

GRUYERE, YARRA VALLEY · RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE · RACHCOFF VELLA

Gruyere Farmhouse

A hilltop sanctuary in the Yarra Valley, where precision light control meets the raw beauty of the Australian landscape.

ARCHITECT

Rachcoff Vella

BUILDER

BD Projects

SHADING

Evaya ev93D

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tatjana Plitt



PROJECT NARRATIVE

"Hilltop Hood"

Perched in Victoria's Yarra Valley, the Gruyere Farmhouse is a testament to a five-year journey of close collaboration between architects, consultants, builders, and clients. Set on a sprawling 100-acre property, the home seamlessly integrates into the hillside, shaped by the clients' intimate knowledge of the land from a self-contained cabin on the same site.

The design, by Rachcoff Vella Architecture, features a protected central courtyard framing breathtaking views across the Yarra Ranges, and an iconic 'Hilltop Hood' roof that shelters the lighter-framed living pavilion. Strategic material choices, including handmade bricks for the bedroom and utility wings, and dark metal cladding, harmonise the farmhouse with its surroundings, reflecting the natural geology and soil colours of the broader Yarra Ranges context.

The secluded courtyard offers protected amenities and a sense of enclosure, embodying a design philosophy that celebrates harmony between architecture and challenging weather patterns. The project was completed in 2022 and recognised with a 2024 Good Design Award in Architectural Design.

"Barely a day goes by where we don't feel incredibly special to live in such a wonderful creation."

— Matt Claughton & Leanne Calvitto, Clients



COURTYARD — GRUYERE FARMHOUSE



WEST ELEVATION — EVAYA EV93D EXTERNAL VENETIAN BLINDS IN MATTE BLACK · GRUYERE FARMHOUSE

PHOTOGRAPHY: TATJANA PLITT

Harmony with Harsh Weather Patterns

The conceptual framework of the Gruyere Farmhouse is grounded in a deep understanding of the site and its challenging weather patterns. The exposed hilltop position in the Yarra Valley demands a shading solution that can withstand high winds whilst delivering precise control of heat, light, and privacy across all four seasons.

To protect the delicate structure of the main living pavilion and its expansive glazing, Evaya ev93D external venetian blinds were specified. Their unique 93mm contoured slats interlock perfectly to provide exceptional room darkening capabilities and unparalleled wind stability, a crucial requirement for this exposed hilltop location.

When lowered, the dark matt finish of the ev93D venetians complements the farmhouse's architectural palette of dark metal cladding and handmade brick, offering a continuous, refined texture that grounds the home within its landscape. When raised, the blinds dissolve entirely into their custom pelmets, restoring the full transparency of the living pavilion and its connection to the sweeping Yarra Valley views.

External venetian blinds intercept solar radiation before it reaches the glazing, reducing cooling loads by up to 75% compared to internal blinds — a critical contribution to the home's thermal performance and year-round comfort.

75%

Reduction in solar heat gain vs. internal blinds

90°

Full range of slat tilt for precise light control

4400mm

Max width and height for large-scale glazing



EV93D IN WINDOW SURROUND



WEST ELEVATION



"The ev93D allows the facade to actively moderate sunlight, heat, and privacy transforming the home's relationship with the landscape across every hour of the day."

— Evaya

ev93D

93 mm Contoured Interlocking External Venetian

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The ev93D is a 93 mm contoured, interlocking external venetian blind system designed for architectural facades requiring complete room darkening, solar control and motorised tilt operation. The unique interlocking slat profile, combined with a Neoprene keder insert along each slat edge, eliminates noise and provides a precise seal when closed, creating one of the most technologically advanced automated louvre systems available.

HAGOFIX ATTACHMENT

Each ev93D is constructed with the Hagofix slat attachment system. A stainless steel connector is embedded into the rolled edge beading of each slat and attaches to a spigot fastened to a Kevlar/aramid woven tape. This provides extremely secure fastening, allows extensive and incremental control of blade angles, and ensures that each slat cannot swivel or slide out of position. The UV-resistant woven synthetic connecting element, with exact fold points, further ensures perfect closure and minimal stacking height.

