

Products

by Patrick McCombe

Super Scooter Saves Knees

The one tool flooring installers have needed for a long time may be the *Racatac*. This lightweight aluminum cart has cushioned kneepads, an adjustable seat, and five swiveling casters, so you can scoot around and avoid the punishment of kneeling on a hard floor all day. The design allows you to maneuver the cart with your feet, keeping the strain on ankles, shins, and



knees to a minimum. When you're not leaning over your work, you can sit on the comfy seat. On the bottom of the cart is a removable tray to hold tools and materials. If you have to work on your knees all day, at least you can

have a little more comfort and efficiency with a Racatac. It sells for \$179.

Contact: Racatac Products Inc., 3229 W. Gloria Switch Rd., Church Point, LA 70525; 877/722-2822, www.racatac.com.



Stud Step

Dragging around a stepladder to get a quick height advantage is too much trouble sometimes. We've all used mud buckets and toolboxes, but they are heavy and don't always do the job. The *Stud Step* answers your need for a fast and easy way to reach a little higher on the job site. It's an aluminum foothold that grabs onto a 2x4 and uses the weight of the occupant to maintain a good grip. It seems like an ideal tool to speed fiberglass installation or mechanical rough-in. It can also be used to temporarily support upper sheets of drywall, hold a can of paint, or provide a handhold for carrying a wall assembly. The best part is that it's small enough to keep in your tool belt. The street price for a Stud Step is about \$20.

Contact: Stud Step, 138 E. Clinton Dr., Rome, GA 30165; 706/802-0115, www.studstep.com.



Better Than Wood

Builders, homeowners, and specifiers who want long-lasting, low-maintenance exterior products have reason to cheer about *Azek Trimboards*. Builders will favor the consistency and knot-free characteristics. Specifiers will love the crisp edges and the traditional wood look. Homeowners will appreciate the



low maintenance and guaranteed longevity. The satin white cellular PVC product is impervious to insect and water damage and installs just like wood. It can also be machined, fastened, and sawn just like wood. Sizes include nominal 4/4 and 5/4 in widths of 4 through 12 inches. The company also makes a tongue-and-groove beaded paneling in 1/2x6 inches for applications like porch ceilings and wainscoting. All of the products can be painted with acrylic paints, and the manufacturer says that the product's superior consistency and UV inhibitors will make paint perform better and last longer. The 1x4 nominal runs about \$1.15 finished per lineal foot. The 5/4x4 nominal runs about \$1.55 per lineal foot.

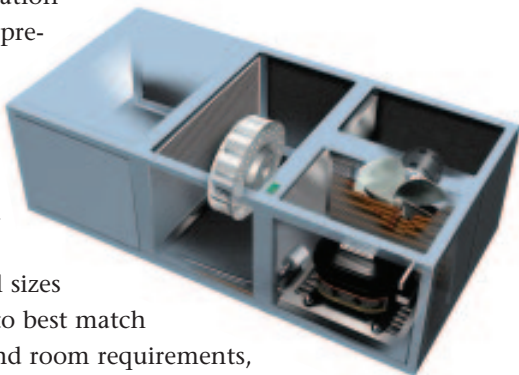
Contact: Azek, 801 Corey St., Moosic, PA 18507; 570/346-8254, www.cpg-vycom.com.

Products

CellarMate Is Quicker and Your Wine Is Fine

Wine aficionados looking for a reliable climate control unit should look no further than *CellarMate*. A self-contained refrigeration unit designed to keep your customer's wine cellar at the optimum temperature, it also aims to provide the easiest installation possible. All of the refrigeration equipment is pre-assembled; the installer only connects the ductwork and supplies electricity. Several sizes are available to best match the climate and room requirements, and add-on humidity and heat modules are optional. The unit weighs about 150 pounds and includes a digital thermostat. The one-ton-capacity size starts around \$3,700.

Contact: CellarMate, P.O. Box 257, West Cornwall, CT 06796; 888/564-2932, www.cellarmate.com.



