

Products

by Dave Holbrook

Foolproof Shower Base

Custom shower enclosures frequently require a site-formed concrete base that slopes to a central drain. Creating a uniform slope is made "goof-proof" with *Quick Pitch*, a tapered PVC float stick and center ring kit. Cut the float sticks to the desired length,



snap them into sockets on the center flange ring, then screed sand mix concrete over the stay-in-place floats. No level needed. Sold through distributors only for about \$21 to \$26 per kit.

Contact: Mark E Industries, Inc., 28921 U.S. 19 N., Clearwater, FL 33761; 727/771-9470.

Easy Access

Shut-off valves and wiring connections can't be buried in a wall or ceiling without access. Making a custom panel is a small pain that's easily relieved with a pop-in *Access Panel*. Cut a hole in the wallboard or other surface up to 3/4 inch thick, and install the panel



using the spring-loaded panel clips; no other fasteners needed. The non-yellowing white polystyrene panels can be painted, papered, or left alone, and come in two sizes, 8x8 and 14x14, for \$11 and \$15 respectively.

Contact: Fluidmaster Inc., 30800 Rancho Viejo Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675; 949/728-2000; www.fluidmaster.com.

Compact Vanity

Small bathrooms can be tricky to equip without compromising on fixture size. As an alternative to wall-hung and pedestal lavatories, the space-saving *Ambassador* and *New Yorker Collections* introduce full-size vitreous china lavatories in a compact, ready-to-assemble thermo-foil vanity cabinet. Available in various sizes and finishes, from \$275 to \$575.



Contact: Burgess International, 6810-B Metroplex, Romulus, MI 48174; 734/729-4069.

Closure Strips

Nobody likes to see roof closure strips hanging off the edge of the building or flapping in the breeze. It's bad for your image. The manufacturer of these UV-resistant *Dovetail* and *Beveled Closure Strips*



says they're installed using an advanced adhesive and won't shrink or sag out. All of the excess foam parts have already been removed to reduce your job-site cleanup. In material thicknesses of 1/8 to 2 1/2 inches, the closure strips are available for a variety of applications on all types of metal roofs.

Contact: Deniston Company, 3655 W. 127th St., Alsip, IL 60803; 800/544-0250.

Bamboo Flooring

You'd have to be living alone in a cave not to have heard about the dwindling supply of hardwood species and the furor over clearcutting. *EcoWood* is a hard, attractive, 3-ply laminated T&G flooring made from bamboo, the granddaddy of the grasses. The prefinished flooring strips are



$\frac{5}{8}$ inch thick and $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches wide, and come in lengths of 36 and 72 inches. With a natural color and matte finish, this is a durable and renewable surface, made from a material that will never run out. The cost per square foot is about \$4.80.

Contact: D & M Bamboo Flooring Co., 858 Sivert Dr., Wood Dale, IL 60191; 630/860-2009; www.dmbamboo.com.

Rooftop Ranger

If you're on the roof and you're not hooked into something as good as the *Roof Anchor Kit*, you really don't belong there — just ask OSHA. The Model 3505694 swiveling style is one of two models that anchor a 30- or 50-foot



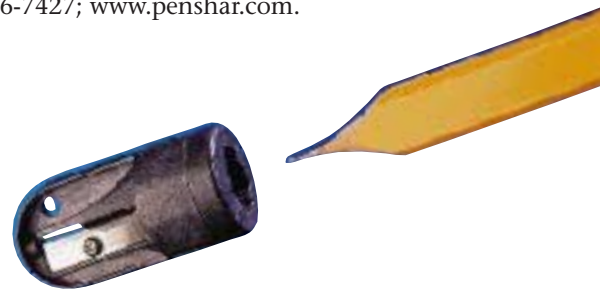
self-retracting lifeline, giving workers a 360-degree range of movement. The anchor shown costs \$865, harness not included; almost as painful as taking a fall, but cheaper than the hospital bill. Many other models and features are available at lower cost.

Contact: DBI/SALA, 3965 Pepin Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066; 800/328-6146; www.dbisala.com.

Pencil Sharpener

If you don't like sharpening your carpenter's pencil with your utility knife, now there's the *Carpenter's Pencil Sharpener*. A neat idea at \$4.99 retail.

Contact: Penshar, 1 South 312 Ardmore, Villa Park, IL 60181; 877/736-7427; www.penshar.com.



Flameless Soldering

Working with open flame in a wood structure always carries an element of risk. When copper pipes run close to the surface, instead of relying on a flame shield, clamp on the 110V *Solder EZ* and have at it. This compact, portable device will safely and rapidly heat $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch copper pipe to 500°F, sufficient for standard soldering. A high-low setting adjusts the temperature to pipe size, and a carrying strap makes transportation convenient. The industrial model retails for \$250.

Contact: Mina Industrial Products, 3020 Redhill Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626; 800/279-7921.



Form Lumber

Instead of solid-sawn wood for your concrete forms, here's an engineered wood alternative that is supposed to resist twisting, shrinking, cupping, splitting, and warping. The 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick *Teclam* comes in lengths of up to 24 feet, and in standard depths of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$, 11 $\frac{7}{8}$, 14, and 16 inches. Custom sizes are available by special order.

Contact: Louisiana-Pacific, 111 S.W. 5th Ave., Portland, OR 97204; 800/299-0028.



Cement Board Screws

With a Hi-Lo thread design and a weather-resistant coating, these screws are designed for fastening cement board, dense sheathings, plywood, and other materials to wood or light-gauge steel studs. In #9 x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ or #9 x 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ sizes, *Rock-On Cement Board Screws* feature "S" points to eliminate pre-drilling and a special rib design under the head to countersink the screw. A pack of 200 retails for about \$8.

Contact: ITW/Buildex, 226 Gerry Drive, Wood Dale, IL 60191; 800/727-5633; www.itwbrands.com.



Screen Cure

The deceptively simple, open look of a screened porch gives little evidence of the tedious, time-consuming job of stretching, stapling, and tacking screen into panel, or the royal pain of screen maintenance and repair. The worst aspects of the job are removed when using the *Screen Tight* system. Attach the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch vinyl base strip to conventional 2-by wood framing, then apply and tension the nylon screening in one step, using a roller and screen spline. A vinyl finish cap, available in white, grey, beige, or brown, snaps onto the base strip to complete the installation. System cost averages \$1 per square foot.

Conventional wood screen doors have also been given a major overhaul by ScreenTight. Closed-cell solid structural vinyl, assembled with mortise and tenon joinery, incorporates splined screening in a rot-, sag-, and peel-free door system that can be cut and fitted using common woodworking tools, and accepts standard hardware. Introduced in 1999, the basic door should retail for about \$58, and a raised-panel wide-stile version for about \$130.

Contact: Screen Tight, One Better Way, Georgetown, SC 29440; 800/768-7325; www.screentight.com.



Cabinet Convenience

Stooping and groping around for the trash pail inside a sink cabinet isn't many people's idea of a good time. Making the wastebasket come to you is a trick performed by *The Slider*, an easily installed sliding shelf with a load capacity of 15 lbs. A linkage bracket connects the shelf to the cabinet door and pulls the shelf forward when you open the door. This practical cabinet upgrade for kitchen, bath, recycling, and home office use comes in small (\$12.50), medium (\$14), and large (\$15), with increasing discounts for quantity purchase (4 or more).

Contact: Blue Heron Enterprises, Inc., 842 East Douglas Ave., Bellingham, WA 98226; 800/803/1284; www.theslider.net

