

# Products

by Patrick McCombe

## Improved Liner Panel

USG's *Sheetrock Gypsum Liner Panels* have a mold-resistant blue face and back paper that resists damage from wetting better than previous versions, according to the manufacturer. The 1-inch-thick panels are made primarily for area-separation walls and are manufactured in 24-inch widths in lengths from 8 to 12 feet. The maker claims that the liner panels perform similarly to fiberglass-faced panels but without the skin irritation. The liner panels sell for about 50¢ per square foot.

USG, 800/874-4968, [www.usg.com](http://www.usg.com).



## Hot Roof

With summer upon us, it's tough to think about ice damming, but now is the prime season for correcting problem roofs. *Hotshingle Heating Elements* use a thin, copper heating element to melt accumulated snow

and ice before damming can occur, according to the manufacturer. The 40-watt electric elements adhere to the back of any standard architectural shingle. They're wired together with snap connectors and controlled by a timer or temperature sensor. The manufac-

turer says that a 3,000-square-foot home requires fewer than three squares, with installation and materials running about \$2,000 per square.

Hotshingle Systems, 970/544-6354, [www.hotshingle.com](http://www.hotshingle.com).



## High-Strength Screed

Aluminum Screeds from Marshalltown are made from a premium alloy that's durable and warp resistant, according to the manufacturer. The screeds are available in lengths from 6 to 24 feet long. The ends are capped to make cleanup easier and prevent concrete buildup. Prices start at \$37.

Marshalltown, 800/987-6935, [www.marshalltown.com](http://www.marshalltown.com).



## No-Glue Bamboo

Bamboo flooring has grown steadily in popularity since its introduction about ten years ago. The durable material is harvested every six years, and advocates say it's among the most environmentally responsible of floor coverings. Timber Grass, one of the industry pioneers, recently introduced the *TimberClick Floating Floor*. The 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 86 x 5/<sub>8</sub>-inch planks are snapped together, simplifying installation. Prefinished with a water-based, six-coat finish, the planks have a 25-year residential finish warranty and a 5-year commercial warranty. According to the manufacturer, the floating bamboo flooring can be installed over radiant heat and over a basement living space. It sells for about \$5.25 per square foot.

Timbergrass, 800/929-6333, [www.timbergrass.com](http://www.timbergrass.com).

## ON THE JOB

### Chimney Pots

Chimney pots have been enjoying a tremendous resurgence in popularity. Although the added height created by a chimney pot is a cost-effective way to improve draft, most are purchased simply as a good-looking architectural element. Because they are relatively inexpensive, come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, and are easy to install, builders and remodelers are using them to spruce up plain brick chimneys. Stock chimney pots are available in sizes from 18 inches to over 6 feet, in styles ranging from simple cannon barrels to custom pots that look like castle turrets or smoke-breathing dragons. Installing a chimney pot takes only a couple of hours, but it often gives a home a completely different look.

Chimney Pot Shop, 724/345-3601, [www.chimneypot.net](http://www.chimneypot.net).

The pot is pushed firmly into a 3-inch mortar bed, ensuring a good bond. Sloping the mortar away from the pot prevents ice and resulting cracks. Chimney pots and mortar should be inspected for cracks whenever the chimney is swept or every ten years.



Before the pot is carried up to the roof, 1/2-inch wire mesh is cut to size and secured to the top of the chimney pot with silicone. The mesh acts as a spark arrester and keeps out animals and debris.



Water trapped between the chimney liner and the chimney pot can freeze, cracking the clay pot or the liner. Removing any flue tile that extends above the top of the chimney with a circular saw or grinder equipped with an abrasive or diamond blade prevents damage.



## Products (continued)

### Plastic Arbor

With its flat-topped pergola roof and lattice walls, the *Fairfield Arbor* could easily be mistaken for a painted-wood arbor. In fact, it's all vinyl and impervious to rot and insects. According to the maker, the vinyl formulation is high in titanium dioxide and won't yellow with age. It can be painted if desired. The arbor costs about \$500.

New England Arbors, 800/282-9346,  
www.ultralast.com.



