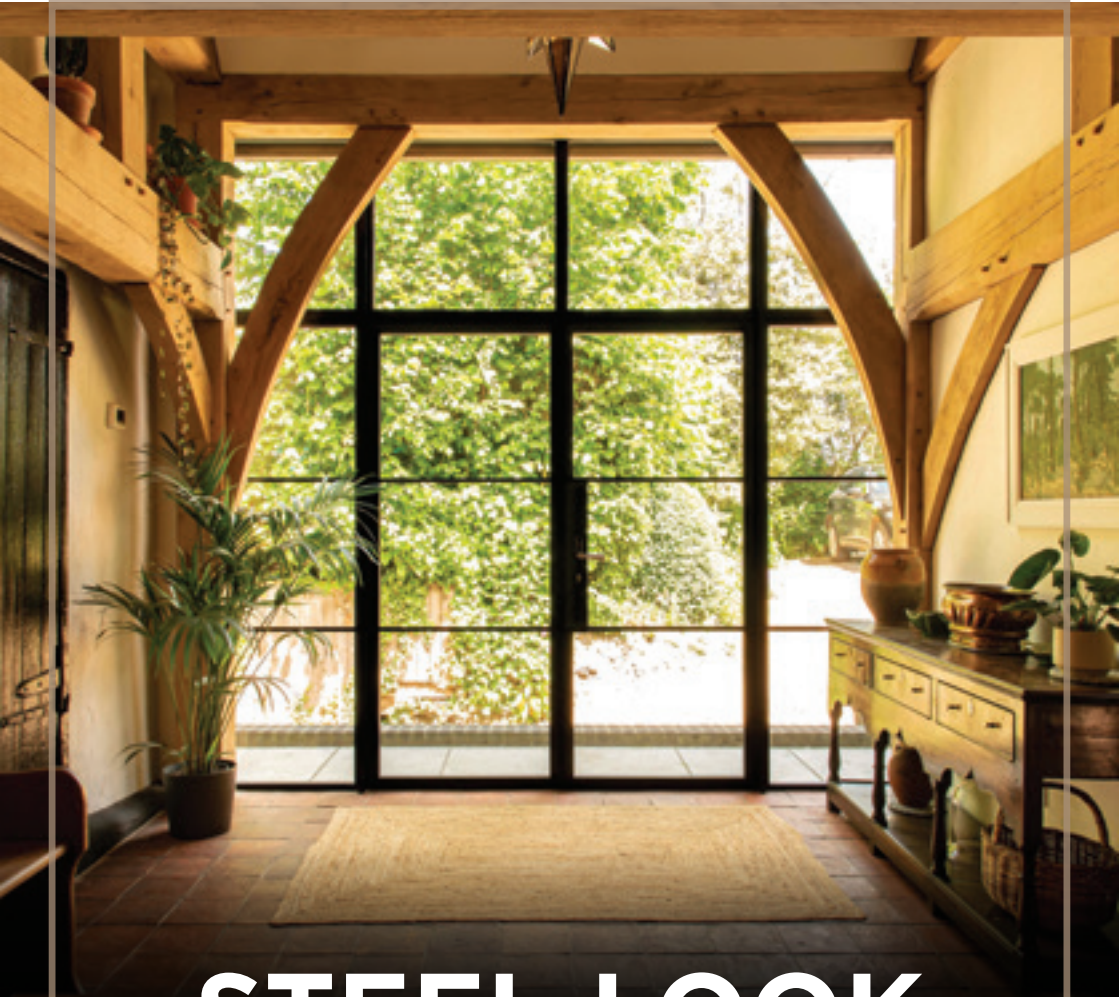


ALUCO™

Steel Look Collection

Interior • Exterior • Doors • Screens • Windows



STEEL LOOK BUYERS GUIDE

CHOOSING THE BEST ALUMINIUM
STEEL LOOK WINDOWS AND DOORS

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— Exterior Steel Look Collection —

ALUCO STEEL LOOK BUYERS GUIDE

Choosing the Best Aluminium Steel Look Windows and Doors

Original steel windows and doors have long been admired for their timeless elegance, heritage appeal, and slim, minimalist frames. Today, aluminium steel look glazing provides a superior alternative, capturing the aesthetic of classic steel with added benefits such as durability, energy efficiency, and low maintenance.

At Aluco, we are proud to be the first company in the UK to create a complete collection of steel look windows and doors. Steel look glazing is our sole focus, and our expertise ensures that we craft the most authentic steel look, Art Deco, and heritage-inspired aluminium windows and doors.

