

Products

by Patrick McCombe

Bonaparte's Favorite Boiler

When your company has been around long enough to have made cannon balls for Napoleon, you probably know a little about metal-lurgy. *De Dietrich Residential Cast-Iron Boilers* are less susceptible to the problems associated with pitting, corrosion, and thermal shock. The units can handle return water temperatures as low as 105°F without a tempering valve. The secret is an exceptionally fine-grained “eutectic” cast iron in the exchanger. According to the manufacturer, the good-looking boiler is favored by style-conscious Europeans because their small homes frequently require placing the heating plant in the kitchen, where it's always on display. De Dietrich boilers start at about \$1,000, minus the burner.

Macna/De Dietrich, 866/420-3989, www.macna-dedietrich.com.



Top-Shelf Gutters

Do your customers ever ask for low-maintenance gutters? *LeafGuard* might be the answer. The one-piece seamless gutter system is roll-formed on site and installed by trained franchisees. According to the manufacturer, the one-piece design provides the best protection from leaves and other debris. With the magic of surface tension, water follows the nonperforated cover into the gutter's interior, allowing gutter-clogging debris to fall to the ground. Hangers spaced every 24 inches and aluminum that's 20% thicker than the aluminum used in most gutters prevent sagging and damage from ladders. The manufacturer promises that if the gutter or downspout ever becomes clogged, they'll fix it for free. The system is available in 12 colors.

Englert LeafGuard, 800/532-3482, www.leafguard.com.



Stick Chic

Epoxyes are great for strong connections, but unless you're building an office tower or warehouse, common two-tube dispensing systems generally contain too much material. For smaller-scale



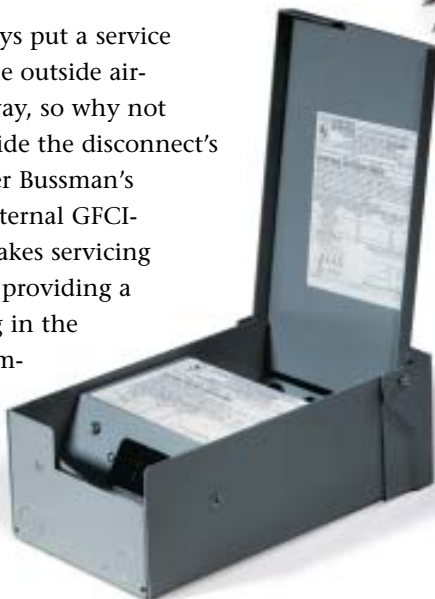
structural connections, Powers suggests its new *Quick-Shot*, a 10-ounce version of its Power-Fast and AC100 Plus epoxyes. The single-use cartridge fits in a standard caulking gun and provides about 18 cubic inches of adhesive. The AC100 formula sells for about \$13.50; Power-Fast sells for about \$15.

Powers Fasteners, 800/524-3244, www.powers.com.

Plug In

Good installers always put a service disconnect near the outside air-conditioning unit anyway, so why not include a receptacle inside the disconnect's metal enclosure? Cooper Bussman's *B222-60NFGF* has an internal GFCI-protected outlet that makes servicing AC units easier, besides providing a convenient spot to plug in the leaf blower or string trimmer. According to the manufacturer, the nonfused 60-amp disconnect has plenty of space inside, so it's easy to wire.

Cooper Bussman, 636/527-3877, www.bussmann.com.



Extreme Lengths

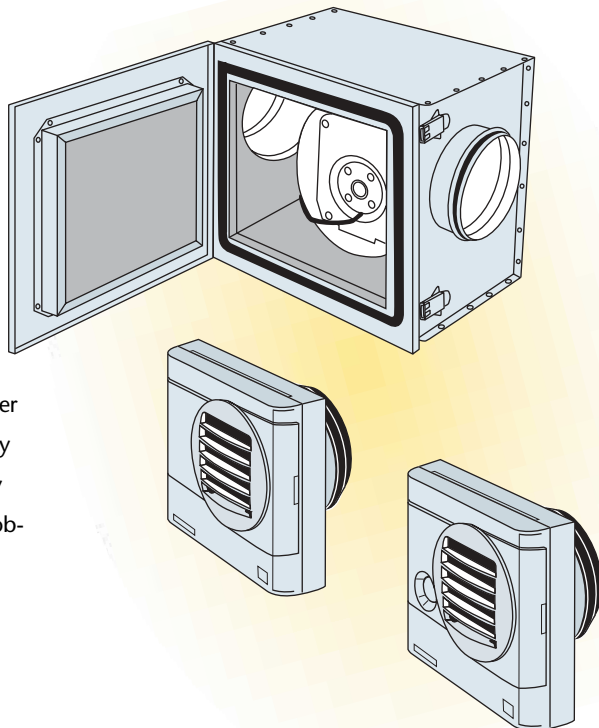
Attaching structural insulated panels calls for a fastener that can go the distance. *Long-Length Screws* are similar to self-drilling structural screws but with a smaller wire size, usually in the #8 to #14 range. Countersinking heads and self-drilling points make them perfect for driving into hard, dense materials without predrilling. Available up to 12 inches long, they're also ideal for landscape ties or furring with thick material. Zinc coatings and stainless steel are available for exterior use.

