

Products

by Joe Stoddard

Bigger Diggers

Gehl recently rolled out a new line of *Compact Excavators* that feature the company's variable-capacity hydraulic system, making them more fuel efficient and responsive, according to the company. The excavators range in size from a mini 3,600-pound, 14-horsepower unit that can dig to a maximum depth of 6 feet 10 inches (ideal for a 4-foot trench), to the monster 25,400-pound, 98-



horsepower model that has a digging depth of 14 feet 9 inches. Standard features include auxiliary hydraulics, two-speed drive train, dozer blade, and a wide variety of attachments. The cab and boom swing independently to weasel into tight places. Pricing starts

at around \$30,000 for the mini model.

Contact: Gehl Company, 143 Water St., West Bend, WI 53095; 262/334-9461; www.gehl.com.

Hole Saws With Stamina

Ideal Industries has a new line of hole saws featuring a *variable-pitch tooth design* that the manufacturer says will outlast just about anything else on the market when cutting wood, plastics, and even sawtooth-killing



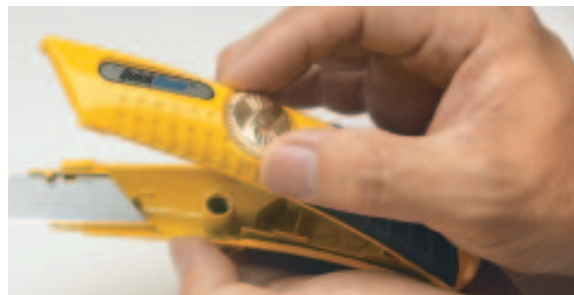
stainless steel. The saws are available in 51 sizes, from $\frac{9}{16}$ inch to 6 inches, and cost from \$7.95 to \$79.95. They also come packaged in multipiece kits. An eight-piece kit is available at a suggested price of \$100.

Contact: Ideal

Industries, Inc., Becker Place, Sycamore, IL 60178; 815/895-5181; www.idealindustries.com.

Quick-Change Artist

Have you ever wondered who the genius was who designed utility knives that require a screwdriver (or the head of a roofing nail) to change the blade? Twist-to-open designs were a step in the right direction, but the slickest solution is the *QuickBlade Utility Knife* from Pacific Handy



Cutter. The QuickBlade has a thumbwheel release dial where the screw usually is, a blade carrier that can't fall out, and a hinge at the back of the knife to keep the two halves together while you're changing blades. It retails for around \$7.

Contact: Pacific Handy Cutter, 2968 Randolph Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626; 800/229-2233; www.razortools.com.

Privacy Units

Dark laundry rooms, closets, and small bathrooms could often benefit from the extra light a standard window could provide, but not at the risk of the neighbors seeing you in your skivvies. Real glass block is a solution, but it's a hassle



to install. *Hy-Lites fixed acrylic block windows* are a good compromise. The lightweight units come preassembled in either a

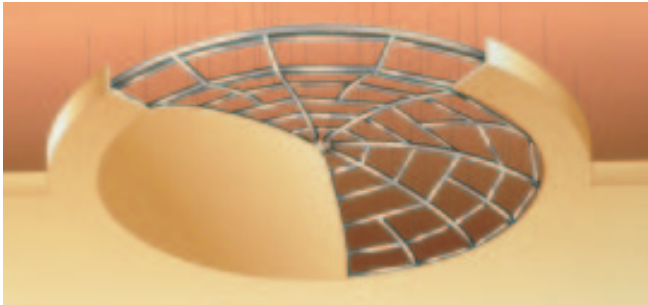
vinyl or aluminum frame and in a variety of sizes, styles, and trim materials. Prices start at \$86 for a 2x2 window of 8-inch blocks in an aluminum frame.

Contact: Hy-Lite Products, Inc., 101 California Ave., Beaumont, CA 92223; 800/827-3691; www.hy-lite.com.

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Drywall Domes

At \$8 per linear foot, *USG's Drywall Suspension System for Domes* is a much cheaper way to build domed and vaulted ceilings than flying Uncle Mario's plaster crew over from Venice.



The Domes system is the latest component to be added to USG's Drywall Suspension System, which made its debut in 1998. USG pre-fabs the components for the dome based on your specs; they come labeled and ready to install. Or you can design your own Drywall Suspension System by downloading the Design Wizard software from the USG website.

Contact: USG Corporation, 125 South Franklin, Chicago, IL 60606; 800/874-4968; www.usg.com.

High-Capacity Tool Haulers

If you're tired of not having enough places in your nail-bags for all your tools, you'll like the *5-piece Ballistic Nylon Combo System* from Custom LeatherCraft. The system (model 1714) has 23 separate pouches — almost enough to carry your entire toolbox around your waist if you wanted to. Padded suspenders make hauling all that stuff a little easier on your back. Suggested retail price is about \$148.

Contact: Custom LeatherCraft Mfg. Co., Inc., 811 West 58th St., Los Angeles, CA 90037; 800/325-0455.



Presto, Change-o, Exhausto

A poorly designed chimney or too tight building envelope no longer sentences your customers to a house full of wood smoke every time they light a fire in their fireplace.



In use in Europe for over 40 years, the *Exhausto Chimney Fan* is just starting to catch on stateside. The aluminum and stainless-steel units mount on top of either masonry or metal chimneys and provide a positive draft, regardless of

other conditions in the building. The variable-speed fans can also do double duty as a ventilation unit, pulling stale air up the chimney even when no fire is burning. The fans come with a six-month unconditional money-back guarantee, two years on mechanical failure, and ten years against corrosion perforation. All-fuel rated models (for wood stoves) start at around \$1,200, with smaller units available for furnaces and water heaters.

Contact: Exhausto, Inc., 1200 Northmeadow Pkwy., Suite 180, Roswell, GA 30076; 800/255-2923; www.exhausto.com.

Finyl Is Vinyl

Anyone who builds in coastal climates knows what salt air can do to anything left outside for more than ten minutes. Railings are especially vulnerable, which is why the *Kroy Finyl Rail* might be worth looking into. Finyl Rail is made from rigid PVC material, $\frac{5}{16}$ inch thick, specially formulated to resist salt air and UV damage. The system is reinforced with schedule 80 galvanized steel, giving it the strength of welded aluminum, according to the company. Finyl Rail is available in prepackaged kit form or custom fabricated for larger projects. Cost is around \$35 to \$40 per linear foot uninstalled and \$55 to \$60 installed.

Contact: Kroy Building Products, P.O. Box 636, York, NB 68467; 800/933-5769; www.kroybp.com.

