

PRODUCTS

Shadow-Shaping Shade

Copper sheets filter light stylishly

by Scott Gibson

Uriah Bueller gathers design ideas in such far-flung locales as Indonesia, Panama, Fiji, and Kenya. A lot closer to home, patterns born from his travels emerge from 16-ounce copper (.021 inch thick) panels, lending a flair to fences and pergolas. Dubbed Parasoleil, each 3-foot-by-8-foot panel weighs 24 pounds before the patterns are cut out with a water jet.

Panels can be attached to horizontal or vertical frames, making them suitable for providing privacy or shade in a variety of applications. They're thin enough to flex around curves but can withstand heavy snow loads and high winds, Bueller says.

On a pergola, panels — pre-drilled for fasteners — are laid out perpendicular to the framing and installed with solid brass screws to prevent corrosion. The copper should last indefinitely, picking up a dark-bronze or blue-green patina depending on the environment (color changes can be accelerated with chemical treatment).

The panels aren't strong enough for foot traffic and may be dented by hail, but Bueller says weather-induced



wear and tear adds to the product's appeal. Bueller, a member of the U.S. Green Building Council, says he stocks mainly 95 percent recycled copper, although Parasoleil panels can be fabricated from other materials, such as weathering steel and powder-coated aluminum.

Panels are available in five standard patterns and retail for about \$440 each; custom designs can be ordered.

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■ **UB Arts**, 303/589-4524, parasoleil.com.

Field Dressing

A quick way to seal end cuts

Because water easily moves into wood through its end grain, sealing the ends of pressure-treated decking and framing cut during construction is good practice — it helps to prevent both end cracks and rot. However, not many deck builders actually seal end cuts. Who wants to lug around a can of preservative and a paintbrush?

One alternative is DeckCuts from Ze-Vo. The 4-ounce container is filled with an oil-based clear coating and comes with a sponge applicator the maker says is leak-proof. After making a cut, all you have to do is give the end of the board a swipe to seal out moisture.

Ze-Vo says the treatment helps minimize end checks

and will extend the life of all types of wood decking (it's not recommended for composites, though). The company also makes a product called EndCuts, which is designed to be used on pre-primed lumber and siding.

DeckCuts contains no volatile organic compounds (VOCs). It retails for about \$10 per bottle and is distributed at lumberyards throughout the United States. — S.G.

■ **Ze-Vo**, 508/879-3151, zevoproductsgroup.com.



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Decking for Docks

Composite designed for marine environments

Like many other types of composite decking, Tamko's Elements DockBoard is made from a mix of polyethylene plastic and wood fiber; however, unlike most composites, it also contains a mineral filler, which lowers water absorption and makes the material especially well-suited to marine environments, according to the company.

The nominal 2x6 planks are 5¹/₄ inches wide and about 1¹/₂ inches thick, and they can span 24-inch on-center framing.

DockBoard is intended for face fastening, with composite decking screws over wood framing or with metal screws over a metal substructure.

DockBoard is available in 12-foot and 20-foot lengths and in just one color — Pier Gray. It carries a limited



25-year warranty. The company did not disclose retail pricing. — S.G.

■ **Tamko Building Products**, 800/641-4691, tamko.com.

Porch Planks

Correct Building Products has new composite decking



Designed to replicate the look of an old-fashioned porch floor, CorrectPorch tongue-and-groove composite planks are 3¹/₈ inches wide, which is the same width as the wood boards traditionally used on porches, according to the manufacturer.

The composite material that the planks are made from is 60 percent recycled hardwood and 40 percent polypropylene, a mix that resists sagging and qualifies for points under the U.S. Green Building Council's

LEED for Homes certification program, the company says.

The company recommends installing CorrectPorch planks with 16-inch on-center spacing (but says the material can span up to 19 inches). It also recommends that installers drill at an angle through the tongues and attach the boards with stainless steel trim-head screws. A hidden spacer allows the planks to expand and contract with temperature changes while maintaining the proper spacing between boards.

Boards are gray and don't require painting. If homeowners want a different color, however, the company says CorrectPorch can be primed with an alkyd porch primer and top-coated with a high-quality porch and floor paint.

CorrectPorch is currently recommended for use only on covered porches, although the company is testing it on uncovered outdoor spaces and says it should be able to remove that limitation shortly.

The planking comes in lengths from 8 feet to 16 feet in 2-foot increments. Color-matched stair treads also are available. CorrectPorch retails for between \$9 and \$10 per square foot. — S.G.

■ **Correct Building Products**, 877/332-5877, correctporch.com.

PRODUCTS

Aluminum Balusters

Deckorators dresses up a basic rail component



Estate aluminum balusters are the latest addition to Deckorators' line of deck balusters and rail accessories. The 3/4-inch square balusters are available in a black or bronze finish and can be used for both guardrails and stair railings.

The company says the new balusters will add a modern look to a deck; they can also be jazzed up with a basket or collar accessory that slides on and attaches with a set-screw. As is true of all Deckorators balusters, the Estate line can be used with either wood or composite rails.

Deckorators' Web site includes a step-by-step tutorial for installing its balusters. Rail and stair connectors, which are sold separately, are screwed to rail sections and



anchor the top and bottom of each baluster. A bead of silicone caulk prevents balusters from rattling after they are installed.

Balusters cost \$2.50 each; basket accessories cost \$7 each; and collars cost \$3.50 each. Connectors and stair adapters come in packs of 20: A pack of connectors runs \$10 and a pack of stair adapters runs \$9. — S.G.

■ **Deckorators**, 866/568-9866, deckorators.com. ❖