

Table for Two

by Gary Cherene



Built-in benches can add much more than seating to a deck; they can create a focal point, define the edge of the decked area, and provide an intimate area for conversation. For guests who are seated on this bench, the integral table also offers a place to put drinks, food, or accessories like sunglasses or a set of keys.

I made the bench frame out of 2x6 Douglas fir and used FastenMaster 5-inch LedgerLoks to bolt it to pressure-treated posts set 2 feet in concrete. I dressed up the posts with black Trex post sleeves and added Trex skirts to the bottoms for a clean, finished look. The rock on the sides and front of the bench came in sections—6 inches by 24 inches—and is attached with thinset mortar to cement backerboard. For the bench seats, I used Trex Select square-edge deck boards that match the deck (the dark border is “woodland brown,” and the lighter color in the center is “saddle”), routing grooves on their inside edges

for the hidden fasteners that attach them to the bench frame. The top of the table is a custom-selected piece of sandstone.

For nighttime entertaining, I added subtle lighting. Tucked under the lip of the table is a Trex recessed LED light, and on each post, hidden under the bench, are two half-dome lights. The wire for the low-voltage lighting runs up through one of the post sleeves.

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