

# Products

by Patrick McCombe

## My Favorite Dish

Satellite television is increasingly popular, but until now I haven't seen a good method for roof mounting a dish. The *CommDeck* is an 18-gauge self-flashing galvanized platform for mounting small satellite dishes.

Available in black, brown, and weathered wood, the platform is predrilled to accept dishes from both DirecTV and DISH Network. Now you can offer satellite-ready spec homes while reducing the possibility of leaks. I found it on the Web for \$55.

RSTC Enterprises, 866/367-7782, [www.commdeck.com](http://www.commdeck.com).



## Maintenance-Free Frame

A wet location combined with minimal homeowner maintenance can turn a door frame spongy after only a year or two. If you're dealing with a damp site and would like to spare your customers annual scraping and painting, consider using the maintenance-free *Freedom Frame*. Made from a combination of composite plastic and wood, the product is available for 2x4 and 2x6 walls and includes concealed Jamb Jacks for a plumb installation. The Freedom Frame is available at most door prehangs and, depending on size, adds between \$50 and \$100 to the cost of a pre-hung door, according to the manufacturer.

Fen-Tech, 715/392-9500, [www.fentechinc.com](http://www.fentechinc.com).

## Double-Duty Closet Lighting

Lighting a dark closet isn't the easiest task. The National Electric Code prohibits some types of fixtures, and getting light exactly where you need it can be a challenge. Here's a great solution: the *Closet Rod Light* from Outwater. Available in brushed nickel and white, in lengths from 24 to 46 inches, the fluorescent fixture-closet rod includes a T5 bulb, a rocker switch, and a 9-foot cord. Prices start at \$57.

Outwater, 800/631-8375, [www.outwater.com](http://www.outwater.com).



### WINDOWS



**Quick Finish.** One of the best ways to save time and money when you're installing wood windows is to have the interior prefinished at the factory. Peachtree recently started offering a prefinished interior on the *500 Series* windows and patio doors. While factory top-coating is generally offered only in white, Peachtree will apply a single layer of primer if you're planning a top coat in another color. Prefinishing a Peachtree 500 Series window generally costs between \$30 and \$40, depending on the size. Prepriming runs about \$18 per unit. I used pre-

finished windows in my own home and found that the labor savings and quality of finish made the option well worth the cost.

**Peachtree**, 800/732-2499, [www.peachtreedoor.com](http://www.peachtreedoor.com).



**Discreet Screen.** Screens generally don't do much for the aesthetics of a home.

Don't believe me? Look at the catalogs and marketing materials from just about any window manufacturer — they almost never depict windows with the screens installed.

For screens that barely show, check out the *Vivid View* screen option from Pella.

Available on Designer and Architect series windows, Vivid View screens use a special fab-

ric that, the maker says, "makes them less obtrusive from the outside" and increases airflow. Vivid View screens for common casement and double-hung sizes have a list price of about \$95.

**Pella**, 888/847-3552, [www.pella.com](http://www.pella.com).

**Less Expensive Grille Option.** Simulated divided lights (SDLs) are a great way to dress up ordinary windows, especially if you're going for a historic look or replacing units on an older home. Most optional SDL systems use a spacer bar between the two panes of glass, but many window manufacturers, including Crestline, offer less expensive SDLs without the spacer. By opting for Crestline's *Value Divided Lights* (instead of the company's SDL units with the spacer bar), you can

reduce the unit cost by about 5 percent. That might not sound like much, but it makes a noticeable difference on a large window order. The only drawback is that when you get right up close to the window, you can see the void between the exterior and interior grilles. The gap is especially obvious on patio doors, because they typically have a bigger air space than windows do.

**Crestline Windows**, 800/552-4111, [www.crestlinewindows.com](http://www.crestlinewindows.com).



### HEATING PRODUCTS

**Snug Fit.** Refrigerant lines for residential air conditioners and heat pumps require a pretty big hole in the side of the building. You could seal the opening with duct sealing compound or caulk, but a big blob of either substance doesn't look too swift and probably won't maintain a weathertight seal for long. A better way to seal around refrigerant lines is with a *Thermo-Thimble*. This unique product has a plastic housing that channels water away from the hole — plus the foam seal looks way better than a gob of caulk or duct sealing compound. It's offered in rectangular and round versions and accommodates walls up to 12 inches thick. For price, check with your heating contractor.

