

Products

by Patrick McCombe

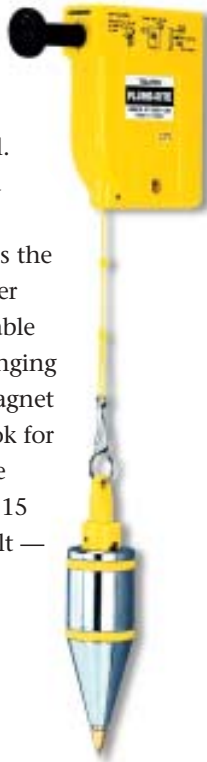
Plumb Crazy

Gravity doesn't change much day to day, and unlike a level, a string can always reach far enough, no matter how tall the wall. The only drawback is dealing with a tangled ball of string, but with its retractable reel, the *Plumb-Rite* makes the old-school, versatile plumb bob easier than ever to use. The weight-adjustable reel includes an attached pin for hanging on wood or drywalled surfaces, a magnet for steel surfaces, and a recessed hook for hanging off nails or beams; plus, the self-recoiling line extends to almost 15 feet. Best of all, it fits in your toolbelt — try that with your 6-foot level. The *Plumb-Rite* sells for \$35.

Tajima

888/482-5462

www.tajimatool.com



Snow Mobility

Working outside in all types of weather is part of a builder's reality. A bad fall on ice or snow can mean a minor injury, a broken bone, or the end of your carpentry career. *Yaktrax*'s stretchy rubber restraints fit hundreds of ice-grabbing steel coils over your shoes or

boots, reducing the chance of injury to your person or pride. The spikeless design comes in three sizes and removes easily when you get a chance to get back inside. *Yaktrax* are modeled after footwear used by sure-footed Himalayan Sherpas, who probably have more experience than anyone walking and working in bad weather. *Yaktrax* sell for about \$20.

Yaktrax

866/925-8729

www.yaktrax.com



Bucket Chauffeur

Installing flooring all day on your knees is tough enough without having to drag your bucket of thinset along like a dog on a leash. The five-caster *Heavy-Duty Bucket Dolly* glides alongside, dutifully holding your adhesive bucket at any angle, making the material easy to reach whether the bucket is full or nearly empty. The cart's low-slung design is claimed to make tip-overs a bad memory, and its 300-pound capacity and flat outer ring make it useful for moving heavy tile and other items around, too. The model 102-BD dolly has a list price of \$32.

Gundlach

618/233-1781

www.benojgundlachco.com



Flash Forward

Carrying a pocketknife should be required of everyone on the job site. The *Flash* shines brightly in a world of humdrum locking blades. It's not a switchblade, but its spring-assisted blade opens much faster than a standard lock blade, and the half-serrated edge is very sharp out of the box. It took me awhile to get the hang of the single-handed opening technique, but once that's mastered, the sturdy knife works well.

SOG Specialty Knives & Tools

888/764-2378

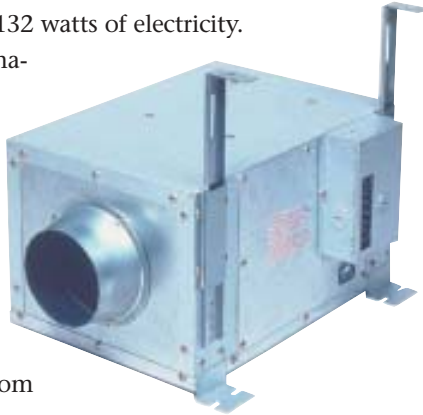
www.sogknives.com



Products

Remote-Mounted Ventilation

Reduced noise and easier servicing make remote-mounted ventilation fans a good idea. The *Whisper Line* series is available in four sizes, from 120 to 440 cfm, and has an insulated, galvanized housing to reduce noise and resist corrosion. The fans are rated to use between 36 and 132 watts of electricity. Condenser motors, with permanently lubricated bearings, provide maximum durability. The manufacturer says that the fans are easy to install, can be used with a single or multiple inlets, are rated for continuous duty, and feature a thermal cutoff to protect the motor from overheating if a duct or grill becomes obstructed. Prices run from \$230 to \$330.



