

BACK-SAVERS



Need a Lift? Warn Industries, a leader in truck-mounted recovery winches and other products for off-road enthusiasts, recently introduced the Warn Works line of portable winches and hoists designed for construction applications. The most versatile model is the *H1000AC*. Powered by a .6-hp permanent-magnet motor, this 1,000-pound

hoist has built-in load and travel limiters to prevent overtaxing the unit or getting the line stuck inside the housing. The remote has a 12-foot lead and the motor has an 8-foot power cord. I found the H1000AC on the Web for \$630.

Warn Industries, 800/543-9276, www.warnworks.com.



Compact Cart. Moving sheets of MDF, particle-core doors, and mulled windows by yourself can be a lot easier and safer with a new compact dolly from Trojan. The *DC-9's* adjustable carriage accepts objects up to 9 inches wide and handily traverses rough terrain with 10-inch pneumatic tires. Another plus: It doesn't take up too much room in the truck. It sells for \$134.

Trojan Tools, 800/745-2120, www.trojantools.com.



Table-Saw Valet. With their greater capacity, more powerful motors, and additional features, modern portable table saws are light-years ahead of their predecessors, but they're also heavier and more awkward to carry. In response, Bosch has come out with the new *TS2000 Gravity-Rise Table Saw Stand*. This well-engineered stand is simple to set up and rock-solid in use, and it folds for storage. Large semipneumatic tires and strategically placed handles help you get the whole rig on and off the truck — and even up to the second floor — by yourself. Although designed to be the perfect match for the Bosch 4000, it fits just about every other pro-duty portable table saw. A kit containing the Bosch 4000 table saw and the Gravity-Rise Stand sells for \$550; the stand alone goes for about \$150.

Bosch, 877/267-2499, www.boschtools.com.



Shingle Schlepper. Lugging a roof's worth of shingles or sheathing up a ladder isn't much fun — nor does it make much sense when you can buy a *TranzSporter LH2000-T8 Roofing Hoist* for less than you'd pay a helper for one month. Powered by a Briggs & Stratton or Honda gasoline engine, or by a high-torque electric motor, the hoist can lift a maximum of 200 pounds up to 44 feet in the air (with additional track sections). The basic model — with three 8-foot track sections and the Briggs & Stratton engine — sells for about \$1,300. Track sections are also available in 4-foot lengths (\$107) and 16-foot lengths (\$300).

Tie Down Engineering, 800/241-1806, www.tiedown.com.

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Take a Load Off. The Caterpillar *TH210* may be the ultimate back-saving tool. With 17 feet of reach and over 4,800 pounds of lifting capacity, this machine makes getting a load of lumber off the delivery truck and onto a second-floor deck about as strenuous as moving a joystick. It boasts a 9-foot 10-inch turning radius with three steering modes for navigating in tight spaces; the enclosed cab with heat and optional air conditioning should prove a welcome retreat when the weather is getting on your nerves. You can even swap the forks for a general-purpose bucket for grading and light digging. Prices start at around \$60,000.

Caterpillar, 309/675-8995, www.cat.com.

Shoulder the Load. Carrying appliances all day would make most people reconsider their career choice, but young inventor Thomas Dent simply came up with a new way of moving heavy objects: the Shoulder Dolly. The newest version of this product, the *Shoulder Dolly LD*, works much like the original — by distributing a load's weight over the entire

body — but it's designed for people who aren't professional movers, and it costs less. According to the manufacturer, the Shoulder Dolly LD encourages proper lifting and greatly reduces the risk of injury. It sells for \$60.

TDT Moving Systems, 800/217-1114, www.shoulderdolly.com.

**ELECTRICAL TOOLS**

Sweet Strippers. It's time to replace those lame wire strippers you bought five or 10 years ago — and Ideal's new *Kinetic Reflex Strippers* are worth considering. In addition to ergonomic curved handles and a Santoprene grip, this well-made tool offers clear markings, pliers on the end, bolt cutters for common electrical fasteners, and an easy-to-use handle lock. It sells for about \$20.

