



# Cover Your Biggest Investment

## ...With an Aluminum Roof

For years, aluminum roofs have graced the tops of commercial, industrial, and agricultural buildings, where they have earned a reputation for being strong, durable, and maintenance-free. Aluminum roofers have found it harder, however, to make significant inroads into the residential market, where asphalt remains the dominant material.

That may be changing, thanks in part to roofing companies' aggressive marketing of aluminum's many advantages—and in part to emerging research that supports aluminum and metal roofs as a highly energy-efficient choice.

### Many Choices; Only One Aluminum

Residential roofing is available in a variety of materials, including asphalt, plastic membranes, tar and gravel, wood, concrete, clay, slate, steel, and aluminum. Each offers distinct appearance and performance characteristics.

The aluminum shingle is the most common aluminum product used for residential roofs. Shingles are formed from aluminum sheet that is stamped to create the look of a traditional shingle, shake, or tile, then typically baked with a kynar finish for protection and color retention. Shingles are available in a wide range of colors.

Up-front, aluminum shingles represent a mid-to-upper-priced roofing option, generally costing more than asphalt, steel, and

composite shingles, but less than concrete tile, stone-coated steel panels, or copper roofs. Over the life-cycle of the building, its champions contend, aluminum roofs likely represent the cheapest option.

According to Classic Products, of Piqua, Ohio, which distributes several types of aluminum shingle, the savvy homeowner buys

worn-out asphalt, fiberglass or wood shingle roofs, eliminating the time, cost and mess of tearing off the existing roof. Like any good aluminum shingle, these are built to stand up to the harshest climatological conditions: capable of surviving 110-mile-per-hour wind-driven rain without leaking, warranted against chipping and leaking due to hail, and incapable of being ignited by sparks from a chimney or nearby fire.

As if those performance characteristics aren't enough to add value to a house, many aluminum shingles are backed up by a limited lifetime warranty for the initial owner and a 50-year limited warranty for future owners. The warranty alone is two to three times longer than the expected life span of an asphalt roof.

### Energy Savings

A sometimes-forgotten component of the overall cost of a roof relates to its energy efficiency. In particular, a roof that effectively

reflects sunlight will lower a house's air-conditioning needs in summer.

Classic's Rustic Shingle, for example, reflects 94.5 percent of the sun's rays. According to the company, homeowners have seen energy costs decrease by up to 20 percent after re-roofing with the product.

Studies carried out by the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC) provide support for such claims. Comparing the cooling performance of a range of roofing materials



Country Manor Shake, a product originally manufactured by Alcoa, offers the beauty of real wood shakes without the problems traditionally associated with them—drying, splitting, rotting, and insect infestation.

roofing on an annual cost basis considering:

- Up-front installation expenses;
- Expected lifespan of the roof;
- Ability to protect against wind, water, fire;
- Estimated maintenance costs;
- Appreciation of the house itself as a result of the roof; and
- Projected energy cost savings.

Aluminum shingles are all designed for easy installation and—because of their low weight—typically can be affixed directly over





Lightweight aluminum rustic shingles frequently can be installed over an existing roof.

under summer conditions in Ft. Myers, Fla., FSEC concluded that, "a white galvanized metal roof should save a customer who lives in an average-size 1,770-square-foot home approximately \$128 or 23 percent annually in cooling costs [year 2000 dollars]" compared with a traditional gray asphalt roof.

Aluminum shingles' ability to reflect solar radiation pays dividends in colder climates as well. When snow accumulates, aluminum roofs—and metal roofs more generally—can help thwart ice formation by reflecting solar rays back through the snow to promote even snowmelt. Less-reflective roofs promote uneven snowmelt—i.e., typically melting over living areas, but not over porches and overhangs—which can prevent drainage, encourage refreezing of snowmelt, and cause damage to both the roof and house.

"When we install Rustic Shingle, I feel confident that we are installing a top-of-the-

line roofing product that makes it unnecessary to haul yourself up to the roof and shovel off those porches and overhangs," says Frank Farmer, owner of Flushing, Mich.-based American Roofs.

### The Environmentally Friendly Option

Aluminum shingles are 100 percent recyclable and frequently have a high recycled content. The actual percentage of recycled material varies according to the manufacturer and product. Rustic Shingles, for instance, contain 98 percent recycled material.

According to the National Association of Homebuilders Research Center, 20 billion pounds of asphalt shingles are dumped into U.S. landfills each year. Those shingles take an estimated 300 years to decompose.

By contrast, an aluminum roof—should it not outlast the house it covers—can be recy-

clad and become a new roof again. Additionally, because aluminum is by far the lightest roofing material (approximately 50 lbs. per "square," i.e., 100 square feet), it can often be installed over the existing roof. That saves money—tearing asphalt shingles off, for instance, costs approximately \$30 to \$50 per square—and landfill space.

Once a new aluminum roof is installed, the owner can be content that:

- Unlike wood shingles, it will not dry, split, rot, or attract insects;
- Unlike steel, it will not rust; and
- Unlike asphalt, it will not curl, dry, lift or host moss, fildeu or fungus.

### Aluminum Roofing Q&A

#### Q. Is an aluminum roof noisy?

A. No. It is usually installed over a solid substrate, with attic and insulation providing additional sound barriers. It is no noisier than traditional roofing products.

#### Q. Do they attract lightning?

A. An aluminum roof has no more chance of being hit by lightning than any other type of roof. But, if it is struck, it can help prevent the house from catching afire because it can dissipate the electrical charge. Also it is non-combustible.

#### Q. Will hail damage an aluminum roof?

A. Aluminum is a preferred roofing material in hail-prone areas. Unlike roofing materials that split or break in a hail-storm, aluminum will not be penetrated.

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