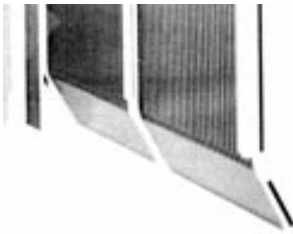


Trackless Shower Doors

by Sal Alfano



Shower door tracks are notoriously hard to clean and keep watertight. Lyons Industries' line of bifolding tub and shower doors gets around the problem by eliminating the track altogether. Each door panel bends inward at the bottom to direct dripping water back into the tub or shower base. Full-length aluminum hinges connect the doors to each other and to the jamb, which holds the assembly to the enclosure wall. The trackless design makes these doors particularly attractive for barrier-free applications. Two types of door panels are available. *Shower Veil* doors are hollow, ribbed, Lexan panels set in an aluminum frame. The new, frameless *Designer Veil* doors are solid Lexan. The panels are either clear or bronze tinted, and *Designer Veil* doors offer a "designer stripe" accent. Standard hardware finishes are gold or silver. Stock sizes fit standard tubs and shower openings from 28 to 60 inches wide, and prices range between \$350 and \$450. For more information, contact Lyons Industries, Inc., M62 West/P.O. Box 88, Dowagiac, MI 49047; 800/458-9036.

Attractive Latch



An interior door latch with no moving parts is available from Texim International, a building industry research and development firm. The *Texima Magnetic Latch* gets its holding power from a $\frac{3}{8}$ -x- $\frac{23}{4}$ -inch magnet. The latch mounts in a shallow rabbet on the face of the door, and a narrow strike plate attaches to the door stop with double-sided adhesive tape. A fixed

pull is still required to operate the door, and the company offers its own line of porcelain knobs. But according to Texim, the latch accepts most dummy knobs that have a separate base plate and removable rose. The pulling power of the magnet is adjustable between 4 and 22 pounds by means of an exposed torx screw on the latch face. The latch can be used to retrofit existing bored locks. Currently, only passage sets are available, but a locking privacy function is being designed. Suggested retail price for the latch is \$26; *Texima Knob Pulls* are \$16 each. Several finishes are available for each. For more information, contact Texim International, 17777 Main St., Suite H, Irvine, CA 92714; 800/942-4249.

Retrofit Low-e Film



You may not need to replace windows to improve energy performance. Two retrofit film products, *INSUL*film* and *LLumar*, act like the high performance coatings found on manufactured windows, but can be installed on existing glass from the inside. "Tinted" films help reduce cooling costs by reflecting heat back to the outside. According to the manufacturer, the newer low-e versions can increase R-values by as much as 50% by reflecting heat back into the interior. All of the films reduce UV radiation by 95 to 98 percent.

While the company also manufactures a line of do-it-yourself products, called *Gila Sunshine Window Film*, *INSUL*film* and *LLumar* must be installed by factory-trained personnel. For one thing, there is a great variety of films, and choosing the right one is best left to the experts. Also, since the film may warm the glass more than usual, it is important that the glass has been

properly installed to allow for expansion and contraction. For the same reason, the film should not be installed on glass that has already been treated with a special coating. The professional grade products cost about \$4.50 per square foot installed. To find a trained installer, contact Courtaulds Performance Films, 6615 West Boston St., Chandler, AZ 85226; 800/528-4481.

Custom Coverplates



We have all come across plastic or metal coverplates that stick out like sore thumbs against custom finish materials. To the rescue comes *Torrence Coverplates*, a company specializing in hand-crafted coverplates in virtually any wood species and other solid materials, like Corian and Nevamar. The plates can be customized to fit any arrangement of electrical devices, including double switches and GFCI receptacles. They are no thicker than plastic plates, and virtually any edge treatment can be applied. The company carries no inventory, so all plates must be special ordered. If you think the starting price of \$38 each is steep, try to make one yourself. To order, contact Torrence Coverplates, 865 Balsam St., Lakewood, CO 80215; 303/232-5673.

Lightweight Enameled Fixtures



In 1988, American Standard introduced a line of bathtubs made of a new material called *Americast*. Recently, they added kitchen sinks and lavs that, according to the manufacturer, offer the durability of enameled cast iron at about half the

weight. *Americast* is manufactured through a patented process that bonds porcelain enamel to a thin enameling grade metal with an injection-molded structural foam on the back side. According to American Standard, the new material outperforms cast iron in every way, including resistance to direct and reverse impact damage, reduced sound emission, greater heat retention, and resistance to wear. And the light weight makes installation easier. The fixtures are available in as many as 19 colors. For more information, contact American Standard, United States Plumbing Products Group, 1 Centennial Plaza, P.O. Box 6820, Piscataway, NJ 08855-6820; 800/821-7700 ext. 4023.

Restore Weathered Wood



The original color of weathered wood can be restored and preserved, according to the exclusive distributors of *Wood-Revivers*. The first step in the two-part treatment reverses the effects of weathering with an oxidizing agent that the company claims is biodegradable. The product contains less than 7% chlorine, is water soluble, and neutralizes itself within 20 hours, so it requires no rinsing. The second step uses a sealer similar to a semi-transparent stain to waterproof and color the wood while allowing the restored wood grain to show through. The treatment comes with a three-year guarantee against any trace of weathering on vertical surfaces (two years on horizontal surfaces), and can even be used to restore wood shingle and shake roofs. As with any surface stain, wood treated with *Wood-Revivers* must be re-sealed on a regular basis. The proprietary cleaning and sealing products are not available to untrained personnel. Instead, the company offers protected territory franchises. For more information, contact *Wood-Revivers*, P.O. Box 2230, Danville, CA 94526; 800/545-6603. ■