Panasonic

866/292-7292

www.panasonic.com/building

Cheap Air Bottle

A new federal regulation prohibits suppliers from filling 20- to 40-pound propane bottles not equipped with an OPD (overfill prevention device). Plus, you may have to pay a disposal fee to get rid of your obsolete bottle. Instead, for \$20, you can convert your old bottle into an air storage tank, perfect for filling a flat or shooting a few nails. Or use it to increase the storage capacity on your hotdog or pancake compressor when running an extra gun. The *Propane to Air adapter* screws into the tank's existing valve, allowing a charge from a standard air chuck. The kit includes the adapter, a pressure gauge, and a 5-foot air hose with tire chuck.



Intromark

800/851-6030

www.intromark.com

Silky-Smooth Skin

Hard-working hands frequently require some special attention, especially in cold weather. When an Oregon pharmacist noticed the condition of her father's cracked hands and feet, she set about making a fragrance-free, water-based skin cream to get her rancher dad's hands back in good working condition. *Working Hands Crème* doesn't contain oil or lanolin, which can make tools and materials tough to hold on to and can actually aggravate cracked or chapped skin. Prices run from \$3 to \$9 depending on container size.

Working Hands Crème

800/275-2718

www.workinghandscreme.com



See-Through Railing

Why build a deck that overlooks a great view, then clutter that view with a busy railing? A *Sheerview railing system* has a metal-reinforced PVC top and bottom rail, framing a sturdy, tempered-glass panel. The 42-inch-high, UV-stabilized panels come assembled from the manufacturer in 4-, 6-, and 8-foot modules and sell for \$120 per lineal foot.



L.B. Plastics

800/752-7739

www.lbplastics.com

Products

Tape Measure Sidecar

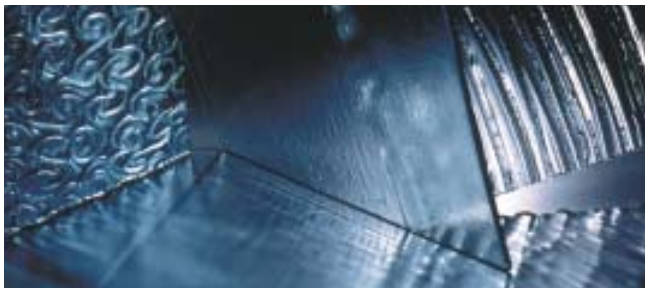
A tape measure has a way of finding the deepest, darkest recess of your tool pouch, then resisting easy retrieval. But getting a grip on your tape measure could be as easy as clipping a nylon *Sidebuddy* to your belt. The Sidebuddy can hold tapes of up to 30 feet and can be placed anywhere on a tool belt, so lefties needn't feel left out. Four smaller pockets surround the tape, keeping pencils, nail sets, and other little stuff handy. A big hole in the bottom of the holder makes removal easier and keeps it from filling with job-site crud. The Sidebuddy has a suggested retail price of \$15.

The Morgan Co.
530/626-8698
www.aprons.net



High-Class Glass

Handcrafted, textured glass could be the special touch that your clients can't live without or the factor that distinguishes your craftsmanship from the rest. Translucent, three-dimensional *UltraGlas* is available in 12 colors and can be ordered in virtually any color to match other decorating styles or elements. The manufacturer suggests cabinet doors, balustrades, fenestration,



light fixtures, and countertops as possible applications. With unlimited custom designs possible, there should be enough options to make almost anyone happy. Squiggle, linen, and ultraswirl are shown. Prices run from \$50 to \$200 per square foot, depending on color, pattern, and thickness.

