

# Products

by Patrick McCombe

## Square Peg

Now you can use Sonotubes to cast square columns and piers in addition to the more familiar cylindrical shape. To get the square shape from a round hole, the *Sonotube Square Fiber Form* uses a polystyrene inner core within the typical cardboard tube. After the column has cured, pulling the “zipper tape” with a hammer handle (or any other handle) splits the form for easy removal without cutting or sawing. Prices start at \$9.77 per lineal foot for 12-inch-square forms.

Sonoco, 888/875-8754, [www.sonoco.com](http://www.sonoco.com).



## Clad Window Colors

Weather Shield's new *Accentials Paint System* offers 48 factory-applied, designer colors in addition to its 7 standard colors. The 55 colors are available on the interior and exterior of Weather Shield doors and windows. The two-part polyurethane-based paint is the result of a joint venture between Sherwin-Williams and Weather Shield. According to the manufacturer, not only does the new system give builders and homeowners more color choices, but the paint is more abrasion resistant, has greater flexibility, and provides better gloss and color retention. The new system can also match other colors in what Weather Shield says is “a fraction of the previous time.” The designer colors add about \$12 to the cost of a clad window, plus a \$75 flat fee for setup.

Weather Shield, 800/477-6808, [www.weathershield.com](http://www.weathershield.com).

## Arts and Crafts

Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement of the last century, Jeld-Wen's *Craftsman Series* of exterior doors is available in seven wood species — oak, cherry, mahogany, fir, hemlock, knotty alder, and pine — and in two- and three-panel designs. The doors feature traditional Craftsman details like shaker-inspired sticking and beveled glass. Matching sidelights with full or partial glass are also available. Prices start at \$500.

Jeld-Wen, 800/877-9482, [www.jeld-wen.com](http://www.jeld-wen.com).



## Push-On Wire Nuts

Join wires without twisting. According to the manufacturer, *Series 773 Push Wire Connectors* are the first push-on wire connectors that can join both stranded and solid copper conductors. With a range from 12- to 18-AWG solid copper and 12- to 16-AWG stranded copper, the wire nuts can accommodate up to eight conductors, and built-in test points allow continuity checks without disassembly. A 100-count box of four-conductor connectors sells for \$7.15 list.

Wago Corporation, 800/346-7245, [www.wago.com](http://www.wago.com).



## Products (continued)

### Bigger Digger

**W**ith a 100-hp Caterpillar diesel engine, a 125-inch lift, and an optional air-conditioned cab, the ASV RC-100 *All-Surface Loader* should make heavy site work and material handling easier. The rubber-tracked machine has lower ground pressure than rubber-tire loaders for better agility in wet conditions and less damage to sensitive terrain. A hydraulically controlled attachment system makes swapping attachments easier, and a tilt-up cab provides service access. Pricing starts at about \$48,000.

ASV Inc., 800/346-5954, [www.asvi.com](http://www.asvi.com).



### Better-Looking Window Well

**G**alvanized window wells aren't the most attractive backdrop for a basement living space. But the fiberglass *Gibraltar Rock Wall* is a better-looking alternative to plastic and steel window wells, and it installs faster than dry-stack or masonry systems. The three-piece area well measures 53 inches wide, 44 inches deep, and 60 inches tall. It includes egress steps and sells for about \$500.

Monarch Manufacturing, 800/343-9370, [www.monarchmanufacturing.com](http://www.monarchmanufacturing.com).



### Invisible Deck Fastener

**H**omeowners love fastener-free decking, but the extra labor can make it slow for you and pretty expensive for your customer. One way to achieve the fastener-free look with less labor is to use the *I-Clip Decking System* from DHL.



The I-Clip deck is made from Bangkerai, a Southeast Asian hardwood similar to Ipe. Two saw kerfs that run the length of the board receive a special T-shaped

aluminum fastener. The fastener is hammered into the board's edge and secured to the joists with a screw. The decking is available in six profiles with matching rail components. The 5/4 x 6-inch decking with clips costs about \$4 per square foot.

DLH Nordisk, 800/688-2882, [www.dlh-nordisk.com](http://www.dlh-nordisk.com).

### No-Caulk Shower

**P**romising a watertight seal without caulk or sealants, Swan's *Veritek Shower Alcove Wall* assembles in minutes on the job site. Using a sturdy boss-and-clip fastening system, the wall can be carried by one person and assembled either outside the shower area or in place. According to the manufacturer, generous shelf space is provided on all three sides and the wall accepts all standard shower fittings. Swan's Veritek shower



walls are available in three solid colors and seven granite colors. List prices for a 32x32-inch wall system start at \$370. Tub-sized units are also available.

