

az foothills

AZ FOOTHILLS MAGAZINE

The Transformational Tube

DAVID M. BROWN

Page 1 of 2

[Tweet](#)

[Like 0](#)



Saul and Juan Estrada, left to right at 350-ton hydraulic press. Photo by Saul Estrada, Jr., Southwest Metal Spinning Inc.

Want to transform an unfriendly room? Welcome in light with a room- and life-brightening tubular skylight, also known as a solar tube. After one is added, a forbidding hallway disappears; a dark kitchen is changed into a friendly space; bathrooms, bedrooms, hallways and closets are enlivened. And, this happens after just a few hours of professional installation. Simply transformational.

Creating and installing some of the finest tubular skylights are the Estrada family, owners of Elite Solar Lighting & Fans in Chandler. In addition to manufacturing these top-quality tubular skylights, they also produce premium solar attic fans and garage exhaust fans.

This year, the parent company, Southwest Metal Spinning (SWMS) celebrates 25 years of manufacturing excellence. SWMS provides metal spinning, stamping and the engineering of tooling to fabricate custom metal-formed parts such as food industry components and precision aerospace parts.

The family's Elite Solar Lighting & Fans is in the same building; SWMS creates the premium aluminum components for its high-impact domes and diffusers. Together, the companies employ 16 people.

Brothers Saul and Juan Estrada have worked for more than 75 years in the industry, learning the business at several metal spinning and stamping companies in native Southern California. In 1994, they moved to Arizona and formed their company. They both live in Gilbert with their families. "This is not a job; it is my passion," Saul says.

The Transformational Tube - Page 2

DAVID M. BROWN

Page 2 of 2

Before Picture: Many front entryways do not have windows for security reasons, and artificial lighting is a homeowners' only option. The front entryway is somber, and the décor goes unnoticed.

Entry 2, After Photo, by Jované Estrada, Elite Solar Systems Inc.

Here a tubular skylight transforms the front entryway, outshining the window and allowing the homeowners to enjoy the light and their strategic front-entryway design.

Turning on to the Tube

"A tubular skylight allows natural light in to brighten your room during the day without the need for an electrical light source," explains Jované, Saul's older son and Elite's General Manager. "Solar tubes can be retrofitted into any roof system, including s-tiles, asphalt and steel, and they're especially helpful when windows or traditional skylights are not an option."

In 6-inch to 18-inch-diameter models, the company's tubular skylights have a high-impact hurricane-tested acrylic dome that sits on your roof with durable 1100-O aluminum flashing. This connects to a reflective anodized light tube that runs through your attic, and is adjusted using elbows that deliver light exactly to the space you've chosen. At the ceiling level, the assembly connects to an aluminum trim ring.

Resting against the ceiling is a diffuser in a domed or flat configuration, according to your choice. A Prismatic Diffuser maximizes light in the room through that effect; the MaxLum variety does this from ceilings 12 feet and higher. A White Diffuser delivers softer light, excellent for bathrooms and bedrooms.

For bedrooms or your media/TV room, you might also want to add a dimmer, which allows you to adjust the amount of daylight entering the room. Another option is a Solar-powered Night Light. You can also add a Light Kit so the solar tube can also provide artificial light on demand.

And, in bathrooms an Exhaust Fan can be added. All units have a 25-year warranty.

Environmentally, two advantages stand out. For one, home- or business-owners use free sunlight to light up their homes, garages, offices, hallways, bathrooms and warehouses. Secondly, three layers of UV protection inhibit fading of interiors.

Tubular skylights offer lifestyle benefits for pets and plants. "They've also been reported to improve a person's mood," Jované says. And, they may result in a tax credit: That's a mood enhancer, too.

The tubular skylight only requires a hole on the roof and another in the ceiling inside the home. In contrast, a traditional skylight requires framing and drywall to be installed from the roof to the ceiling. Depending on the area of the roof affected, this can be time-consuming.

Pick the Space, A Tubular Skylight Will Transform it

For years, Valleyites have installed Elite tubular skylights in a variety of homes, production and luxury, single and condos, retrofitting existing space or adding them as part of the build. Almost any room can be accommodated, even a first floor or basement in a multi-story home.

Offices, warehouses and garages also benefit from tubular skylights, enhancing employees' wellness and productivity.

In Chandler, Nick and Theresa Drake didn't like the daytime darkness of the family room, so they added a solar tube. "The family room is now very bright, and, with the solar night light feature we added, the room has a soft glow at night," he says.

In Scottsdale, when the Giffords added a second master suite to their home, the existing windows in the master bath were closed off, removing all natural light.

"The solar tubes brought back the natural light, and we don't need to turn on lights during the day," Jenna says. "The night light provides just enough light at night so as not to wake the other person if we get up. We are thrilled with the results."

Elite Solar Systems, Inc. will be at the Maricopa County Home & Garden Show in Booth #1013 this weekend, May 3, 4 and 5, at WestWorld of Scottsdale, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Jované Estrada, General Manager, will answer your questions. Also, visit elitesolarsystems.com and fill out a form for a quote or more information on sizes and prices.