This guide will help you understand what to look for, the differences in quality across the market, and why Aluco is the most trusted name in the industry. We want your new steel look windows and doors to be the last you will ever buy.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STEEL WINDOWS

Steel windows date back to the early 20th century, with Crittall® being the most recognised brand. These windows gained popularity for their elegant design, ultra-slim sightlines, and ability to create expansive glazed areas. Over time, steel windows became a defining feature of industrial, Art Deco, and heritage architecture, gracing everything from factories and warehouses to high-end residential properties. Many original steel windows remain functional today, a testament to their quality and craftsmanship.

The Rise of Aluminium Steel Look Windows

Aluminium steel look glazing not only became a sought-after trend but also provided a viable alternative for replacing old metal windows in period homes and new developments.

With advancements in aluminium manufacturing, designers and homeowners sought an alternative to traditional steel that maintained its aesthetic while improving energy efficiency, affordability, and longevity. Approximately 15 years ago, aluminium steel look systems emerged as a solution for replacing ageing metal windows. Early aluminium designs were basic, offering only a rough approximation of steel windows. Steel look doors were initially limited to first-floor balcony doors due to security concerns.

Over time, improvements in aluminium engineering resulted in high-performance steel look systems that rival the beauty of traditional steel while addressing key drawbacks - such as cost, lead times, and susceptibility to corrosion. Today, the steel look aesthetic is one of the most sought-after glazing trends in the UK, valued for its timeless elegance and versatility.



What's Available Today?

The key distinction among the various steel look products on the market is:

- **Authentic steel look designs** that have been engineered from the ground up to replicate traditional steel windows and doors.
- **Products that merely mimic steel** but lack the detailing, proportions, and craftsmanship of a true steel look system.

Steel look windows and doors are typically available in four distinct product types:

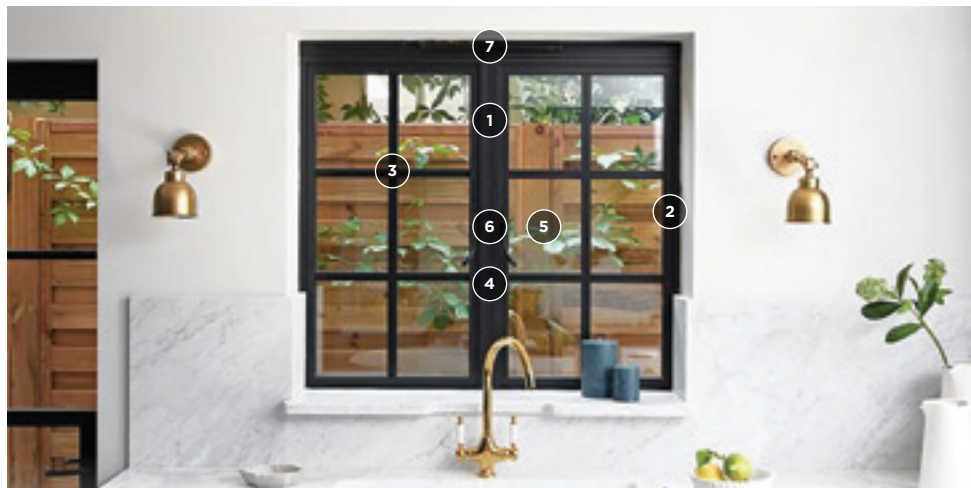
- **Authentic aluminium steel look windows and doors** - carefully designed with true heritage detailing, rolled steel slim profiles, authentic and slim glazing bars, period hardware and dimensions as close as possible to genuine steel windows. These are mostly hand-assembled and finished with top quality hardware and components.
- **Basic steel look windows and doors** - the offering from the mainstream brands. These windows usually only offer a stepped frame and sash, attempting to replicate a metal window, with standard flat transoms and thick glazing bars.
- **Standard aluminium with added glazing bars** - these windows are the same as those provided in residential and commercial buildings. All that's done here is the addition of one transom to mimic a heritage window with traditional handles. Closer inspection reveals a lack of any genuine steel styling and attention to detail, but they are very well marketed as authentic.
- **Mass-produced steel look windows and doors** - The least authentic option, using standard aluminium profiles with stick-on bars, no steel-like proportions, poor glazing connections, and minimal design flexibility. These products often lack period handles and authentic detailing, making them a weak alternative to true steel look windows and doors.

