

Ask Jon Eakes

Ventilation-Maximum - A Canadian Company in Quebec

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Why I like Ventilation-Maximum products

History 101 of perfecting snow country housing

Getting air in and out of our house has always been difficult, complicated by heavy snow, blowing snow and freezing rain. Historically all Canadian houses had vents in each of the end walls of an attic, called Gable vents, that let wind blow through the top of the attic.

As we started building larger and more complicated attics, we discovered they weren't very efficient for that job as well as they often let snow blow into the attic. So for years we tried to modernize attics with Button vents, the low-lying bumps you used to see on most roofs that were invented for warm climates with no snow. Then came the turbines, originally designed for hog barns, where they should have stayed. All the turbines ended up making horrible noises as they spun on rusted bearings, freezing and scooping snow into the attic, or with very strong winds creating enough of a vacuum to pull the cellulose insulation out of the attic and onto the neighbour's yard. Traditional louvered bathroom and kitchen exhaust hoods weren't doing much better as most of them froze open or froze closed or made a lot of noise and all of them eventually created cold air drafts. But that was all we had to work with.

The Square Cupola

Finally, one Quebec company started designing ventilation devices specifically for our snowy climate – starting with the square cupola. Ventilation-Maximum from Quebec saw the positive side of the turbine vent – it stood high above the snow. So they designed, and patented, that square roof vent that looks like a cupola that could replace the noisy turbine and stick up through the snow but they added wind baffles to keep the blowing snow out – continuous reliable attic exhaust with no moving parts. At first they sold it with a round base to be able to directly replace turbines, then they developed the adjustable square sloped roof bases. It worked.

In just a few years, it became the standard in Quebec and is presently spreading across Canada. I stand by this company because they started with excellent design and solid construction of heavier metal and have stuck with it over the years.

Snow Country Ridge Vents

The growing popularity of Cathedral ceilings required special vents that draw air up from the soffits between the rafters and then out along the full length of the roof ridge. But these never really worked in snow country because they quickly blocked up with snow. So Ventilation-Maximum decided to cover the ridge opening with a closed sheet metal channel that fed into one or several of their successful cupolas moved up to the very top of the roof.

Finally, a true snow country ridge vent – expensive because they are custom-built to fit your roof – but they work efficiently all winter long.

Through the Wall Ventilation

Then they tackled the even more difficult question of bathroom and kitchen exhaust hoods. The problems – you know them all: noisy flappers, baffles freezing open or freezing closed, cold air flowing back in freezing the steak on the stove, such cheap plastic or tin construction that you have to replace them often.

So their through the wall exhaust hoods are solid, with cushioned double sealed dampers and good wind protection. These are the best exhaust hoods I have ever seen.

See and Compare

So yes, I invite you to visit their website and search out their products in your stores - there are many more than I have mentioned here. You can always contact the company to see who carries their products near you – and tell them that I sent you. Compare their products closely to look alike products – they are not the same. Many stores don't stock them because they believe you would rather continue to buy and replace junk – others have figured out that many homeowners do want to buy quality that lasts. So if you are a DIY'er or hiring a contractor – specify Ventilation-Maximum. I do.

Here are some of the articles on my site that talk specifically about their products:

Should I Install a Turbine Vent On My Roof?

Ridge Vents for Snow Country

Stopping Cold Air Drafts from Ducts to the Outdoors

How to Properly Duct an Exhaust Fan Through a Roof

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