

PRODUCTS

Preserving the View

Tempered-glass railings seem to disappear



by Scott Gibson

Designed to be visually less obtrusive than conventional wood rails and balusters, Falcon's railing system of powder-coated aluminum posts and tempered safety-glass inserts is an option for homeowners

who don't want anything blocking a great view.

The posts accommodate glass panels 10 mm thick (about $\frac{4}{10}$ inch), 42 inches high, and up to 54 inches wide. What makes the system unique, Falcon says, is a gasket inside the post that not only grips the glass but also rotates up to 45 degrees, allowing the railing to wrap around curved or angled deck perimeters.

Posts are installed between 46 inches and 54 inches apart by bolting or lagging the base plate to the deck. Wood decks require 4 inches of solid backing. The powder-coated posts are available in three stock colors — oyster gray, white, and black — but custom colors also are possible.

Falcon says the system costs about \$110 per running foot installed; building contractors get a discount of about 10 percent.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

■ **Falcon Railing Mfg.**, 250/765-2248, www.falconrailing.com.

Vinyl Decking

One-piece design makes installation faster



New PVC SheerGrain Decking from L.B. Plastics is extruded as a single piece, incorporating both the plank and an integral screw flange. The company says its patented design speeds construction and reduces the number of required fasteners.

The tongue-and-groove planks, which are hollow, are manufactured with and without drain holes punched

in the screw flange. The punched planks allow rain runoff to drain easily through the deck. Non-punched decking applied to sloped framing will divert water away from the house, according to the company, and although the deck won't be completely watertight, it will shed most runoff.

SheerGrain has no wood content and will not rot, stain, fade, or absorb any water, the company claims. Planks are $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches thick and 6 inches wide and can be ripped to width. Although the company recommends 16-inch on-center framing, it says planks meet building code load requirements when installed on 24-inch centers.

J cladding in 8-inch and 12-inch widths also is available for capping rim joists and stair stringers.

Planks come in 12-foot, 15-foot, and 20-foot lengths in two colors, oak and driftwood. They cost about \$4.80 a running foot. — S.G.

■ **L.B. Plastics**, 800/752-7739, www.lbplastics.com.

For more product information, visit ebuild, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.ebuild.com

PRODUCTS

Simpler System

Titan Pro Rail has the brackets attached



A new line of vinyl-clad aluminum railing from Railing Dynamics includes galvanized-steel posts with heavy-duty cast-aluminum brackets already attached — a feature the company says eliminates the most complicated part of installing rails.

RDI says its Titan Pro Rail meets International Residential Code requirements and is suitable for both residential and commercial installations. Unlike railings with steel stiffeners, the Titan Pro vinyl-aluminum rail sections can be cut on site, RDI says. Components come in one color: white.

RDI already offers two other railing lines — Novaline, made from engineered wood, and Endurance, a composite. The company says its newest line is designed to offer the same low-maintenance advantages at a lower price. Also, RDI is hoping that because the Titan system includes fewer components and requires less warehouse space than conventional railing, it will be attractive to dealers.

Titan Pro Rail comes in boxed 6-foot or 8-foot sections for both level and staircase installations and in 36-inch and 42-inch heights. Rail sections cost between \$24 and \$28 per running foot, depending on height and section length. Posts cost from \$80 to \$111, depending on style and height. — S.G.

■ **Railing Dynamics Inc.**, 877/420-7245, www.rdirail.com.

Fence Brackets

Skip the toenailing



TimberTech now produces powder-coated steel brackets for connecting fence posts with rail supports. The company says the brackets make a stronger connection than a toenailed joint, just as joist hangers create a stronger floor system than toenailing alone would.

Brackets have an opening for a rail measuring 1⁵/₈ inches wide and 2⁷/₈ inches high to fit the company's 1⁹/₁₆-inch by 3-inch steel-reinforced rails. They're powder-coated in colors that match the company's Mountain Cedar composite fencing.

Rail brackets are sold for about \$1.75 each, separately or in boxes of 48. — S.G.

■ **TimberTech**, 800/307-7780, www.timbertech.com.

For more product information, visit ebuild, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.ebuild.com

PRODUCTS

Natural Sealer

Wood preservative made from soybean oil



If water-based finishes are a step up on the user-friendly scale from solvent-based stains and sealers, what about an exterior deck sealer that's completely nontoxic and biodegradable and still guaranteed to be effective for as long as two years?

BioPreserve says its SoyGuard deck sealer contains a

compound called methyl soyate — which is derived from soybean oil — along with recycled polystyrene, making the finish ideal for deck professionals or homeowners looking for sustainable building products.

The company says the finish cleans up with soap and water, and can safely be used on docks and piers because it doesn't pose a water-contamination threat. It contains less than 50 grams per liter of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), much less than conventional solvent finishes. That helps SoyGuard meet stringent air quality standards.

BioPreserve says the finish turns gray after two years but continues to protect wood from swelling and warping. In the future, the company plans to offer formulations that can be used to pressure-treat wood for residential, commercial, and industrial applications. In the meantime, you can apply it to backyard wood decking for about \$30 per gallon. — S.G.

■ **BioPreserve**, 800/416-9511, www.soyguard.com.

Fiberglass Rail System

Lifetime warranty, even in marine environments



Applying the same know-how it used to develop high-strength fishing rods and light poles, Shakespeare has designed a line of fiberglass deck and stair railings that never need paint and carry a lifetime warranty.

Armor-Rail is available in nine colors and three

heights — 36 inches, 38 inches, and 40 inches — to make it suitable for commercial as well as residential applications. Toe spaces can be either 2 inches or 4 inches.

Options include both round and square picket styles, along with turned balusters or glass panels. Decorative post tops also are available. The company offers six styles in all.

Shakespeare promises that rail-system components won't rust, rot, or corrode, even when installed in a salt-air environment. Components are insect proof and can be painted.

To reduce installation time, picket-railing systems come preassembled, so the builder only has to attach them to posts. The rail sections can span up to 12 feet between posts.

Prices start at \$25 to \$30 per running foot for railing in white, and run from 5 percent to 7 percent more for colors. — S.G.

■ **Shakespeare Composite Structures**, 800/800-9008, www.armor-rail.com. ❖

For more product information, visit ebuild, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.ebuild.com