

PRODUCTS

Metal Rail Components

Classic architectural accents for gates and railings

by Scott Gibson

Wood balusters are functional and inexpensive, but some clients want a more formal look for their deck railing, fence, or garden gate. Decorative wrought-iron panels, like those in Outwater's expanded line, can add a sophisticated touch to an otherwise plain expanse.

Installation is not plug and play, however. The metal panels come unfinished and should be sandblasted or otherwise cleaned of rust, wiped down with a solvent, and topped with a rust-inhibiting primer and enamel. Incorporating the panels into other metal rail or gate parts is likely to require welding. If that sounds like too much of a hassle, Outwater also sells powder-coated balusters that can be paired with wood railings.

The decorative panels come in a number of styles, ranging



in cost from about \$100 to \$450 each. Details are available in the company's online catalogue.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

■ **Outwater Plastics Industries**, 800/631-8375, outwater.com.

Clubhouse Fasteners

Decking maker partners with FastenMaster

PVC decking manufacturer Deceuninck North America now has an arrangement with FastenMaster that will allow the company to private-label the Tiger Claw TC-G hidden fastener and Cortex screws and plugs under its Clubhouse brand.

Product manager Scott Ricke says the arrangement should make it easier for decking contractors to sell a decking-and-railing package to consumers, while the "one-stop shopping" will minimize ordering headaches for builders.

Clubhouse was once sold under the Kodiak label and later as Solstice. Ricke says the decking and railing were rebranded last year with the Clubhouse label, as the manufacturer decided to "start from scratch."

Its strongest market is in the mid-Atlantic region, but Clubhouse products also are sold in Florida, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Colorado. Clubhouse decking sold in the U.S. is manufactured in Monroe, Ohio.

The Tiger Claw hidden fasteners can be installed with a



pneumatic tool using "scrails," which are shot in like a nail but can be backed out with a drill/driver. Ricke says the system allows an installer to put down as much as 400 square feet of decking per hour.

The company didn't disclose pricing for the decking-fastener package, but Ricke says it's priced competitively with other premium decking. — S.G.

■ **Deceuninck North America**, 877/563-4251, deceuninck-americas.com.

For more information about these products, go to <http://exteriorproducts.hotims.com>.

Thinner Trex

Less-expensive option

A new line of capped composite decking and railing from Trex may appeal to the bargain hunters in your clientele.

Trex Select is a wood-plastic composite capped with a proprietary layer of material with a wood-grain finish. It's available in four colors: redwood, grey, light brown, and deep brown. Decking is 5½ inches wide and comes in 12-foot, 16-foot, and 20-foot lengths. Matching fascia comes in 1x8 and 1x12 boards.

The new Select decking is available only with a square edge profile, and not with the grooved profile available in other Trex lines. It comes with a 25-year limited residential warranty, which does not include fade and stain resistance. Also, Trex says, Select decking has a different grain pattern and color than other Trex decking, and comes in



a 7/8-inch thickness compared with the 1-inch thickness of its other boards.

The new decking should be available in January and retails for between \$2.60 and \$2.80 per lineal foot.

Trex says it is also introducing an aluminum deck railing called Trex Reveal for 2013, along with a beveled version of its Transcend deck railings. — S.G.

■ **Trex**, 800/289-8739, trex.com.

Outdoor Lighting

I-lighting redesigns wiring connectors

I-lighting has simplified the wiring for its LED deck lights, making them less prone to installation errors.

System components plug together with what look like standard SAE connectors, similar to what you'd find on wiring for a boat trailer. With the old-style lighting kits, it was possible for builders to plug parts together incorrectly. But the new components are not polarity sensitive, and that should eliminate a common source of problems, according to sales and marketing director Sean Ryan.

Lights are sold in "kits" that contain all the parts and pieces for a single post or a single stair riser, including the



light fixture, LED lamp, wire, and fasteners. To order lighting for a deck, a builder simply counts up posts and risers and adds a power supply, Ryan says. A video explaining how the lights are installed is available at the company's website.

Low-voltage LED lamps use 80% less energy than incandescent bulbs and are rated for 50,000 hours of use. I-lighting also offers a photocell that can turn lights off and on

depending on ambient light, and a remote-control dimmer that can override the photo eye sensor.

A riser lighting kit retails for about \$24. Post kits are about \$40 and the power supply is about \$75. — S.G.

■ **I-lighting**, 888/305-4232, i-lightingonline.com. ❖