



The deck (left) is anchored to the hillside by custom-fabricated galvanized steel support posts, which bear on 12-foot-deep piers (top). Keeping tools and materials from sliding down the hill into neighboring houses was a high priority (bottom).

The Deck With the Million Dollar View

by Edmund Bourke

One of my company's more memorable projects was a 1,000-square-foot deck that we built recently in the hills overlooking Laguna Beach in southern California. This project stands out not only because of the size of the deck and the home's incredible view of the Pacific Ocean, but also because of the difficult site. Located on a steep, curving road that was too busy and narrow for a crane, the home offered no access for heavy machinery, so everything—including 700-pound support posts and heavy glulam beams as long as 35 feet—had to be hand-delivered through a 4-foot-wide gate.

In addition to being difficult to access, the site was tricky to work on. The

steeply pitched backyard was impossible to stand on, so we had to set up scaffolding even to dig the footing holes. Not only that, we had to make sure that none of our materials got loose and slid down the hill; if they did, they would slide right into the homes at the base of the hill. For the massive 6x20 Alaskan yellow cedar glulams, this meant roping the beams to winches and slowly easing them down the hill as we worked to get them into position.

The city of Laguna Beach and the state of California also had something to say about how we ran the project. Being a beach town, the city has a zero-tolerance policy regarding runoff to drains, so we

had to take great care to avoid spillage when pumping and pouring the concrete for the footings, and we needed to clean up any overage. And because the home is located in a high-risk fire zone, all lumber smaller than 4-by had to be certified flame-resistant.

The underside of the tall deck is clearly visible to the neighbors, so we primed and painted all of the framing a neutral gray before installing the Azek decking. Finally, we installed a glass-panel rail system that helps block the sea breezes without blocking the view. ❖

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