

Looking Ahead

By the time you open this issue—PDB's first-ever all-products issue, including a look at new products for 2014 as well as a roundup of products that we've already reviewed—it's likely that Spring will have finally arrived. But as I write this in the middle of March in what has been a cold winter of polar vortices and Snowmageddon, warm weather still feels like wishful thinking: It was 10° below zero when I drove to work this morning, and my woodpile is looking dangerously low.

To take my mind off the weather and gauge the outlook of deck professionals for the coming year, I teamed up with

MoistureShield senior vice president Brent Gwatney to ask Scott Newman of Fine Line Homes in Winfield, Pa.; deck builder Bradley Duke Daum in Destin, Fla.; and Monica Quinby of Dock-It in Kingston, Tenn., about deck design trends and materials for the upcoming year. Here's what they had to say.

Q What will be the hot design trends in 2014?

Newman: I suspect that even more of our customers will opt for composite rather than wood decking this year.

Daum: More folks are turning their

backyards into resorts and are asking for pergolas, beaches, bars, and other accessories.

Quinby: We anticipate continued demand for aesthetically pleasing designs with functional amenities such as utilities, built-in seating, outdoor cooking, and both covered and open patio-style areas.

Gwatney: In many regions, we see that design trends are moving toward a more modern look with curved decking and toward high-end amenities like deck lighting and glass plates in place of traditional square or round balusters.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Q Which types of materials are growing in popularity?

Newman: Composites are becoming the deck material of choice in my region.

Quinby: Because deck structures have become so significant and costly, homeowners are not willing to invest in

something that will require restoration in five years. They seem willing to spend more for composite decking to ensure that the structure is there permanently.

Gwatney: Composites have continued to show growth throughout the U.S. In the West and South, uncapped

composites seem to be more popular because of their wood-like appearance. Northeasterners tend to show more interest in the modern plastic look of capstock products.

Q What are the most popular colors in your market?

Newman: Gray and brownish red are particularly popular in Pennsylvania.

Daum: On the Gulf Coast, where we have high sun exposure, gray is best for staying cooler.

Quinby: Cape Cod gray and rustic cedar are extremely popular in our area of Tennessee.

Q What is your outlook for the decking business in 2014?

Newman: As the housing market improves, I think we will see more homes built, and with more options. I expect that we will build more and larger decks in 2014 than we did in 2013.

Daum: As our labor costs continue to rise, I'm worried that end-user installations will be the next boom, unfortunately for us deck builders.

Quinby: We feel that the demand for upscale docks will continue to increase as older waterfront homes are purchased and improved upon, while additional new ones are also built. The ever-increasing expense to secure waterfront real estate will mandate the demolishing of older, marginal docks. New structures will reflect the size and quality of the customer's real estate investment.

Gwatney: As we continue to see the up-turn in the economy, the decking business will have substantial growth in 2014. We've already seen that some markets are growing faster than others, but there is opportunity for growth in all regions.

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