

## Rounded Redwood Railings



For decking, Mark Ellis of Creative Redwood Designs in California uses mostly ipe; for railings, he opts for redwood or cedar, which are more workable and less expensive and also add contrast and interest to a deck's overall design.

The redwood railing pictured at left (top and center) was built to match an existing railing on the property; the owner elected to have it built as shown knowing it would not meet current code (a 4-inch sphere can pass through the gap above the arch, the lowest portion of which is less than 36 inches high). For another customer on a subsequent project, however, Ellis modified the design, raising the railing so the low ends of the arches met the code's minimum height requirement. Originally, a horizontal cap rail — similar to the one on the earlier project — was to top the arch, but the homeowner preferred the look of the rail without the cap (below).



Ellis spaced the railing posts as evenly as possible to keep the radius of the arcs constant, not only for appearance, but also to allow reuse of the laminating forms (left, bottom), to which redwood strips were clamped as they were glued together to create the arched rails. Before the top lamination was glued down, holes were drilled in the rail for the balusters, which were then installed from above through the holes and cut to the arc. The final lamination covers the holes and conceals the ends of the balusters. — *Laurie Elden*



ALL PHOTOS BY MARK ELLIS