

# Extended Living

*Adding a sunroom lets you enjoy an outdoor lifestyle a little longer.*

By Carly Peters



In Manitoba we know all too well how fast the warm months can slip by (not to mention much of that time is spent avoiding the hum of mosquitos). But an outdoor lifestyle doesn't have to disappear when the first snowflake flies. Sunrooms can bring you out into nature even on some of Winnipeg's colder winter days.

Steve Sarens of Sunshade Products Ltd. has been installing these "home extensions" for over 35 years, and says they have become a popular addition to new and existing homes.

"When we started our family business in the 1970s, decks and outdoor living was an afterthought. Today, the outdoor lifestyle with anything that appears in the home moving outside, has people seeing the benefit of a room like this," he says.

"First and foremost, the benefit of a three-season sunroom is just that, being able to enjoy an outdoor enclosed space almost all year round. We tell people that on average, sunrooms users can enjoy their room on a -10 to -15 day, with no additional heat and still be comfortable. Yet, we tend to undersell the sunrooms capabilities," states Sarens.

"We've seen a south facing sunroom on a -31 day still be +5 inside with no heat," he explains.

"On one sunny day with a -47 wind chill, it was only -1 inside."

Exposure is certainly something one should consider when planning a sunroom explains Sarens. He also points to lifestyle, family size, room usage and house constraints as other considerations when choosing size and placement.

"If there is a deck in place already you are constrained by the space," he states. But, Sunshade Products Ltd. can usually add to existing structures. The best-case scenario is to start from scratch in order to achieve exactly what the client wants.

Utilizing concrete pads and teleposts (instead of piles) the company's Glastar Sunroom System offers a unique "floatation" design to ensure when the soil moves (which does happen in Manitoba) that the structure can compensate for this movement. Developed in Manitoba, the system allows panels to float independently of the main structure preventing damage to the sunroom and the house.

This innovation and all their actual products are made in Manitoba, a benefit to users since the makers understand the province's weather.

"The weather patterns have changed over the years and we have changed with it. So if you've bought from somewhere else where they don't have the same weather, it might not be the best fit," he explains. "We are doing constant research and development to our systems and react to change when needed."

***Sunshade Products Ltd. recently received their 25-year membership certificate from the Better Business Bureau, along with the recognition that during their time with the Bureau not one complaint was brought against the company, highlighting the company's high customer satisfaction.***

