

CASE STUDY DESIGNING FOR LIFE: TRANSFORMING OUTDOOR LIVING

WITH ZIP-STYLE EXTERIOR SHADES



All photos: Private Residence – Aurora, CO with Phifer SheerWeave 2900 (5%) in Charcoal/Alpaca

Shading systems are an important part of modern outdoor living as they deliver comfort, privacy, and year-round usability. Two recent Colorado installations demonstrate how FlexShade® ZIP and ZIP XL systems from Draper At Home are meeting that need and reshaping expectations for outdoor environments.

A New Approach to Downsized Luxury

When a pair of Aurora homeowners transitioned from a large rural property to a 55+ community, they gained walkability and convenience but lost the privacy and sun protection they once enjoyed.

“They wanted to sit out on the patio and enjoy the sunset, but they also needed privacy from the walking trail right behind their house,” says James Nimock, owner and CEO of SunSaver, Inc.

SunSaver specified the Draper At Home FlexShade ZIP, a system engineered to lock the fabric into slim side channels, eliminating light gaps and preventing blowouts during Colorado’s windy afternoons. The result is a clean, architectural enclosure that preserves views while creating a comfortable, protected outdoor room at the touch of a simple handheld remote.

Castle Rock: Four-Season Luxury Entertainment

In Castle Rock, the design challenge was different but equally demanding. The homeowners frequently host outdoor events, including family dinners. However, their west-facing patio was unusable during summer evenings and exposed to neighboring upper-story decks.

“They host outdoor dinners all the time and were unable to use their patio during the summer months,” Nimock explains. “**With the ZIP XL, they can now enjoy the patio year-round.**”

SunSaver recessed a FlexShade ZIP XL into the patio structure, creating a seamless integration with the home’s architecture. With spans up to 25 feet wide, ZIP XL delivers the scale required for large openings while maintaining fabric tension and structural stability. In winter, the homeowners can lower the shade, activate a heating source, and enjoy a fully enclosed, climate-controlled space. Again, the control needed to be simple, with a handheld remote fitting the bill.



Why Draper? Performance, Reliability, and Design Integrity

Nimock has worked with shading systems for decades, and his assessment is direct.

“I believe Draper At Home has the highest-quality zipper shade on the market. The interior components and the welds are far superior,” Nimock said. “And they actually stand behind their warranties. That matters more than anything.”

From the manufacturer’s perspective, the engineering behind the ZIP family is intentional.

“The ZIP detail keeps the fabric securely in the side channels, preventing blowouts and eliminating light gaps,” said Clint Childress, Draper At Home Residential Market Director. “ZIP XL allows us to go up to 25 feet wide, which opens up design possibilities other systems can’t match.”

And because Draper At Home manufactures in the U.S., designers gain access to custom powder-coat finishes, a broad fabric library, and shorter lead times. These are critical advantages in today’s project-driven environment.

A Market Shift Toward Outdoor Performance Spaces

According to Nimock, ZIP-style exterior shades now represent at least half of SunSaver’s business.

“As homes develop, we’re seeing more covered patios and permanent structures,” Nimock said. “Draper At Home ZIP shades are the perfect complement. They turn those spaces into usable rooms.”

Design Insight: What Homeowners Should Know

Nimock encourages homeowners and designers to evaluate not just the product, but the partnership behind it.



“Your warranties and future service are only as good as the dealer in front of you and the manufacturer behind the product.”

For performance-driven homes, the combination of engineering, reliability, and design integration that shades bring to the table elevates outdoor spaces to become true living environments.



Hem Bar & Side Channel Detail



Headbox & Side Channel Detail



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