Ideal Industries, 800/435-0705, www.idealindustries.com.



Neat Meter. Looking for a reasonably priced auto-ranging multi-meter? The pocket-sized *PDMM-20* compact digital meter from Greenlee measures both AC and DC voltages and checks resistance. It has noncontact voltage-detection capabilities, a tone continuity test, and a lifetime warranty. I found it on the Web for \$35.

Greenlee, 815/ 397-7070, www.greenlee.com.



ELECTRICAL TOOLS

Fishing Poles. Successfully fishing electrical wires requires patience and the right tools. Fish tapes are okay, but they often curl up when they're in stud cavities and other inaccessible spaces. Ideal's *Tuff-Rods* might be a better choice. These 1/4- or 3/16-inch-diameter fiberglass cable-pulling rods screw together and come in 4- and 6-foot lengths. They're sold in several colors, including glow-in-the-dark green for low-light conditions. One of the great things about products like Tuff Rods is that they allow you to push wires in addition to pulling them, which is virtually impossible with a fish tape. If you work in finished

basements or in commercial spaces, you'll also want to get the *Wisp Head*. Similar in shape to a wire whisk, this device allows you to push wires over drop-ceilings with fewer hang-ups. Tuff-Rod prices start at about \$50.

Ideal, 800/435-0705,
www.idealindustries.com.



Search Team. Ever been irritated by how few electrical panels are labeled well enough to identify the circuit you're trying to turn off? If so, I've got the tool for you: the *CF12 Pro*. To use it, you connect the device's transmitter to the receptacle you're trying to identify and confirm via the device's red light that it's energized. Then you go to the panel and scan the breaker twice with a receiver wand. The first pass automatically calibrates the device; the second identifies the circuit you're looking for. The Pro version includes a plastic case, clips you can attach to bare wires, a socket adapter, and individual prongs for 220 circuits. It sells for \$120. The standard CF12 version, which works only on 110-volt circuits and doesn't include the additional accessories, sells for \$50.

Zircon, 800/245-9265, www.zircon.com.

Cable-Ready. With most rooms in today's new homes wired for cable or satellite TV and cable modems, you need crimpers and strippers to make the coaxial connections. The *GS-59 Coaxial Cable Stripper* from Gardner Bender cuts and strips both the inner and outer jackets of RG-6, RG-6 quad shield, RG-59, and RG-59 quad shield. It sells for about \$18. The companion *GS-91* is used to crimp F-style connectors on the same types of cable. It sells for about \$25. Taken together, the two tools work much better than the cheap all-purpose coaxial tools you'll find at electronics stores.

Gardner Bender, 800/822-9220, www.gardnerbender.com.



Fasco Round-Head Stick Nailer

by Tim Uhler

Last year, my framing crew tested about a dozen 20- to 22-degree round-head stick nailers for *JLC* ("Round-Head Stick Nailers," 6/04). Although we tried to include all the guns from the major manufacturers, we missed one from Fasco. Recently, however, we got a chance to try out the Fasco model F5C RHN20-90A 20-degree nailer. Here's what we found.

Features

The Fasco gun is made in Italy; I believe it's the first European nailer I've ever used. Its features are similar to those of most other guns — it has a top-loading magazine, a fixed exhaust port, and an aggressive nosepiece that is good for toenailing.

The tool-free depth-of-drive mechanism works well; it's controlled by a thumb-wheel on the nose. We found it easy to go from framing with spikes to nailing off sheathing with 8d fasteners. With some tools, you have to fiddle with the air pressure to get the right depth of drive, but with the F5C, setting the correct depth of drive was less trouble than usual. That's an important benefit for us because we're subject to shear-wall inspections and the inspectors do not like overdriven nails.

Many nailers come with sequential trip triggers. If you want to bump-fire, you have to install a different trigger. This gun has a switch under the trigger that allows you to go back and forth between sequential and bump without swapping triggers. As a framer, most of the fasteners I drive are bounce-fired, but I like the switch because it makes it easy to fire sequentially when I need to.