Swan, 800/325-7008, [www.swanstone.com](http://www.swanstone.com).



## ON THE JOB

### Good-Looking Gutters

by Suzanne Pennink

**W**hen it came time to build my own home, I wanted something better looking and more durable than the typical aluminum K-gutter found in every home center and on every tract home built in our area. It was equally important that the gutter system stand up to the high winds and heavy rains brought in by coastal storms. When I received a brochure from Perimeter Systems (800/334-9823, [www.perimeter-systems.com](http://www.perimeter-systems.com)) describing its combination cornice and gutter system, it looked perfect for my needs.

Unlike a typical gutter, which hangs out in the open, the *Designer Series Gutter and Cornice System* uses a special mounting bracket and a matching prefinished aluminum or copper cornice that hides the gutter. Not only does this look better architecturally, but the components are heavier and provide better fit and finish than home center offerings. The gutter is available in several sizes and styles with round or rectangular



The Perimeter Systems gutter uses a special bracket to support the gutter and the cornice. The photo at left shows the gutter before the decorative cornice is installed and the preformed corners that make assembly easier. Below is the completed assembly.



Once the cornice piece is installed, the gutter blends in with the trim. Sturdy, tightly spaced brackets and extra downspouts ensure that it can handle heavy rains without sagging or overflowing.



downspouts. We decided to go with the Colonial style to match the home's architecture, and we chose round downspouts, which would easily connect to the underground pvc drainage system.

Given the price of copper, we initially planned to use aluminum and paint it to match the house's trim color. But when the cost of painting was factored in, copper turned out to be about the

same price. After a little instruction by the manufacturer, our gutter subcontractor installed the system without a problem. The finished product looks great and has performed well during the unusually heavy rains we've had so far this year.

*Suzanne Pennink is a general contractor in Fayetteville, N.C.*

## Products (continued)

### CAULKS, SEALANTS & ADHESIVES



**Clear Improvement.** Solvent-based clear sealants are great for many tasks, but the odor is a bit much for interior remodeling work. Some homeowners complain they can detect the smell even weeks after application. Latex products have less smell, but clear latex formulas usually have a slightly amber or cloudy appearance. *Alex Plus* latex caulk is now available in what manufacturer Dap claims is a “crystal clear” formulation. The quick-drying latex offers easy cleanup and less stink. Dap has also launched Alex Plus in antique white to better match the favorite builder shade. The clear sells for \$2.50, and the antique white sells for about \$2.

**Dap**, 888/327-8477, [www.dap.com](http://www.dap.com).

**Air-Sealing Salve.** You might not think Tremco's *Acoustical Sealant* would be an ideal air-sealing product, but energy-conscious Alaskan and Canadian builders love it. According to the University of Alaska Fairbanks Extension Service, the product never hardens, flows easily in cold weather, and sticks tenaciously to anything, including difficult materials like poly sheeting and Tyvek. Experienced users advise keeping acetone or kerosene on hand for cleanup.

**Tremco**, 800/852-8173, [www.tremcosealants.com](http://www.tremcosealants.com).



**Fire Fighter.** In the past few years, the phrases “fire blocking” and “fire stopping” have become more common in building inspection circles. Inspectors are increasingly diligent about sealing holes and penetrations that contribute to flame spread. Any hole that connects two framing cavities or building levels should be closed up, and the sealant must comply with ASTM E-136, certifying that it's noncombustible. *Handi-Seal FR 136* from Fomo is one example of a water-based, fire-blocking sealant. Its pink color distinguishes it from conventional sealants that aren't flame proof.

**Fomo Products**, 800/321-5585, [www.fomo.com](http://www.fomo.com).



**Sealant Breakthrough.** It's irritating enough trying to break the seal inside a tube of caulk while you're hanging from a ladder. Adding insult to injury, many of today's import caulking guns don't have an on-board spout poker. So you have to rummage through your toolbelt for a nail, screw, or anything else long enough to puncture the seal. You can free yourself from both hassles with OSI's new break-away seal, found on tubes of *Quad Sealant*. The special seal breaks automatically when you start caulking. The paintable sealant can be used in temperatures down to 20°F and is available in 150 colors. It costs about \$6.