UltraGlas
800/777-2332
www.ultraglas.com

Wrench Head

Sometimes in tight situations, nuts and bolts just seem to turn against you. In such times, a *Pivot Head Ratchet*



Wrench can get you in and out with grace. The unique flexing box-end of this new combination wrench has a 72-tooth ratcheting design that requires only 5 degrees of travel to turn a bolt,

compared to 30 degrees for a standard box-end wrench. You'll definitely want one the next time you're tightening that 12-inch dowel screw for the newel post. The fully polished wrenches are available in standard and metric sizes; a set of four sells for about \$60.

Cooper Tools
919/362-1670
www.coopertools.com

Including the Kitchen Sink

Stainless-steel kitchen sinks are tough to get excited about, but the *Blanco Module* could be an exception. Its integral section of stainless-steel countertop and four-inch backsplash eliminates the typical sink cutout, especially significant when used with a natural stone countertop.



The sink's 18-gauge surgical-grade stainless steel is the highest quality available and resists spotting and mineral deposits better than any other type, according to the manufacturer. List price on the Module is \$1,690.

Blanco
800/451-5782
www.blancoamerica.com

Products

Mt. Rushdoor

Garage doors are high-visibility items, and a cheap stamped-steel door really doesn't do anything but detract from an otherwise good-looking home. The *Presidential carriage door* series offers all



the convenience of a modern overhead door in a better-looking package. The line features 1/2-inch-thick paneling of western red cedar or hemlock in either a smooth or rough-sawn finish, covering a heavy-duty door that's supported on nylon ball-bearing rollers. Torsion springs, high-quality hinges, and aircraft-grade cables assure a minimum of 10,000 cycles and smooth operation, according to the manufacturer. The Grant style shown, clad in western red cedar with antique brass hardware, lists for \$4,668.

General American Door

800/879-4232

www.gadco.com

Easy Roller

The last time I was at the airport, I wondered why nobody had made a toolbox in the style of those heavy-duty carry-ons that airline employees have, but only a few days later this wheeled chest came to my attention. The *Metal Pro Chest* has an aluminum telescopic handle and 6-inch rubber wheels for portability. A flat lid with a bungee-cord holder allows other toolboxes, or your lunch, to be strapped on top. The chest has a large lower storage compartment and a full-size tray for smaller tools and parts. The lid is secured with two lockable metal draw catches. The Metal Pro Chest sells for \$69.

Stanley Works

800/782-6539

www.stanleyworks.com

Fireplace Problem Solver

Poor indoor air quality and fireplaces that won't draft are common with today's tight houses. The *Replenum*, a combination draft inducer, to keep exhaust gases moving up the chimney, and heat-recovery ventilator, to provide filtered and heated fresh air to the living space, promises to solve both problems at the same time. Using heat that would otherwise be wasted up the chimney, the Replenum circulates fresh outside air around a heat exchanger and delivers it to the living space via an integral blower. A sepa-



rate fan inside the heat exchanger keeps the exhaust gas going up the flue. Lighting a fire starts the Replenum automatically; the unit shuts off when the fire is extinguished. The product lists for \$1,375; special pricing programs are available for builders.

Condar

828/894-8383

www.condar.com



Products

Flat Wire

Duct-taping speaker wires to the walls may have worked in college, but it's not the best option for the home theater in your customer's suburban split-level. *DeWire* is a complete line of flat, copper, conductor speaker wires that can easily be painted or papered over, according to the company. The paper-thin wires are protected inside a rugged polyester film, and with wire sizes to 12 AWG, even the most discriminating audiophile could be satisfied. The company's special gold-plated connectors allow an easy transition to any type of audio speaker. The company plans on expanding the product line to include communication and low-voltage AC and DC cable in the near future. Pricing starts at \$1 per foot; the high-end 12-gauge wire sells for \$5 per foot.

DeCorp

866/412-9901

www.dec corp.com



End of the Line

The days of driving in a nail to pull a diagonal chalk line or to keep the hook from popping off the edge of the material are over. The *End-Mate*'s bigger teeth and swiveling action really hold on better, no nails required. The gnarly teeth are more likely to hang up the

line on retrieval than a standard hook, but a little fly-casting action will usually free it. The End-Mate sells for \$2.19.

C.H. Hanson

800/827-3398

www.chhanson.com

