

by Patrick McCombe

Tight-Budget Transom

A fixed transom mulled to a traditional double-hung window looks great and can help a window package complement the tall ceilings commonly found in modern homes. The problem is that mulled transoms are pretty expensive, especially considering that they add only a little light and no ventilation. A good compromise is a simulated transom, which Crestline now offers on its *CrestWood* double-hung window. By permanently adhering a 3¹/₂-inch rail to the window's enlarged upper sash, the company has created a unit that it says looks like a typical double hung with a mulled transom but costs 10 percent to 15 percent less. Crestline says the simulated product is easier to install, too.

Crestline, 800/552-4111, www.crestlinewindows.com.



After



Before

Garage-Door Facelift

If your customer is looking for an easy way to upgrade a boring garage door, check out *TransformaDoor Garage Door Siding*. Available in three stained colors — light, medium, and dark — the composite panels attach to the face of the existing door, giving it a completely new look. (They can also be painted.) According to the manufacturer, TransformaDoor works with a door's existing hardware, but the product's added weight does require adjusting the lift springs. Therefore, the company recommends professional installation, which starts at about \$1,000.

Warner Industries, 719/488-0260, www.warnerindustries.net.

Boot Rack

Duct boots serving heat or AC registers often require wood blocking or other improvised methods for mounting. Unfortunately, adding blocking can be a big pain for hvac installers who aren't equipped for carpentry work. There is a solution, however: the *Speedi-Boot Boot Hanger*. It accepts most standard-sized duct boots, and mounts with built-in, telescoping arms. It includes a foam gasket to reduce air leakage where the boot meets the drywall, and a temporary cover to prevent construction grime and drywall dust from settling inside the ductwork. It has a list price of \$5.50.

Lance-Larkin, 866/268-5953, www.speediboot.com.



CAULKS & SEALANTS

A Perfect Match. Finding caulk that's an exact match with paint or bath-fixture colors can be an impossible task. You either have to paint the caulk later or be content with "close enough." But if you need — or are willing to buy — at least three cases (36 10-ounce tubes), *Phenoseal* will provide custom colors for a \$25 lab fee, plus the cost of the caulk and any shipping charges. The company says orders usually can be processed in about two weeks. You can also buy custom-colored Phenoseal produced in quart tubes, bulk pails, and drums.

Phenoseal, 800/343-4963, www.phenoseal.com.



The Good Stuff. Interestingly, Sashco started out making windows (hence the name), but couldn't find a good sealant to glaze its steel sash. So the company's founder started making his own. Eventually Sashco focused all its efforts on producing quality caulks and sealants for both log- and conventional-home builders. *Big Stretch* caulk is the best multipurpose latex caulk I've ever used. It tools great, works inside and out, and lasts a long time while maintaining excellent flexibility. I recommend ordering a trial pack from the company's Web site or toll-free number and checking it out yourself. The trial pack includes six tubes of white or clear and sells for \$24, shipping included.

Sashco, 800/289-7290, www.sashco.com.



Short-Term Sealant. Caulk and sealant manufacturers are always trying to outdo each other by boasting that they have the longest-lasting products with the best adhesion. I haven't seen too many that claim their sealant pulls off without a struggle — except for *Seal 'N Peel*. This temporary watertight and weatherproof clear sealant removes easily without solvents or tools and without damaging painted surfaces, says the maker. It's used primarily for seasonal air sealing. A 10-ounce tube sells for about \$4.50.

DAP, 888/327-8477, www.dap.com.

For more product information, visit *ebuild*, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.jlconline.com or www.ebuild.com

LANDSCAPING PRODUCTS



Made in the Shade. Re-create a day at the beach in your customer's backyard with an *Isla Sidepost Umbrella* from ShadeMaker. Its sturdy anodized-aluminum mast and stainless-steel hardware make it suitable for coastal areas and other wet, windy climates, and the side-post design maximizes usable space under the canopy. List price starts at \$1,845, with a discount of up to 30 percent for specifiers.

ShadeScapes USA, 970/527-7070, www.shadescapesusa.com.



That's Concrete? No Way! For a good-looking, affordable alternative to stone walkways, try concrete patio blocks from Nantucket Pavers. Available in rectangular sizes from 12 inches square to 18 by 36 inches, *Bluestone-Style Paver Blocks* boast a textured surface and natural-looking hues. Prices vary greatly because of shipping costs; in eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island they start at \$3 per square foot, about half the price of bluestone.

Nantucket Pavers, 508/336-5800, www.nantucketchpavers.com.

Warm Feelings. Help your clients keep warm outside when temperatures start dropping. The propane- or natural-gas *Patioflame* campfire puts out 60,000 Btu



and includes a five-piece ceramic log set. It's made from stainless steel and is approved for installation on most outdoor surfaces, including wood decks and concrete and masonry patios. It sells for \$355.

Napoleon Fireplaces, 800/461-5581, www.napoleonfireplaces.com.

Landscape Tiedown.

The *Duckbill Anchor* serves as an underground toggle bolt for jobs like straightening trees and securing garden benches. After driving it into the ground with a steel rod, you lock it into position by pulling up on the attached cable. The largest-size Duckbill can resist up to 5,000 pounds of force in "normal" soil, the maker says. Prices range from \$2 to \$70. Driving rods are sold separately, for between \$5 and \$30.

Foresight Products, 800/325-5360, www.earthanchor.com.



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STANDBY GENERATORS

Problem-Solving Power Plant. A loss of electricity doesn't just mean there's no AC or TV — it can also lead to more serious problems like spoiled food and ruptured pipes. Standby generators can minimize the inconvenience and potential damage caused by a power failure. Guardian generators are powered by either propane or natural gas and come in models of up to 40,000 watts. Automatic controls start the generator and switch power to the emergency circuits when the grid goes down. An air-cooled 12,000-watt *Guardian Plus* generator sells for about \$2,700. Professional installation adds another \$1,000, says the manufacturer.

Guardian, 800/333-1322, www.guardiangenerators.com.



Powerful Ally. One of the realities of being a home builder is that your customers expect you to be an expert on every aspect of home construction and design. If you don't feel confident explaining all the intricacies of standby power generation or specifying an appropriate product, let Onan give you a hand. The company prides itself on its contractor support and provides turnkey standby power packages to home builders and remodelers nationwide. Onan's *RS12000*, an 11,000-watt unit, can meet the basic electrical demands (no AC) for most homes of up to 2,700 square feet. The generator is powered by a propane- or natural-gas-fueled Honda GSX engine and includes an installation base for mounting. Prices for the RS12000 start at about \$3,900 without a transfer switch.

Onan, 800/888-6626, www.onan.com.

Keep Your Cool. When people think of Kohler, they usually think of bath fixtures, but the company is also among the country's largest producers of backup generators for residential and commercial applications. Kohler says its new 12,000-watt generator, *Model 12 RES*, can run a typical four-ton central air conditioning unit. (Previously, the company's 17,000-watt unit was required.) The new generator is fueled by either natural gas or propane and includes a mounting pad. The list price for Model 12 RES — with a transfer switch — is \$4,900, but builder discounts often apply.

Kohler, 800/544-2444, www.kohlerpowersystems.com/residential.



For more product information, visit *ebuild*, Hanley Wood's interactive product catalog, at www.jlconline.com or www.ebuild.com