



Weston Leavens: Stacking the Deck

By JAMES FLORENCE, Staff Writer Diamond Certified Program

Weston Leavens always knew he wanted to work with wood for a living, but he also wanted to find an industry niche that offered the best of two scenarios. “I discovered that as a carpenter, you basically have two choices,” he explains. “You can be a framer, which enables you to work outside but all your work gets covered up, or you can be a finish carpenter, in which case your work remains seen but you’re stuck inside all the time.” Eventually, Weston found that building decks offered the happy medium he was looking for. “With deck building, I was able to work outdoors and create products that didn’t get covered up at the end of the job.” Twenty-five years later, as owner of Deckmaster Fine Decks, Weston continues to enjoy the balanced

“With deck building, I was able to work outdoors and create products that didn’t get covered up at the end of the job.”

benefits that come with being a deck builder.

Weston’s major contribution to his industry is a groundbreaking technique that literally takes an inverse approach to traditional deck building.

“As I spent more time in the industry, I found I was replacing a lot of decks that weren’t really that old,” he says. “In many cases, I found this was the result of water penetrating the nail and screw holes in the deck, which then caused its understructure to rot prematurely.” Weston surmised that if he could devise a way to attach the deck boards from below, he could avoid this issue and improve the deck’s aesthetic quality at the same time. “We ultimately came up with the hidden bracket system, which revolutionized the deck industry and is still the best way to build a deck.”



Weston Leavens is a 25-year veteran of the decking industry and owner of Deckmaster Fine Decks.

Originally from Southern California, Weston moved to Sonoma County in 1996 with his wife, Jenny, after deciding it was time for a change of scenery. “We were sick of city life and wanted to relocate to a more rural area,” he says. The Leavenses found just the atmosphere they were looking for in the small town of Sebastopol, where they continue to appreciate its characteristic tranquility and natural beauty.

Outside of work, Weston participates in everything from daily yoga to outdoor activities like kayaking and walking his dog, Bo. One of his lesser-known hobbies, however, is competing in chess tournaments. “I’m no Bobby Fischer, but I’m not bad,” he laughs. Weston also likes to hook up his camper and hit the road on occasion, which he says is the first thing he’d do if he could retire tomorrow. “Jenny and I enjoy taking road trips to remote locations, so I think if I retired we’d plan a longer, more elaborate trip and check out some new places we’ve never been to.”

Read Weston Leaven’s expert contributions and watch his expert video at www.dccert.org/westonleavens.