

New Niche For European Multipoint Systems

BY KATHLEEN KALVAN

In recent years, multipoint lock systems have been embraced by a wide variety of American manufacturers for high-quality entry and patio doors. A number of hardware suppliers are currently competing aggressively for the domestic multipoint door market.

Now that the doors have been opened, windows are emerging as the next frontier. Functional Fenestration, an independent supplier

of American and European hardware, reports a growing interest in European multipoint window systems among window manufacturers. In turn, the custom manufacturers interviewed for this article all reported increased interest in this product from their clients over the past year. Here are three general reasons for this development.

The first reason is an architectural trend toward larger openings. As the

allow size options up to ten feet tall. "Since tall windows can be locked effectively with this hardware, we can now offer the aesthetic options our clients are looking for," said Joe Mathews, of Architectural Millwork of Santa Barbara, Calif. Architectural Millworks is one of many showrooms to have added multipoint-equipped windows to their showroom displays.

Second is the broader range of applications possible with these systems. "Clients are now more open to European designs such as tilt and turn, or windows with copper or aluminum cladding that employ multipoint systems," said Robert Quibuyen, of T & F Custom Wood Products in San Marcos, Calif. "Before, no one in America wanted inswing windows, but now there's enough interest that we're seeing an opportunity here. We're building lots of folding windows with this hardware on them, as well."

Indeed, multipoint systems allow

great freedom and creativity in window design. Their modular nature allows many different sash sizes and handle heights, providing a multipoint solution for almost any situation. Window multipoint locking hardware is currently being employed for inswing and outswing casement windows, awning windows and operable sidelights. Window multipoint locks, known as espagnolettes or cremones, are available with narrow backsets that make them ideal for narrow stiles. Optional corner drives allow additional locking points around the top and bottom rails on the sash.

The third reason is the increased variety and quality of decorative hardware options now available through European and custom sources. "The home designers we work with appreciate the room for creativity that these windows give them, especially the ability to use custom handles — a choice that hasn't been available on traditional



Multipoint espagnolettes for windows, with optional cams.

ability to build larger windows is contingent on hardware capable of supporting them, windows equipped with European-style multipoints

American sashes," said George Topalian, of Brothers' Custom Windows in San Carlos, Calif. This is a significant shift from the "one style fits all" handle choices of the previous decades. Additionally, many handle styles are available that match existing door hardware.

In addition, all multipoint systems — for doors and windows — offer increased security, superior weather-sealing, protection from warping and ease of installation. All multipoint systems work in a standard 16 millimeter "Eurogroove", which minimizes set-up and tooling considerations.

A final benefit of some multipoint systems is that they offer a possible "off the shelf" solution to the stringent Dade County, Fla., building codes that are currently driving the level of performance required in hurricane prone markets. With all that this product has to offer, multipoint hardware is emerging as a niche market worth watching. ■