

LEAVE IT TO THE PROS

Two AFA PRO Award Winners Share Their Vinyl Masterpieces

BY AMY DREW THOMPSON

Vinyl. It's low-maintenance. It's pest-proof. It's fire-resistant. It's very long-lasting, and lifetime warranties aren't infrequent. What's more, it's easily utilized for large-scale commercial projects and highly customizable for intricate residential jobs. And you couldn't find two projects better suited to rep these traits than this year's inaugural AFA PRO Award winners in the vinyl category: Forever Fence & Rail (Residential) and Tek-Rail (Commercial).

DEER PRUDENCE

Deer are prevalent in the beautiful Buckeye State, and the suburban Cleveland neighborhood in which Ken Throckmorton (CFP, CAGSD) and his team at Forever Fence & Rail completed their residential vinyl project was no exception. It was with these



Forever Fence and Rail's six-foot tan (almond) color colonial picket fence meets up with a 6-foot tall designer fence in back, consisting of tan vinyl t&g privacy panels and aluminum powder coated bronze color top, and bottom rails with aluminum powder coated posts. (Materials from Digger Specialties.)

lovely, delicate creatures in mind that Throckmorton's clients wanted their challenging — and interesting — fence designed.

"It actually began with the typical neighborly dispute," says Throckmorton, who has been working in the fence industry since 2006 and started Forever Fence & Rail in 2014. "They wanted privacy, of course, but they wanted the sides open, so that they could still see some deer."

They also wanted a more upscale, designer look, so Throckmorton jumped in with suggestions.

"They wanted a high-end product, so I showed them what we call our designer fence, which is aluminum with a vinyl infill. The aluminum can be powder-coated in a darker color and the infill can be just about anything."

Especially challenging (and interesting!) was the terrain.

"The sides had to go up a 30-degree hill," Throckmorton explains, "so we had to custom-route every section of the picket fence and were then able to ascent the hill. It was ridiculous," he chuckles. "And then we went from being in the ground to transitioning into a paver wall onto which we bolted it down."

To look at it, however, no layperson would know the scope or the engineering that went into it. Some of the work was less intricate, cutting trees to allow for a sight line, but Throckmorton gives some credit to his preferred manufacturer for the fence's final, polished look.

"I use Digger Specialties," he says. "I just love their product — it's fine quality and they stand behind it — and they ended up winning the Manufacturer of the Year Award, which was well deserved."

Throckmorton believes the most challenging elements of the project were what cinched the win for his company.

"When you hear 'six-foot vinyl privacy fence,' it doesn't sound like anything exotic," he jokes, noting that most people probably imagine a plain, white fence. "But then you see it — a bronze, fine textured, powder-coated aluminum frame with the post and rails, and then a tan, wood-grain vinyl infill? It's something else."

It wasn't Throckmorton's most difficult project, but he ranks it up there near the

top. The honor of winning the AFA PRO title, though, especially in its first year, will undoubtedly lock it in among his most memorable.

"I'm honored, obviously," he says. "And I think it's a great thing that the AFA is doing. Us little guys are out here and it's really nice for us to be recognized."

RAIL CALL

Tek-Rail began as a fence company back in 1990, but in the years since has made aluminum and vinyl railing a principal part of its business. By the time its professionals signed on for the Sawgrass at Bolton's Landing project in Charleston, SC, they had nearly 30 years of experience to bring.

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**—Ken Throckmorton (CFP, CAGSD),
Forever Fence & Rail**



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Bluewater at Boltons Landing.

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—David Mullins, CEO, Tek-Rail

And bring it they did.

The lovely multifamily complex sits pretty amid the Carolina woodlands, but no one could deny that the crisp, white lines of its balconies afford the buildings an extra bit of Southern elegance — a flourish that's celebratory; reminiscent of a wedding cake.

Tek-Rail CEO David Mullins says that those outside the specialty often have misconceptions about vinyl. Projects such as this one serve to eradicate that notion — and its new status as an AFA PRO award-winner won't hurt, either.

"Architects and general contractors can get caught up on the idea that vinyl doesn't bring the beauty they're looking for, or that it can appear cheap," he says. "They like aluminum — which we also do — but although vinyl is a more economical alternative, that shouldn't be confused with cheap."

The white-on-white color choice, Mullins notes, really makes the rail features pop, but says Tek-Rail doesn't deserve all the credit.

"Sterling Construction and the architects (SGN+A) had a lot to do with it; they had the vision to see the product could be really attractive as a white-on-white piece... it doesn't matter where you stand on the property, it just looks beautiful."

Moreover, it's well past safe when it comes to code, exceeding the requirements by 250 percent. The community's residents can feel at ease relaxing with a sunset cocktail as they lean against it, soaking up the view around their homes.

Tek-Rail began the project back in 2015 — it was built in phases — and was with it from Day One.

"By the time the most recent buildings went up, we were the subject matter experts," Mullins says.

He says it's an award-winner not merely for its aesthetics, but also for its quality.

"It's a true, garden-style community, and our vinyl really looks good in that sphere, but the important thing is that we could come back here in 20 years and that vinyl is going to look just as good, just as clean, as it does today. It is mono-extruded, so you know it's going to last."

There's an importance to the project, as well.

"We have a saying around here in that fence defines boundaries, but railing saves lives. Tek-Rail is in the life-saving business. And we have here a safety product that is aesthetically pleasing. And we're really proud of that." ■

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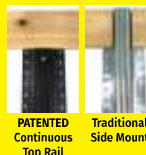
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