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## Skylight Designs Lighten Up

New styles retract, tint on demand and pipe in light through 30-foot tubes.



PHOTO: JOHN DOUGLASS

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0 COMMENTS

Skylights, or daylighting systems, as they are known in the building trade, are popular “not just for aesthetics,” says Jim Lucas, spokesman for Maine-based maker Wasco Products Inc., “but for energy efficiency.” They can help heat rooms during winter months and, if vented or tinted, cool down spaces in the summer, he says. Once little more than a high-up window, skylights now come in a variety of styles and materials for the luxury home. Here are a few examples of skylight innovations.

—Nancy Matsumoto



PHOTO: LITBA.

### Open-and-Shut Case

While skylights that can be opened tend to be operated by winches, Litra USA's designs employ a patented motorized system, operated by button or remote control, for residential and commercial settings. In homes, they are ideal for kitchen extensions, dining rooms, courtyards and swimming pools, says partner Alex Lauria. The New Jersey-based company is part of an international company with branches in Europe and Canada.

**Price:** For a standard residential size of 20-by-20 feet, including installation: \$120 per square foot



PHOTO: VICTORIA BALVA

### Modern Art

Toronto-based Artistic Line Studio designs and manufactures custom stained-glass skylights in traditional and modern styles. Artist Victoria Balva and her husband, Eugene Bakumenko, a civil engineer, arrived in Canada from Ukraine in 2000 and began showing Ms. Balva's work at design fairs. Today, they do international commissions. They cut glass pieces and metal frames—including for dome skylights—using a programmable water-jet cutting machine. Their traditional pieces suggest European ceiling designs of the 18th and 19th centuries. Abstract styles include fused glass nuggets, and globes with sparkle and texture.

**Price:** From \$250 to \$1,000 a square foot, not including shipping and installation



PHOTO: JOHN DOUGLASS

### Fitting a Pitch

If you live in a pitched-roof home and want to add a skylight, Maine-based Wasco Products makes a model to fit almost any existing roof. The panes of the “low-profile” model rest on and use the building's rafters as windowpane dividers, allowing in as much natural sunlight as possible.

**Price:** About \$10,000 for a 5-by-15-foot system, not including installation, depending on glazing and finishing choices

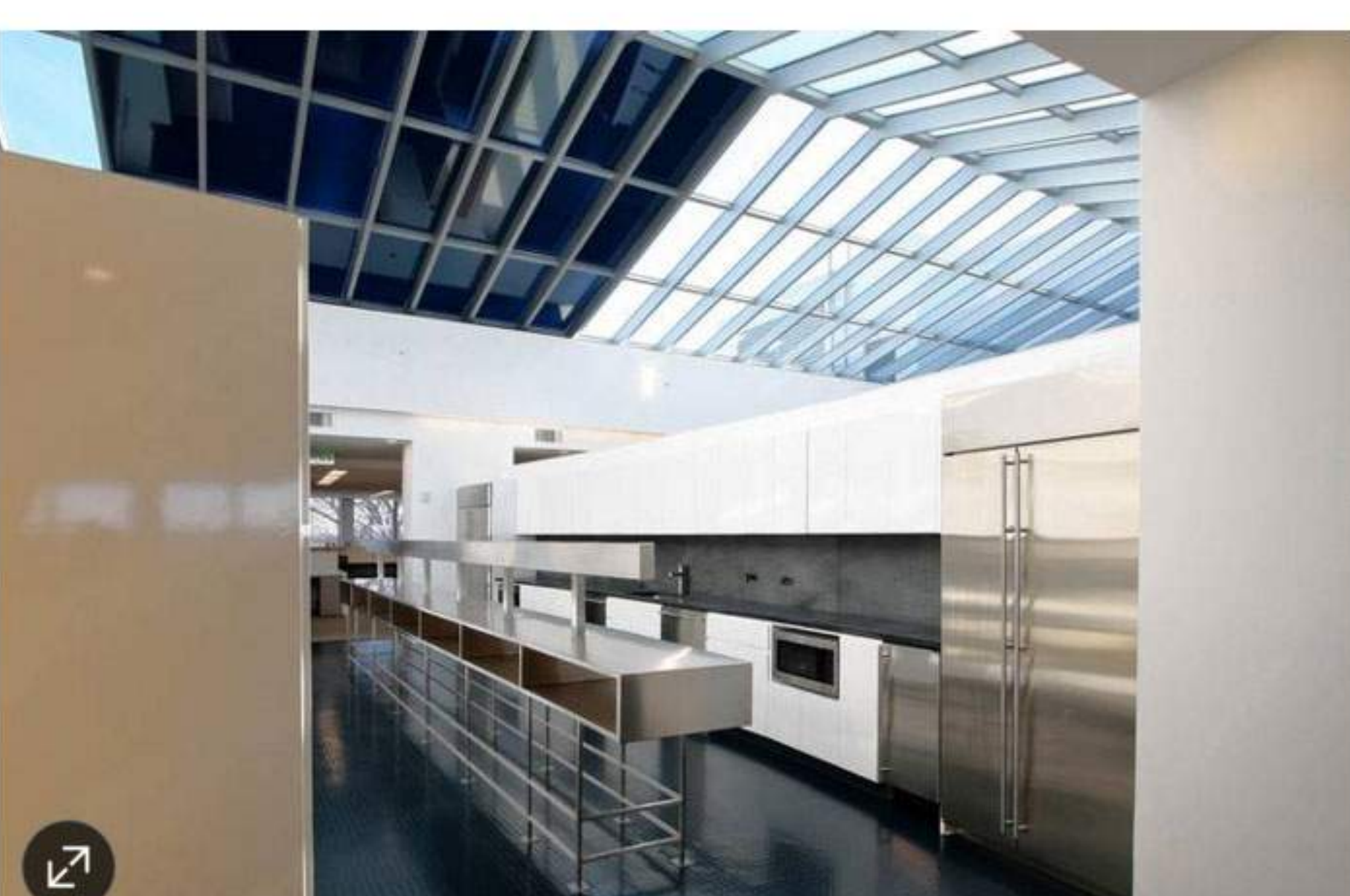


PHOTO: SAGEGLASS

### Gray Areas

SageGlass, a Minnesota-based company, uses nanotechnology to apply five micropically thin layers of ceramic material to the glass of its skylights. Low-voltage electricity makes the glass darken in tint, says Derek Malmquist, vice president of marketing, preventing people below feeling “poached” during hot days, and saving energy by eliminating rising heat. A daily tinting schedule can be programmed to follow the sun, then tweaked via wall-mounted switches or wireless apps. Though primarily sold to commercial clients, SageGlass skylights can be custom-ordered for residential use.

**Price:** Average \$50 to \$100 per square foot for glass and controls, not including installation



PHOTO: SOLATUBE INTERNATIONAL, INC.

### Let the Sunshine In

What if your home has a dark space with no skylight-able roof? California-based Solatube International specializes in a type of skylight that pipes in the sun through tubes up to 30 feet long that can be bent to reach dark interior spaces. Often installed in series of 10- to 14-inch diameter units, similar to flush-mounted fixtures, Solatube's Daylighting System uses reflective linings, mirrors, ridges and angles to pull in more light than regular skylights.

**Price:** \$600 to \$800 per unit, including installation, depending on optional features such as a ventilator fan

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