In order to choose the best steel look window for your home, do not accept the first product you are shown. Do your research around the styling and dimensions of original steel windows and seek a product that replicates these as close as possible. Choosing the right system is crucial for achieving an authentic steel look aesthetic.

UNDERSTANDING MODERN CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL LOOK WINDOWS & DOORS



ALUMINIUM Vs STEEL: KEY DIFFERENCES						
AESTHETICS	PRODUCTS AVAILABLE	ENERGY EFFICIENCY	SECURITY	COLOURS	COST	LEAD TIMES
Slim sightlines, mechanical construction and a refined finish.	Windows, single and French doors, bifold doors and custom slimline sliding doors. Internal doors.	Thermally insulated aluminium profiles and high-performance glass. Most energy-efficient.	Multipoint locking with locking handles and security cylinders in doors.	The full choice of powder coated colours, textured and special finishes.	Cheaper than any steel product.	Approximately 6-8 weeks to install in your home.
Slim sightlines, welded construction and industrial finish.	Windows, single and French Doors only. Internal doors, Fire rated internal doors.	Insulation achieved by foam or other inserts and high-performance glass. Less energy efficient.	Modern locking systems but designed for the limitations of steel.	The full choice of powder coated colours, textured and special finishes.	At least three times the cost of a premium aluminium brand.	Approximately up to 26 weeks to install in your home.



HOW TO SPOT A GENUINE STEEL LOOK WINDOW

Not all aluminium steel look windows and doors are created equal. Here's what to look out for:

- ① **Slimline profiles** – Some brands make no effort to replicate the sightlines of steel windows and doors and ignore the correct proportions.
- ② **Rolled steel appearance** – These are unquestionably the closest to steel windows and give you the thinnest profiles.
- ③ **Thin glazing bars and correct transom sizes** – True steel look aluminium windows must offer you a choice of transoms and glazing bars not just one option. You must also be offered a 25mm and 20mm slimline glazing bar to replicate the bar proportions of real steel windows.
- ④ **Bespoke options** – Inferior products offer limited configurations, while authentic steel look windows come in multiple styles and finishes.
- ⑤ **Correct Thermal Performance** – Many steel look systems only meet current Building Regulations as a triple glazed product and do not comply double glazed. Ensure your U-Values are accurate.
- ⑥ **Classic styling with modern functionality** – Despite the classic nature of steel look windows, they still need to be safe, secure and robust. Double corner mitre cleats, no unsightly handle blocks, fire escape or easy-clean hinges, optional child-window restrictors, unique bay posts with load bearing properties and security claws. All these and more should be on your wish list.
- ⑦ **Concealed Trickle Ventilation** – Trickle ventilators will most likely be needed on your windows and doors. Most other brands will increase the top dimension of your windows by 35-50mm. A correctly-designed steel look window has concealed trickle ventilation.
- **It just looks like steel** – Trust what your eyes see. Get to see a genuine steel window and compare with aluminium. The quality aluminium versions are then easy to spot versus those that merely aim to mimic.



HOW TO SPOT A GENUINE STEEL LOOK DOOR

There are steel look doors on the market that cut corners in their design. Pay attention to:

- ① **The iconic feature backplate** – Your doors must have the distinctive and instantly recognisable feature backplate behind the handle. It's an otherwise standard door.
- ② **Floating Lock Design** – A distinctive feature of steel doors, this is where the handle and it's backplate connects into the glass and the handle appears to float unsupported.
- ③ **Slimline Profiles** – Steel doors are thin by design and aluminium versions should also be ultra-slim in appearance.
- ④ **Rolled steel appearance** – These are unquestionably the closest to steel doors and give you the thinnest profiles.
- ⑤ **Thin glazing bars and correct transom sizes** – True steel look aluminium doors must offer you a choice of transoms and glazing bars with a 25mm and 20mm option. Beware doors with 36mm bars having projecting gaskets. The sightline increases to more than 40mm.
- ⑥ **No Dummy Sashes** – French Doors with side panels is the most popular design. But inferior doors use unsightly couplers and dummy profiles. These disrupt the clean sightlines of true steel look designs and real steel doors.
- ⑦ **No Fixed transom spacings** – Some brands are unable to move the position of the door glazing bars to match your design, leading to an inconsistent aesthetic.
- ⑧ **Flexible Door Sizes** – Ensure your doors are available at the height you want. Whilst other steel look doors max out at reduced heights, Aluco Elite doors can reach up to 2400mm in height.
- ⑨ **Classic styling with modern functionality** – Doors should offer mod-cons such as adjustable hinges, accessible thresholds, black colour-matched cylinders and no dummy frames in fixed panels.
- ⑩ **Correct Thermal Performance** – Many steel look systems only meet current Building Regulations as a triple glazed product and do not comply double glazed. Check your glass specifications.
- **Attention to Detail** – As well as actually looking like a steel door, look for attention to detail such as elegant flush bolts for the secondary door leaf and colour-matched black key cylinders.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY, SECURITY & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

When choosing the right steel look windows and doors, concentrate on the features that will keep your home warmer, drier and weather protected as well as important safety and functional features.