### Prefinished Decking

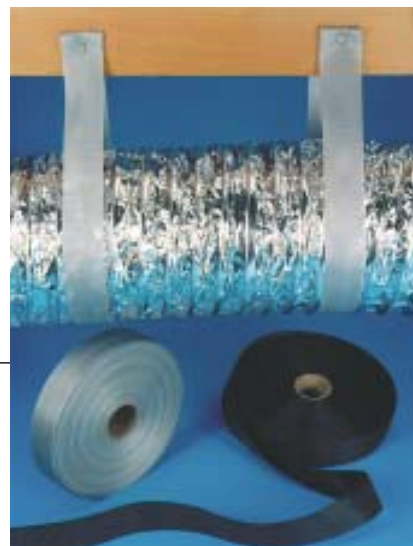
Customers looking for a long-lasting deck that's not made of plastic might consider *Meridian*. The prestained decking and railing components are made from *Shorea maxwelliana*, a clear tropical hardwood that looks a lot like teak. All components are prestained with Exotic Hardwood Penofin, and the distributor claims that the decking and accessories are suitable for coastal areas and other harsh environments. Prices start at \$3.50 per square foot for the 1x4 decking.

Princeton Forest Products, 800/504-8044.

### Go-Anywhere Water Heater

Gas water heaters require a flue, which limits where they can be installed. But direct-vent units, like Rheem's *PowerVent 2*, can be vented horizontally through an exterior wall up to 75 feet away with inexpensive, 3-inch plastic pipe. The water heater's on-board diagnostics alert installers and service techs to problems. The PowerVent 2 is available in 40- and 50-gallon sizes and meets the low-nitrous-oxides (Nox) emission requirements of Texas and California. It costs about 30% more than an atmospherically vented water heater.

Rheem, 334/260-1500, www.rheem.com.



### Better Pipe Strapping

Easier to install and more flexible than conventional metal pipe strapping, polypropylene *Duct Master Support Strap* has 450 pounds of tensile strength. The flexible webbing passes the UL 732 burn test for flame spread and smoke development and can be cut with scissors. A 100-yard roll, available in silver and black, sells for \$12.50.

Nelco Products, 800/346-3526, www.nelcoproducts.com.

## Products (continued)

### Safety Glasses

Promising unsurpassed comfort and durability, Klein's new line of stylish, wraparound *Protective Eyewear* give users a choice of temple lengths and protective coatings. UV, scratch-resistant, and antifog coatings are offered in three frame styles. The maker promises better performance and fewer scratches compared to competitors' products. List prices range from \$7.50 to \$11.55.

Klein Tools, 800/553-4676, [www.kleintools.com](http://www.kleintools.com).



### Laundry Tub With a Twist

Although it looks similar to an ordinary deep-basin sink, the *SinkSpa Jetted Sink* is actually a spa tub for clothing. Using three water jets, it creates a gentle swirling motion for effective cleaning of delicate garments automatically, without hand washing. Designed to fit in a 36-inch sink-base cabinet, the SinkSpa uses a ten-minute timer and a three-speed pump for operation. It requires a dedicated GFCI receptacle. Available in white and "biscuit," it costs around \$600.

Whirlpool, 800/253-3977, [www.insideadvantage.com](http://www.insideadvantage.com).

### Pet Rock

Hiding cleanouts or septic vent pipes in a residential landscape can be challenging. But Topp Industries' *Plastic Landscape Rocks* can hide just about anything, except maybe a real boulder. The hollow rocks have a 9 1/2-inch opening at the bottom that can be enlarged up to 18 inches in the field. A built-in weight tray filled with soil, gravel, or concrete prevents movement. Rocks are available in three sizes, ranging from 17 to 36 inches tall, and prices start at \$65 list.

Topp Industries, 800/354-4534, [www.toppindustries.com](http://www.toppindustries.com).



### Glue for CMUs

OSI's *Low-VOC Landscape Block Adhesive* is designed to prevent cap blocks in masonry retaining walls from shifting when a homeowner is mowing the grass or landscaping. The adhesive can also be used to secure brick, slate, stone, wood, and metal. Available in 10-ounce cartridges, it has a wax-coated tube and a rust-resistant top cap that prevents damage from wet weather. A tube costs about \$3.

OSI, 800/321-3578, [www.stickwithpl.com](http://www.stickwithpl.com).



For a comprehensive product manufacturer directory, visit Hanley-Wood Interactive's

[www.ebuild.com](http://www.ebuild.com)  
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