Safer Subfloor Adhesive

Reducing VOCs in adhesives and finishes has become a priority for manufacturers because of consumer demand and increasing regulatory pressure. *GE-400L* is a new construction adhesive that is solvent free, and GE promises that the product will not compromise performance. The adhesives exceed the standards set by the APA for subfloor applications. Pricing is comparable to that of traditional construction adhesives; a 29-ounce tube should cost about \$6.

Contact: GE Sealants and Adhesives, 16325 Northcross Dr., Huntersville, NC 28078; 800/626-2000, www.askgesa.com.

Prestained Doors Save Time

More and more builders are insisting on prefinished doors and windows for their projects, and for good reason. Prefinishing saves time and money, and the quality of the finish frequently surpasses that of site finishes. In response to builder demands, DoorCraft is now offering a *prestained finish* on its line of molded six-panel interior doors. According to DoorCraft, the wood grain etching is copied from actual oak doors, which gives the doors a more natural wood look. The doors can accommodate panic bars and commercial locks, making them suitable for both residential and light commercial applications. The staining is available in five colors that best match popular stain finishes, according to the manufacturer. The prestain option increases the price of the door by about 50%.

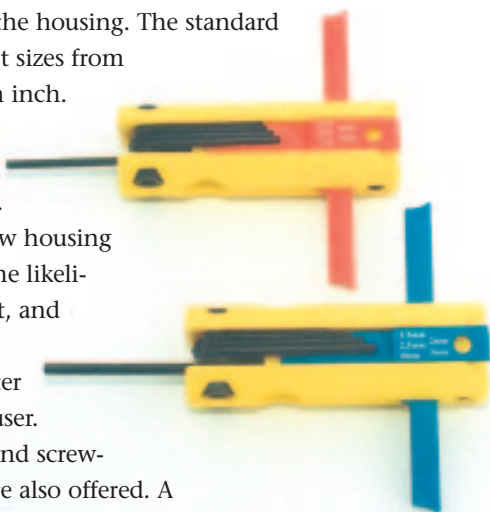
Contact: DoorCraft, P.O. Box 1329, Klamath Falls, OR 97601; 800/877-9482, www.doorcraftdoors.com.



Better Folding Hex Set

Although its name conjures up thoughts of *Jurassic Park*, the *T-Hex* is a folding hex key set. The high-quality tool has fold out "T-Bars" for additional torque when needed and a special lever to pop the wrenches from the housing. The standard version has eight sizes from 1/16 to 3/16 of an inch. The metric version handles 1.5mm to 6mm. The bright yellow housing should reduce the likelihood of losing it, and its rounded corners afford greater comfort to the user. Torx, ball-end, and screw-driver models are also offered. A *T-Hex* costs about \$10.

Contact: American International Tool Industries, Inc., 129-B Fletcher Ave., Cranston, RI 02920; 800/932-5872, www.aitool.com.



Products

Multi-Tool for Pro Painters

Think of it as the Swiss Army knife for painters. A Quicktruss 10-in-1 painter's tool in your pocket could save a lot of trips to the toolbox. The stainless blade has all the standard tools and features of a traditional 5-in-1, as well as three different wrenches for hoses and nozzles on airless and HVLV spray equipment. The ergonomic handle has a hammer end and a magnetic socket to hold standard 1/4-inch screwdriver bits. A second magnet on the handle will store an additional bit. Quicktruss's 10-in-1 sells for about \$15.

Contact: Quicktruss Inc., P.O. Box 226, Farmington, NM 87499; 800/250-3667, www.purepainter.com.



Shower Leaks Dampen Spirits

Fixing a leaky shower drain that's installed on a concrete slab is a major ordeal. You have to pull up the shower base, replace the drain, and repair all of the wall finish you destroyed to get the base out. Plumb-Rite's *Wingtite Replacement Drain* turns that

ordeal into a relatively ordinary service call. After you remove the old drain, the Wingtite goes in from the top side of the shower, and little wings fold out to secure the drain to the base. A rubber O-ring seals it to the trap assembly. Plumb-Rite includes instructions on how



to get the old drain out of the shower base. The price of \$65 to \$75 may seem a little high, but imagine the savings of not having to tear out the shower.