Screw Products Inc., 877/844-8880, www.screw-products.com.

INDOOR VENTILATION

Smart Ventilation. If your customer is looking for an affordable and effective way to improve indoor air quality, you might consider the exhaust-only *Occupant-Sensing Ventilation System* from Resource Conservation Technology. The system uses a continuously running, remote-mounted exhaust fan combined with unique louvered grilles to remove indoor air pollutants. What's cool is that the grilles allow about 4 cfm of air to pass through at all times, but when the motion or humidity sensors are triggered, the louver opens fully, allowing up to 50 cfm of air flow. Grilles are offered in humidity-sensing (\$68), motion-sensing (\$76), humidity- and motion-sensing (\$108), and switched varieties (\$76). Humidity-sensing grilles don't require a power source, while motion-sensing units rely on a transformer or a 9-volt battery that the maker says should last a year or two. Switched grilles are typically used in rooms where humidity levels remain low but odors could be a problem. The remote fan is rated at about 140 cfm and sells for about \$300.

Resource Conservation Technology, 800/477-7724, www.conservationtechnology.com.



INDOOR VENTILATION

Get In-Line. Moving exhaust fans to an unoccupied space like the attic or basement has a lot of advantages, like reduced noise and easier servicing. It also allows the installation of additional ducts with minimal effort and expense. While Panasonic has made quality ceiling-mounted bath fans for many years, the manufacturer recently introduced *WhisperLine Remote-Mounted In-line Fans*. The company claims that the remote fans have the same attributes that made previous Panasonic fans builder and consumer favorites, including insulated housings that reduce noise and prevent condensation and energy-efficient motors rated for continuous operation. The WhisperLine series is available in sizes from 120 to 440 cfm. I found it on the Net starting at \$135.

Panasonic, 866/292-7292, www.panasonic.com/building.



Moving in the Right Direction. Installing huge range hoods and other high-powered exhaust fans can prevent combustion-appliance flue gases from making it up the chimney. If the flue gases from your customer's water heater, boiler, or furnace need some incentive to get going, you could have your plumber or heating contractor install an *In-line Draft Inducer*. This self-contained fan installs in a section of flue pipe and gets gas moving in the right direction. Prover switches mounted on the unit confirm that the fan is working before the gas valve is opened or the burner is fired. Prices start at \$150 for the inducer and \$270 for the prover switch and controller.

Tjernlund, 800/255-4208, www.tjernlund.com.

Clever Fan Controller. Quality bath fans have become the mainstay of most cost-conscious ventilation systems, but occupant-controlled switches are generally the weak link in what could otherwise be an effective strategy. Fortunately, improving your customer's ventilation system can be as easy as installing an *Airetrak Switch* from Tamarack Technologies. The programmable switch runs the bath fan for 12 or 24 hours a day at full capacity or energy-saving reduced speed, creating a whole-house ventilation system. A push-button-activated, 20-minute boost cycle can be used for clearing odors and showering. The solid-state controller is easy to program, and it has a lithium battery that maintains settings during power outages. The Airetrak is rated for fans up to 180 watts and uses standard switch plates. It lists for \$133.

Tamarack Technologies, 800/222-5932, www.tamtech.com.



LOCKSETS

Clean Lines. If your customer is looking for something with a little more class than the typical polished brass home-center doorknob, you might suggest one of the offerings from Italian hardware maker Valli & Valli. The *Chipperfield* shown here is one of the sleeker designs, featuring a one-piece handle flowing from the escutcheon. Matching window handles and other hardware pieces are also available. Prices start at \$216 for a passage set.

Valli & Valli, 877/326-2565, www.vallievalli.com.



