



Radiant Compass Rose

by Brendan Casey

Back in 2015, my company built a standard 200-square-foot pressure-treated-wood deck onto the back of the new home that our clients had just built. A half-dozen years later, they contacted me about expanding the deck to accommodate a new hot tub and replacing the wood decking with composite. During my site visit to discuss the project, the wish list grew to include plenty of lighting and possibly a built-in fireplace as the deck's focal point.

Eventually, the fireplace idea was shelved but not the idea of a focal point for their new outdoor living space. To meet that goal, I showed my clients a design for a curved deck with a contrasting border and lighting around the perimeter. My clients liked the design and

were hoping to find composite decking with grays and tans to match the color of their house. At the time, Fiberon was planning to release some new colors that I thought would match perfectly, so we held off on the project until the new decking became available.

As we began taking apart the old deck and framing up the new one, I had an idea for a focal point to replace the fireplace—but I didn't tell the homeowners what it was. Instead, we left a blank area in the middle of the decking and assured them that if my inlay idea didn't turn out to be something they loved, we would remove it.

My crew leader and I traded some sketches before we settled on our "Divine Rose" inlay, which spans over 8 feet in

each direction. Working in our shop, we used two contrasting deck-board colors to create the star-within-a-star pattern. Realizing we couldn't create an astrological design without an element of light, we then added over 500 low-voltage LEDs to outline the inlay and create the impression of a Christmas star. Another LED at the center enhances the effect.

After we installed the inlay, we invited the homeowners back to "unwrap" their surprise. While they loved the design, it wasn't until later that evening—when they turned on their new deck lights—that they had a chance to fully appreciate our unique work. ❖

Brendan Casey owns Casey Fence & Deck in Frederick, Md.

PHOTOS: JENNIFER LEWIS