

Products

by Joe Stoddard

Real Plastic Wood

If you're going for a low-maintenance exterior and would like something more substantial than flimsy vinyl accessories or crinkly aluminum coil stock, check out *Royal Wood Trimboards*. Royal Wood has a tough composite core (recycled milk jugs plus sawdust), coated with a tough acrylic finish that can be left white or painted to match other materials. Royal Wood is heavy, dense, and machines like real wood but is guaranteed rot- and split-proof. It's available as brick mold, beaded wainscot, lattice strips, preformed corners, and dressed board in sizes up to 5/4x12. Board-foot pricing is competitive with high-grade wood if you consider that no additional prep or applied finishes are required.

Contact: Precision Composites Inc., 109 N. 37th Ave., #1, Phoenix, AZ 85009; 866/899-3320; www.royal-wood.com.



Smooth Operator

Makita says its new industrial-strength *BO6030 6-inch Random Orbit Sander* (about \$190) vibrates 30% less than the competition, making it comfortable for use in high-production environments. The 6030 also features quick-change hook-and-loop sanding pads, through-the-pad dust



pickup, and variable speed from 4,000 to 10,000 rpm. It comes standard with a cloth dust bag but can also accept the industry standard paper dust bag assembly.

Contact: Makita USA Inc., 14930 Northam St., La Mirada, CA 90638; 800/462-5482; www.makitatools.com.

High-Style Hoods

High-output commercial ranges used in residential kitchens require commercial-quality ventilation. The problem is most high-output hoods look like they belong down at Denny's. The *Europa Collection* by Zephyr marries high

style with powerful commercial-style ventilation. The Torino features a stunning hand-blown glass canopy with a stainless-steel body, touch controls, and 715 cfm blower. Options include a delay off timer and dual halogen work lights. Pricing starts skyward of \$2,000, depending on blower configuration and other options.

Contact: Zephyr, 1551 Minnesota St., San Francisco, CA 94107; 888/880-8368; www.zephyronline.com.



Third Hand

Strip down any \$300 miter saw stand to its most basic function, and what do you have? Something to prop up one end of a board while you're making a cut on the other.



The \$47.50 *MiterMidget* clamps in the jaws of any clamping workstation (such as a Black and Decker Workmate). It telescopes to more than 4 feet long and can be adjusted to match the table height of any chop saw.

Contact: Trojan Manufacturing Inc., 9810 N. Vancouver Way, Portland, OR 97217; 800/745-2120; www.trojantools.com.

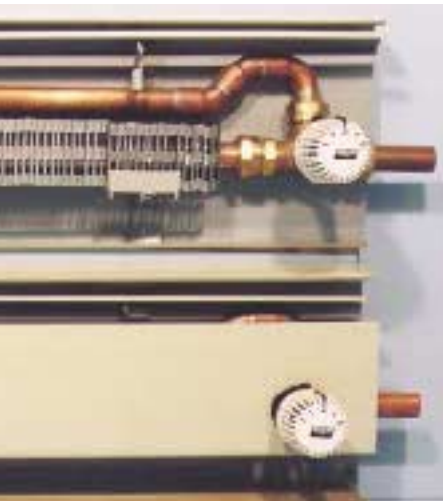
In the Zone

Controlling the temperature of a single room in an existing hot water baseboard heating system has been an exercise in frustration. Sure, you can clip fins off the tubing or close the cover if the room overheats, but what if you have a room that's chronically cold? Short of making new piping runs back to the boiler and pulling 'stat wire, there hasn't been a great solution.

The *Enerjee 3-Way Thermostatic By-Pass Valve* might be just what the doctor ordered. The \$65 valves respond to the

built-in thermostat to either send boiler water through the fin tubing if the room needs heat, or divert it through a plain pipe in the baseboard if it doesn't.

Contact: Enerjee, 24 S. Lafayette Ave., Morrisville, PA 19067; 215/295-0557; www.enerjee.com.



As Seen on TV

Ever wish you had something better than an adjustable "knuckle-buster" to change a saw blade, crank in a cable hook, or open that busted spigot? When I caught the *Gator-Grip universal socket* on TV one night I figured it was destined for the infomercial hall of fame but decided to check it out anyway.

As it turns out, the "Gators" are nicely machined and finished "made in U.S.A." tools. All use a system of sliding hardened steel pins

to grab on to and turn things normally reserved for vice grips, but with ratchet action. The \$12 to \$13 ETC-120 handles hex-head fasteners from 1/4 to 3/4 inch and hooks up to about 2 inches. The King Gator handles 7/16 to 1 1/4 hex and hooks up to 4 1/2 inches. It will run you about \$30.

Contact: Endeavor Tool Company, LLC, 18 Worcester St., West Boylston, MA 01583; 508/835-9993; www.endeavortool.com.



Versatile Vinyl

I don't usually get too excited about vinyl flooring, but *Congoleum Ultima* is tough as nails, looks good, can go over just about anything, and is reasonably priced. The 12-foot-wide sheet goods mimic 13 natural slate, stone, and plank patterns and can be installed either fully adhered or perimeter-bonded over concrete, wood, or existing vinyl. At 102 mils, Ultima is as thick as many high-traffic commercial products. That extra thickness will help smooth out a "remodeling" subfloor. Best of all, Ultima gives your customers a 15-year stain, cut, gouge, discoloration, and scuffing warranty, along with lifetime protection against manufacturing defects and "wear out." It retails for \$20 to \$23 per square yard.

Contact: Congoleum Corp., Department C, P.O. Box 3127, Mercerville, NJ 08619; 800/274-3266; www.congoleum.com.



High-End Showerhead

For a shower fit for a king, or at least a Queen Anne, you can confidently recommend the massive *Harrington Brass Works Victorian 9-Inch Showerhead*.

According to the company, the big Vic's 76 "picots" (holes) will drench your happy homeowner with water "reminiscent of a rain shower." Harrington makes a complete line of coordinating solid brass lav, tub, and shower faucet systems with authentic Victorian styling in a variety of finishes. The chrome version shown here is available for \$995.

Contact: Harrington Brass Works, 7 Pearl Ct., Allendale, NJ 07401; 201/818-1300; www.harringtonbrassworks.com.

