

Products

by Dave Holbrook

Traditional Vinyl

You can replicate the look of Honest Abe's birthplace without felling a forest. *Timbermill Log Cabin Board*, made from vinyl laminated to profiled expanded polystyrene, lays on the log-look without bark, bugs, or bruises. Furthermore, the fire-retardant treated foam won't support combustion. The cedar-colored logs install singly in the same manner as standard vinyl siding at about three times the cost (but at one-third the cost of solid cedar). The .042-inch-thick vinyl profile projects 1 inch from the wall. Corner posts, $\frac{5}{8}$ - and $1\frac{1}{8}$ -inch J-channel, and window and door trim are all available.

Contact: Resource Materials, P.O. Box 690, Fremont, OH 43420; 800/846-9599; www.resourcematerialscorp.com.



Switch-a-Hitch

You can tow any trailer if you have the right size balls. The *Interchangeable Hitch Ball Systems* allow you to change from a $1\frac{7}{8}$ -inch ball to a 2-inch ball, or even a $2\frac{5}{16}$ -inch ball, by turning the "quick-release" pin with a coin or screwdriver and swapping diameters. The balls spin freely on the shank, allegedly reducing towing-related noise and binding. With load ratings from 5,000 to 10,000 pounds, depending on the kit selected, the systems cost between \$34 and \$43.

Contact: Reese Products, P.O. Box 1706, Elkhart, IN 46515; 800/359-5505; www.reeseprod.com.



Clean Curves

If there's a wish to break from convention, the *Ultra Round Shower System* offers a compact alternative to the standard neo-angle enclosure. Featuring an acrylic Lucite base and walls, a corner drain location, and curved tempered glass sliding doors, the compact enclosure is available in 36- and 38-inch base dimensions with an 80-inch overall height. Standard, optional, and custom colors are available. The retail price is approximately \$1,775, depending on the options chosen.

Contact: Ultra Baths, 1200 Chemin Industriel, Saint-Nicolas, PQ G7A 1B1, Canada; 800/463-2187; www.ultrabaths.com.



Toothy Tie-Down

If the various makers of those pervasive poly tarps want to cut manufacturing costs even further, I suggest that they eliminate the almost useless grommets. The *Crocodile Clip* provides a better way to tie things down. Slide the locking ring forward to grip the tarp tightly between serrated teeth, and depress the tab to release. The glass-filled nylon clips resist cracking down to -40°F, will keep a bag of corn chips crunchy, and retail for \$1.59 apiece.

Contact: Homax, P.O. Box 5643, Bellingham, WA 98227; 800/729-9029; www.homaxproducts.com.



Circular Basin

The pots, plates, glasses, and the drain are all round, so why is the kitchen sink always rectangular? The solid-surface *Swanstone Round Bowl Sink* isn't. Roundness comes in drop-in or undermount styles and 30 different colors. The 18¹/₂-inch-diameter, 8¹/₂-inch-deep basin can be installed singly or in combinations for multiple-bowl configurations. A single sink costs between \$192 and \$278, depending on color selection.

Contact: The Swan Corp., Dept. 270, One City Centre, St. Louis, MO 63101; 314/231-8148; www.theswancorp.com.



Portable Power Protection

Your friendly neighborhood OSHA inspector would very much like to see GFCI protection on all of your non-permanent job receptacle outlets, or in plain English, extension cords. *Contractor Grade GFCI Shock Protection* can cover



that base for you in a couple of formats. The \$25 right-angle model provides single-cord protection, and the \$35 in-line model protects three outlets. Both have a power-interrupt response time of 1/40 of a second.

Contact: Belkin, 501 W. Walnut St., Compton, CA 90220; 800/223-5546; www.belkin.com.

Platform Hoist

Those who learned roofing or chimney masonry the hard way — lumping heavy materials up the ladder — may think that the *TranzSporter* is cruel irony. (Actually, it's steel and aluminum). The 3¹/₂ hp Briggs and Stratton gas engine powers a winch capable of sending 200- to 400-lb. loads 27 feet up the aluminum track. The track breaks down into three 8-foot sections and a 3-foot-long base for transportation. An optional high-torque electric motor keeps the noise level down to a hum. Make the switch and save some of that lifting and grunting for the gym. The model LH200 sells to contractors for \$1,395, and the LH400 goes for \$1,795.



Contact: Tie Down Engineering, 5901 Wheaton Dr., Atlanta, GA 30336; 800/241-1806; www.tiedown.com.

Simple Saw Stand

There's no question that a miter saw's versatility is enhanced by a stand with supporting outriggers. The \$159 *StableMate* stand provides 106 linear inches of workpiece support on a tubular steel frame. A flip-up fence and flip-up work stop, four adjustable work supports, self-locking fold-up legs, and a pair of casters are all included in the 48-pound kit. Deceptively frail looking, the stand is rated to support up to 500 pounds. The legs don't adjust for uneven terrain though, so play it safe on a flat, level surface.

Contact: Iowa Manufacturing, 2456 Eagle Ave., Battle Creek, IA 51006; 800/882-4422.

