

RECOMMENDED

The free expert measure & written quote

A consultant comes to you with fabric and slat samples, walks the elevations at the hour that matters, measures every opening and leaves a written quote itemised per window. Free, no obligation.

[Book my free measure](#)

OPTIONAL

Want a ballpark first?

Pop in rough sizes and we'll send a budget range by the next working day. Not sure how to measure? Leave it out — our consultant measures for free either way, and that's where the exact per-window pricing comes from.

Open the window list

— THE CLOSE

Book your free expert measure

One short form. Want a budget range too? Add rough sizes underneath — optional, and nobody will chase you.



— SOURCES

Where the numbers on this page come from

Every climate, sun-path, suburb and heritage figure above is taken from the following. Where something could not be verified for River Club specifically, we left it out or said so in the text rather than round it into a sentence.

- Suburb size, character, tree cover and the Driefontein Farm history — [Seeff area profile, River Club](#) and [Hamilton's area profile, River Club](#)
- Club incorporated 1966, course and clubhouse opened 1968 — [The River Club, "Our History"](#)
- The Braamfontein Spruit as Johannesburg's longest river and urban greenbelt — [Johannesburg Roads Agency](#) and [Braamfontein Spruit overview](#)
- Latitude and daily sun times for Johannesburg — [Gaisma, Johannesburg](#)
- Solstice noon sun altitude, sunrise/sunset and day length — [Solstice & equinox in Johannesburg](#)
- Why north-facing glass collects the winter sun in the southern hemisphere — [Southern-hemisphere sun-path illustrations](#)
- Altitude, Köppen classification, rainfall, winter temperatures and frost — [Climates to Travel: Johannesburg](#) and [Weather Atlas: Johannesburg climate](#)
- Highveld thunderstorm season, October to March — [Highveld thunderstorms: know the dangers](#)
- Supercell frequency over Gauteng and its October–November peak — [University of Pretoria: characteristics of warm-season supercell thunderstorms over Gauteng and Mpumalanga](#)
- Hail duration and time of day, and Highveld hail frequency — [Hail in South Africa](#)
- Clear-sky summer UV index of 13 for Johannesburg at 1,753 m — [Wright, "Solar Ultraviolet Radiation, Skin Cancer and Photoprotective Strategies in South Africa", Photochemistry and Photobiology, 2023](#)
- Gauteng summer wind direction — [South African Weather Service, Climate of South Africa](#)
- The sixty-year rule for altering a structure — [National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, section 34](#) and [The Heritage Portal: heritage processes FAQ](#)