**OSI Sealants**, 888/445-0208, [www.osisealants.com](http://www.osisealants.com).

**Room to Move.** You wouldn't expect to fill a 2-inch gap with caulking, but Sashco claims that its *Big Stretch* goes the distance. The latex-based sealant can stretch more than 100% of its original width, and it cleans up with soap and water. Available in nine colors, it's compatible with most building materials, with the exception of oil-based, painted surfaces. It costs about \$65 per case.

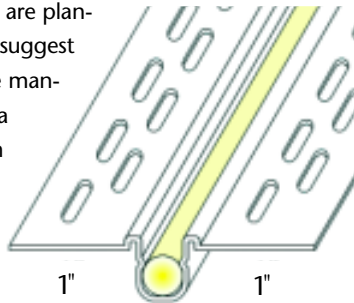
**Sashco**, 800/289-7290, [www.sashco.com](http://www.sashco.com).



### FASTER, BETTER DRYWALL

**Fiber-Optic Bead.** If your customers are planning the ultimate home theater, you could suggest decorative fiber-optic cabling. Trim-Tex, the manufacturer of plastic corner bead, also offers a *reveal bead* that receives decorative  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch fiber-optic cable. The 2-inch-wide channel works with both  $\frac{1}{2}$ - and  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch board and requires a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch groove. Turning corners in the same plane requires special preformed accessory pieces.

Trim-Tex, 800/874-2333, [www.trim-tex.com](http://www.trim-tex.com).



**Cover Your Butt.** No matter how skilled the finishing and feathering, even an untrained eye can pick up the hump of a butt seam in the right light, and today's big homes have more of them. Using the *Butthanger* is among the easier ways to deal with the problem. A U-shaped channel draws in the

board's butt edges, creating a depression similar to that of factory-tapered edges. The manufacturer points out that this product also makes installation of trim and countertops easier. The Butthanger retails for \$6.75 each.

Flat-Fast, 888/292-1002, [www.butthanger.com](http://www.butthanger.com).

**Home Sweet Dome.** I can't imagine a more labor-intensive and time-consuming process than framing and finishing an interior dome. However, USG's *Drywall Suspension System* offers preformed components for domes and arched ceilings with radii from 32 inches to 20 feet. The light-gauge metal components include curved main runners and associated hanging and joining hardware. USG's website includes component dimensions, design and estimating help, and installation instructions.

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



**Clever Clips.** *Instaback Drywall Fasteners* provide a great way to deal with butt seams and patches. The versatile metal clips provide support and make a slightly tapered butt joint for easier finish-



ing. Once the board is secured to the clips with screws, the front tab is broken off. Instabacks also make hanging ceilings easier by supporting one end of the board while you hold and fasten the other — great for solo work. They cost around 20¢ apiece in packages of 200.

Prest-On Company, 888/323-1813, [www.prest-on.com](http://www.prest-on.com).



### FASTER, BETTER DRYWALL

#### Board Stretcher.

According to the manufacturer, you can make your drywall go further and save some installation time with a *Rock*

*Cleat*. The plastic cleat eliminates the need to land the drywall on a stud or joist and the 54-inch length makes it suitable for wide board. Of course, you could accomplish the same thing with a scrap of lumber, but you can cut the Rock Cleat with a utility knife. It comes in three styles, one for typical butt seams, one for a 90-degree inside corner, and one for angled corners and returns up to 120 degrees. The Rock Cleat for butt seams retails for \$3 each.

**Crane Products**, 888/923-8799, [www.craneproducts.com](http://www.craneproducts.com).



**Mud Flap.** Keeping paint and joint compound off posts, beams, and windows can be a one-step

process with *PullAway Bead*

by Trim-Tex. The vinyl

L-bead includes a


removable, 1/2-inch

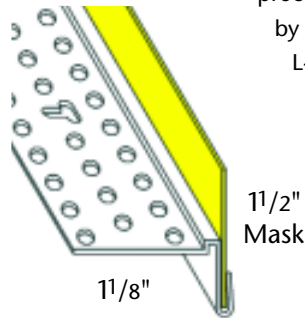
fin to protect adjacent surfaces from

blobs and spatters.

Unlike masking tape that can leave tiny remnants or a sticky residue

behind, PullAway Bead comes off quick and clean.

**Trim-Tex**, 800/874-2333, [www.trim-tex.com](http://www.trim-tex.com). 



For more product information, visit *ebuild*, Hanley-Wood's interactive product catalog at [www.jlconline.com](http://www.jlconline.com) or [www.ebuild.com](http://www.ebuild.com)