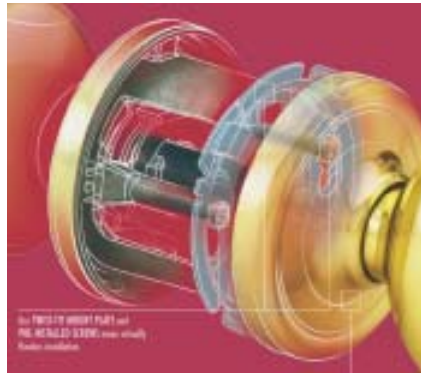
Easy Upgrade. While the \$12 locksets on your new spec home might work fine for their intended purpose, the tinny quality and cheap finish won't send a good message to more upscale buyers. If you want potential buyers to notice that you care more about quality than saving a few bucks, Emtek locksets have a much better feel and finish for only a little more money — it's the kind of touch that could put your new home ahead of the competition. Unlike many other upgrades, they install easily. Emtek's product

line includes entry sets, interior knobs, lever sets, and cabinet pulls. Knob-set list prices start at \$56; entry sets start at \$160.

Emtek, 800/356-2741, www.emtekproducts.com.



Quick and Easy Installation. Holding both sides of a doorknob while you crane your neck to line up the



assembly screws is one job-site acrobatic act that you can eliminate. The new *Kwik Install Assembly System* uses captured assembly screws and one-way alignment plates that make installation easier. According to the maker, the new

method eliminates many of the dings, scratches, and stripped screws that resulted from previous installation methods. You can find this system in Kwikset's UltraMax Security line of products.

Kwikset, 800/327-5625, www.kwikset.com.

No-Cut Pocket Lock. Many of the pocket door locksets I've seen require a big notch cut into the door's edge. If you're worried that cutting into the door could compromise its strength (or the warranty), you could use the *Pocket Door*



Lock from Johnson. Instead of a notch, this lock uses a standard 2¹/₈-inch-diameter bore with a 2³/₈-inch back set, so you can have the door prebored for easy installation without a jigsaw. Available in bright brass, antique brass, and satin chrome finishes, it sells for about \$15.

L.E. Johnson, 800/837-5664, www.johnsonhardware.com.

PAINTS & OTHER COATINGS



Paint for Plastic. While painting plastic with spray paint might sound like a recipe for disaster, the manufacturer claims that *Fusion Spray Paint* by Krylon will adhere to most plastics without priming. According to the manufacturer, it works with ABS, PVC, polypropylene, polyethylene, fiberglass, and rubber. It's available in 32 colors, including several satin and metallic finishes. It sure seems like a great way to match the plumbing vents to the roof. Depending on the color, it sells for about \$4 to \$5 per can.

Sherwin-Williams, 800/457-9566, www.krylon.com.

Caulk of Any Color. If you've ever had to deal with trying to match your caulking to your customer's bold color choices, you know how tough it can be to find caulking in "raspberry" or "mint julep." Red Devil has introduced *Create-A-Color Caulk Mixer*, so you can make caulk of just about any color. You add a few ounces of paint to the tube and use the special tool to mix it in. There are two versions of the mixing tool, an aluminum pro-grade model (\$100) and the standard plastic one (\$30). I saw the mixing process and the caulk (wet and dry) at last year's International Hardware Show, and it looked legit. The manufacturer says Create-A-Color can be used for both interior and exterior applications. It sells for about \$6.

Red Devil, 800/423-3845, www.reddevil.com.



Tired of Touch-Ups? Builders and remodelers love how flat latex paint hides everything, but homeowners are often disappointed when they try to scrub away scuffs and marks. If you're looking for a flat paint that cleans up better, try the new *ColorAccents Interior Latex Flat* from Sherwin-Williams. According to the manufacturer, the new formula maintains a flat sheen but has a much greater resistance to scuffs and marring. It should also be welcome news to builders and remodelers tired of touch-ups and repaints. It has a suggested list price of \$33 per gallon.

Sherwin-Williams, 800/457-9566, www.sherwin-williams.com.

Mold-Stopping Multisurface Coating. With mold still grabbing headlines across the country, builders and remodelers are frequently left wondering how to protect themselves and their clients when they find mold during a project. While it's not a quick fix for bad flashing or missing weather barriers, you can frequently prevent the recurrence of mold with products like Sentinel's *24.7 Multisurface Coating*. The maker

claims that the product is easy to apply, cleans up with soap and water, and can be used on surfaces from ductwork to dry-wall. A five-gallon pail sells for about \$325.

Sentinel, 800/373-0633, www.senpro.com.