LIFTING & GUIDANCE

The lifting system relies on a UV-stable Texband tape which passes through precision-machined, punched and drawn holes along the length of each slat. Stable, secure operation is guaranteed by Zamac side pins mechanically riveted to the slats, which engage in the extruded aluminium side channels. Each side channel features a patented keder insert to reduce noise and friction. The ev93D is typically lowered closed at 0° and raised in the horizontal position at 90° open.

MOTORISATION

The ev93D is compatible with the Geiger GJ56 tubular motor, enabling fully automated tilt and lift operation. Integration with building management systems, sun tracking sensors and smart home platforms allows the facade to respond dynamically to solar conditions — maximising thermal comfort while minimising energy loads.

SPECIFICATIONS

Slat Width	93 mm
Slat Profile	Contoured / Interlocking
Slat Gauge	0.45 mm
Maximum Width	4,400 mm
Minimum Width	800 mm
Maximum Height	4,500 mm
Max Square Area	16 m ²
Tilting Range	0° – 90°
Room Darkening	Yes
Motor	Geiger GJ56
Slat Attachment	Hagofix System
Lifting Tape	UV-Stable Texband
Tilt Tape	Kevlar/Aramid Woven
Side Pins	Zamac (machine riveted)
Side Channel Insert	Patented Neoprene Keder
Side Channel Types	6 profiles (A–F + Shroud)
Guidance	Side Channel
Slat Finish	0.45 mm Stove Enamelled
Alloy	Copper-free aluminium

KEY FEATURES

- Interlocking profile — complete room darkening at 0°
- Neoprene keder insert — noise elimination and precise seal
- Hagofix system — slat cannot swivel or slide out of position
- Kevlar/aramid tape — UV-resistant, exact fold points
- Omega punching — correct louvre spacing and wind stability
- Precision machined on-site — roll-formed aluminium alloy
- Stove enamelled — scratch, shock and corrosion resistant
- Available in standard and custom project colours

SLAT PRODUCTION // ev93D

Each ev93D slat is roll-formed and precision-machined on-site from 0.45 mm gauge aluminium alloy, chemically pre-treated and stove enamelled for maximum durability. Omega Punching creates horseshoe-shaped clefts at precise intervals, ensuring correct spacing between louvres and enabling incremental blade angle adjustment. Precision-punched and drawn holes allow the passage of Hagofix connectors, Texband lifting tapes, Kevlar/aramid tilt tapes and stainless steel wire guides.

The slats at Gruyere Farmhouse are finished in Dulux Electro® Black Ace (906-9116F), a flat, zero-sheen matte black with an ultra-low LRV of 4%. Scratch, shock and corrosion resistant, the stove-enamelled finish is reinforced with copper-free aluminium alloy for added strength and flexibility. Custom colours and project-specific alternatives are available upon request — including Colorbond, RAL and Interpon specifications.

STANDARD COLOUR RANGE



PROJECT FINISH: Dulux Electro® Black Ace · 906-9116F · Matte · LRV 4%

Technologically Advanced Design



CONTOURED 93MM INTERLOCKING SLATS



EV93D IN CUSTOM WINDOW SURROUND

● **Hagofix
Slat System**

Stainless steel connector embedded in rolled edge beading, attached to Kevlar/aramid woven tape for maximum stability.

● **Neoprene
Keder Insert**

Noise suppression rubber insert on the leading edge of each slat prevents damage and enhances thermal reflective properties.

● **Zamac
Side Pins**

Mechanically riveted to each slat, engaging in extruded aluminium side guides with patented keder insert for silent, smooth operation.

● **UV-Stable
Texband Tape**

Precision machined lifting system with UV-stable Texband tape passing through punched and drawn holes along each slat.



PROJECT CREDITS

PROJECT
Gruyere Farmhouse
BUILDER
BD Projects

LOCATION
Gruyere, Yarra Valley, VIC
EXTERNAL SHADING
Evaya ev93D

TYPE
Residential — New Farmhouse
PHOTOGRAPHY
Tatjana Plitt

ARCHITECT
Rachcoff Vella Architecture
AWARD
2024 Good Design Award — Architectural Design