Energy Efficiency

- Modern aluminium steel look windows incorporate advanced thermal break technology for superior insulation.
- Double and triple glazing options help retain heat and reduce noise.
- Bespoke foam under the glass, where required, improves the U-Value.

Security

- Multi-point locking systems with enhanced security claws as standard.
- PAS24 specification available.
- Toughened or laminated glass options add additional protection.
- All glass secured from the inside.

Safety

- Safety glass in all doors and low-level windows.
- Accessibility Threshold with a minimal step.
- Fire-escape hinges as standard.



PERSONALISING YOUR WINDOWS & DOORS

A true steel look window or door should offer substantial scope for customisation, including:

- Virtually any window or door design including shapes and curves.*
- Numerous period handle options.
- Authentic hardware finishes such as brass, antique colours and more.
- Heritage colour options – Classic black, anthracite grey, or a choice of bespoke finishes.
- Glazing choices – Clear, reeded, frosted, or decorative glazing.

*subject to design limitations

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUPPLIER

Steel look windows and doors are highly-engineered products that need expert manufacturing and installation for your peace of mind. Apart from the authentic steel look, here's what to look for:

- **Who makes their windows and doors** – Always ask your supplier who manufactures their windows and doors. A reputable company will be transparent about their products' origins and specifications.
- **Experience with steel look glazing** – Not all window installers understand the nuances of steel look systems.
- **Portfolio of completed projects** – A reputable company should have examples of previous installations.
- **Product range and flexibility** – Customisation is key to achieving the right look. Ensure the supplier offers multiple design options.

Why It's Important to See, Touch & Feel Products

Steel look windows and doors are a significant investment and potentially the last windows and doors you will ever buy. And only by visiting a quality showroom can you get to understand the quality and beauty of a well-designed and hand-finished product. At the same time, it helps you to understand the differences between a properly-designed collection of windows and doors and others. Always make the time to visit a showroom and view a selection of products.

- Inspect the quality of profiles and glazing bars.
- Compare different steel look products side by side.
- Assess the overall build quality, finish, and hardware.
- Understand genuine steel-like dimensions vs others.
- A proper steel look window and door opens and closes with a premium feel.



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SUPPLIER

Before committing to a purchase, ask:

1. Is this a genuine steel look system or a standard window with bars added?
2. Who makes my new windows and doors?
3. How do the sightlines compare to real steel windows?
4. What glazing bar options do you offer and are they like steel?
5. Are the doors designed with dummy frames and connection pieces?
6. What are the thermal performance ratings?
7. How will trickle vents look on my windows?





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WHY CHOOSE ALUCO?

At Aluco, we are passionate about creating the finest aluminium steel look glazing, blending heritage aesthetics with modern performance. Our products are meticulously designed to capture the beauty of original steel windows and doors while offering the benefits of modern aluminium.

Every one of our hand-finished and expertly-crafted windows and doors promise incredible product quality, finish and obsessive attention to detail.

What Sets Us Apart?

- ✓ **The Original and Best** – Aluco pioneered the UK's first complete steel look collection.
- ✓ **Unique and Exclusive** – Our proprietary system, designed and manufactured exclusively by us.
- ✓ **Steel look is all we make** – Unlike other brands that produce various window types, we focus solely on steel look glazing.
- ✓ **The only complete collection** – Only Aluco offers a complete collection of external windows and doors with a complimentary internal range.
- ✓ **Authentic steel look detailing** – The proper profile proportions, styling, hardware, look and feel. All designed to match steel as closely as possible.
- ✓ **Handcrafted quality** – Every window and door is precision-engineered for superior build quality.
- ✓ **Customisable options** – A wide range of configurations, finishes, and styles.
- ✓ **Showroom experience** – Expert and Professional showrooms nationwide.
- ✓ **Expert support** – Our team is on hand to guide you through every step of the selection process.

Next Steps

Experience the Aluco difference today - book a factory and showroom visit or request a quote now.

Contact us to put you in touch with your Local Retail Showroom Partner

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