Contact: Plumb-Rite Mfg., P.O. Box 4040, Modesto, CA 95352; 800/200-2678, www.plumbrite.com.

Cordless Heavy Hitters

Installers and remodelers who need a hammer drill periodically should find a lot to like about Hitachi's two newest cordless drills. The DV14DV (14.4-volt) and DV18DV (18-volt) drills feature: two-speed transmissions, variable speed with electronic brake, a 22-position clutch, and a conveniently positioned reverse switch. The hammer mode in the 14.4-volt model delivers 18,000 beats per minute, and the 18-volt pounds at 22,500 beats per minute. Both drills have the most torque in their class, and the batteries charge in less than 40 minutes, according to Hitachi. Street price is \$240 for the 14.4-volt and \$278 for the 18-volt.

Contact: Hitachi Power Tools, 3950 Steve Reynolds Blvd., Norcross, GA 30093; 800/829-4752, www.hitachi.com.



Lightweight Backerboard

Asked to name the biggest pain associated with cement-based tile backer, most installers would say the one in their back. Cement tile backers weigh nearly 45 pounds per sheet and can be very tough to cut. Bonsal's *tile backer* has a polystyrene core — a full sheet weighs only 8 pounds. According to the manufacturer, the product cuts easily with a utility knife and is ideal for walls. It meets a light commercial rating for floor installations. An added benefit is that the polystyrene has a better insulating ability and reduces heat loss through the tile. It also helps to reduce sound transmission. A sheet of Bonsal tile backer costs about \$16.50.

Contact: W.R. Bonsal Company, P.O. Box 241148, Charlotte, NC 28224; 800/334-0784, www.bonsal.com.



■ Products

Fireplace for the Great Outdoors

Outdoor fireplaces used to mean a ring of rocks and a campfire, but recently Lennox introduced the *Oasis*, a heavy-duty manufactured fireplace for installation on the outside of the home. It has an all-stainless-steel construction and features a design that complements any outdoor living space. According to Lennox, the *Oasis* offers the largest viewing area of any outdoor fireplace and features a simulated brick firebox in either a standard or

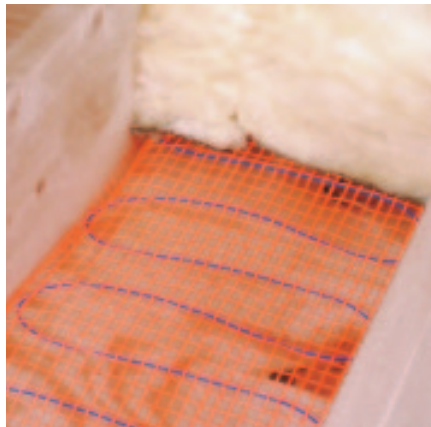


herringbone pattern. Optional glass bifold doors with brushed stainless trim are also available. The list price starts at \$1,699.

Contact: Lennox Hearth Products, 1110 W. Taft Ave., Orange, CA 92865; 800/953-6669, www.lennoxhearthproducts.com.

Warm Floor

The perfect response to your customer's request for a nice warm floor in an existing framed building may be *HeatWeave UnderFloor mats*. The mats are secured to the joist sides one inch from the subfloor. Insulation is then placed in the joist cavity to increase the heat transfer to the top side. While the mats can be used for space heating, they are more commonly used for increasing comfort on a cold floor. They can raise the floor temperature as much as 15 degrees. Mats can also be placed directly under tile in thin-set mortar. They come in a variety of sizes. Prices, not including controls, run about \$9 to \$10 per square foot.



Contact: Watts Radiant, 3131 W. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, MO 65802; 800/276-2419, www.wattsradiant.com.