Power

We used this gun to nail studs, joists, rafters, sheathing, and shear walls. The



F5C RHN20-90A

Weight: 8.5 lb.

Size: 13⁵/₈" H x 20⁷/₈" L

Nail length: 2¹/₄"–3¹/₂"

Nail diameter: .113"–.131"

Collation: 20 degrees; also available for 28- and 31-degree fasteners

Street price: \$277

Fasco America

800/239-8665

www.fascoamerica.com

F5C felt well-balanced and did not seem heavy or awkward to use in any way. It shot nails fast and hard when framing walls; very few fasteners were left proud.

The Fasco nailer has more recoil than I would like — but not so much that it prevented me from wanting to use it. I really liked using this gun to fasten plywood and nail off shear walls, because the depth of drive was so consistent.

The gun also has excellent power. It had no trouble driving fasteners into LVL beams. I've used a lot of different framing guns, and the only one that feels significantly more powerful than

this one is Max's high-pressure nailer.

If I were in the market for a conventional round-head framing gun, this tool would be near the top of my list, right behind Max's SN890-RH and Hitachi's NR83A2.

My only concern with a new brand of tools is that I don't know how durable it is likely to be over time. But, based on how this gun feels and how it performed while we had it, I would be willing to bet it will hold up just fine.

Tim Uhler is lead framer for Pioneer Builders Inc. in Port Orchard, Wash.

DeWalt Laser Plumb Bob DW082

by Victor Rasilla

The arrival of low-cost precision lasers has dramatically changed the way many tradespeople work. As a residential remodeler, I've used rotary and point-to-point lasers for everything from site work to leveling cabinets — but I had never used a dedicated laser plumbing device like DeWalt's laser plumb bob. At first, I was inclined to think that this little instrument could not possibly be useful enough to justify buying and keeping track of yet another tool. But after using the DW082 for a couple of months, I have to admit that it is well worth having.

I often work alone, and it's difficult to use a plumb bob without a helper. Even when there is someone else on site, it's not always convenient to get that person to stop what he's doing and give me a hand. With the laser plumb bob, I can do the job myself. And there's no string involved, so if I'm working outside, there's no need to worry about gusts of wind.

Using the Tool

When the laser plumb bob is turned on, laser beams project from windows at the front of the housing. One beam goes up and the other goes down. The points where the beams hit a surface are visible as bright red dots. The device is self-leveling, which means that if you were to stretch a line between the dots, it would be perfectly plumb.

I used the tool successfully outdoors for plumbing down from a shored-up wall to footings 13 feet below. We were forming a concrete retaining wall, and it needed to be plumb and directly below the wall above. As with all foundation layout, accuracy was crucial. Since I had never used the DW082 before, I checked it against a conventional plumb bob. It was dead on.

Performance and Details

My one complaint about the operation of this tool is that when you put it down, it takes six to eight seconds for the beam to come to steady. That seems kind of long compared with the other self-leveling laser devices I have used — but it's still much faster than using a traditional plumb bob.

The DW082 has a four-degree operating range; the beam will flash if the unit is tilted beyond that range and is unable to come to plumb. There is a 1/4-20



Laser Plumb Bob DW082

Weight: 1.0 pound

Size: 2" x 4 1/4" x 5"

Power supply: four AA batteries

Range: 100 feet

Street price: \$129

DeWalt Industrial Tool Co.

800/433-9258

www.dewalt.com

threaded insert on the bottom of the device, so you can mount it on a tripod for use on sloped surfaces. The tool uses four AA batteries and has a low-battery indicator lamp next to the switch. It comes with a case that has a handle and metal latches.

With its rubber overmolded shell, the DeWalt DW082 feels rugged enough to stand up to tough job-site conditions. I did not go easy on it: I intentionally dropped the device 6 feet while it was on, and it retested perfectly.

I've seen the laser plumb bob advertised for \$129. At that price, it would quickly pay for itself by allowing me to plumb things faster and avoid using a helper.

Victor Rasilla is a working supervisor for Brinton Construction in San Leandro, Calif.