**Thermo Manufacturing**, 888/678-3709, [www.thermopan.com](http://www.thermopan.com).



#### Two Zones Are Better Than One.

Zoned heating systems in residential applications are increasingly popular because they maximize comfort and save energy. The *SlimZone Classic II* is a good example of a

relatively simple and easy-to-install two-zone control panel. It allows the occupants to adjust the first- and second-floor spaces independently. The panel works with all Robertshaw dampers and thermostats and with all single-stage electric, oil, and gas furnaces and single-compressor electric heat pumps. And you won't need a separate fossil-fuel kit when using it with a dual-fuel heat pump.

**Robertshaw**, 800/445-8299, [www.robertshaw.com](http://www.robertshaw.com).

#### Energy-Saving Blower Motor.

Electronically commutated motors (ECMs) in forced-air furnaces use about half the electricity of more conventional blower motors, says a study released last year by the Energy Center of Wisconsin. The study

examined the energy consumption of 31 90-percent-efficiency Wisconsin furnaces, 14 of which had ECM blowers, and found that the additional \$550 up-front cost of the ECM could be recouped in 15 years if the blower was used for heating and cooling exclusively, or in two or three years if it ran continuously. With those statistics in mind, check out the *Affinity Variable Speed Furnaces* from York. Offered in 80+ and 90+ efficiencies, the new furnaces use a variable-speed ECM blower. The 90+ unit has an Energy Star rating.

**York**, 877/874-7378, [www.yorkupg.com/affinity](http://www.yorkupg.com/affinity).



## HISTORIC RESTORATION PRODUCTS



**Peak Performance.** In addition to elaborate millwork and paint schemes, Victorian homes often boast decorative metal accents, including decorative ridge metal and cresting. Sadly, these elements are often sacrificed when replacement pieces prove tough to find. If you need decorative exterior metalwork for a restoration project, get in touch with W.F. Norman Corp. This company continues to produce the same galvanized steel and copper

*Ornamental Ridge Tiles and Cresting* it's sold for more than 100 years, plus countless other decorative metal components. It can also custom match existing pieces. The copper ridge shown here sells for about \$10.50 per foot; a matching copper finial sells for \$55. The two galvanized profiles come in 5-foot lengths and sell for about \$15 each.

**W.F. Norman**, 800/641-4038, [www.wfnorman.com](http://www.wfnorman.com).



**Open and Shut Case.** Shutters are a key component of many historic homes — and I'm not talking about the tacky plastic versions from the lumberyard or home center. When nothing but real wood will do, consider *Cedar Shutters* from Timberlane Woodcrafters. Made from red cedar, they are available in raised- and recessed-panel, board-and-batten, and louvered designs. Timberlane offers hundreds of styles and sizes and can make exact duplicates of your existing shutters. The company

also makes interior shutters and sells functional shutter hardware. The Bermuda Shutters (above) cost \$310 per window. The Radius Top Shutters (far right) cost \$400, and the two- and three-panel shutters (right) cost \$405 per window. All prices include the hardware shown.

**Timberlane**, 800/250-2221, [www.timberlane.com](http://www.timberlane.com).



### Southern Hospitality.

Getting the paint colors right is one of the most important aspects of any historic restoration. Last spring, Duron started selling a line of paints inspired by the colors of homes and commercial buildings in historic Charleston, S.C. Previously, these hues were available only in a few Charleston-area

Lord and Evans paint stores.

The *Colors of Historic Charleston* come in both exterior and interior formulations in several sheens. Compared with many other historic paints, they're a bargain: Exterior latex runs about \$32 per gallon.

**Duron**, 800/723-8766, [www.duron.com](http://www.duron.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)