



Decking of a Different Stripe

The owner of the deck pictured here was originally interested in man-made decking and railing, but the appearance and lower cost of tigerwood won the day. Also known as gonalcalves, tigerwood is imported mainly from South America, and like many other tropical hardwoods, it's naturally rot resistant. Though not quite as dense and heavy as ipe, it is still tough on saw blades, says the deck builder on this project, Darcy Warner, of Warner Remodeling (warnerremodeling.com) in Auburn, Ind.: "The blade for my miter saw is carbide

tipped; it was fresh from the sharpener when I started, and by the time I was finished, the blade was spent."

Tigerwood suppliers recommend predrilling to prevent splitting; sealing cut ends to prevent checking; and providing ventilation under the deck and between the boards to prevent cupping. Most of the decking on this deck was affixed with Tiger Claw hidden fasteners, which gapped the 5/4 x 6 boards 3/16 inch apart; those boards that were face-screwed were predrilled.

For the fascia and stair risers, Warner painted MiraTec exterior treated composite trim to match the trim on the house. The railing parts are mostly Deckorators.

One thing Warner says he would do differently next time is install the posts after the decking: "Those 4x4 chunks of tigerwood, and even ipe, are subject to do some funny things if you leave them sticking up in the elements without the railing to hold them in place." On this project, he wrapped the posts in plastic bags — even after sealing them — while he finished laying the decking. He says, "I think it worked out well to protect the ends of the posts and to keep them from twisting and doing all sorts of crazy things."

To preserve the striking color of the wood, Warner used Messmer's Natural UV Oil for Hardwoods. Before applying the finish, he sanded the deck with a Festool

Rotex sander and CT-22 Dust Extractor, though he says it "may have been overkill to sand the whole thing."

"I absolutely love the way this decking looks," Warner says. "Like a nice piece of furniture." — Laurie Elden

