

BY CHARLES WARDELL



Composite Tiles

Made from a limestone composite and recommended for floors and walls—but not showers or fireplace surrounds—Alterna Engineered Stone Tiles can be installed over minor subfloor irregularities without cracking, Armstrong says. Sizes range from 8x8 to 12x24 inches, in multiple shapes; square-foot price should be about \$5.30 to \$5.60. Armstrong, 877.276.7876, armstrong.com



Midrange Power Solution

Briggs & Stratton says that its new 25 kW Liquid Cooled Standby Generator will run two air conditioners as well as other essential circuits. The unit has an automotive-style engine in a galvanneal steel enclosure and is controllable via computer, smartphone, or tablet. Retail price: \$8,600. Briggs & Stratton, 800.743.4115, briggsandstratton.com/us/en/generators



Tough Lightweight

InSpire Aledora 12-inch polymer-composite roofing tiles have the thick profiles and irregular edges of slate, can be installed with a nail gun and roofing nails, and have a 110-mph wind-uplift rating. Tiles weigh just 180 pounds per square with 8-inch reveals and come in an array of colors. Cost: \$425 to \$450 per square. The Tapco Group, 800.971.4148, inspireroofing.com



Code-Compliant Batts

With new energy codes requiring 2x6 walls to be insulated to R-20, Owens Corning has added an R-20 offering to its Propink EcoTouch insulation line. Soft to the touch, it comes unfaced or with kraft facing and is formaldehyde-free with 58% recycled content. Expect a cost of about \$50 for a 78-square-foot roll. Owens Corning, 800.438.7465, owenscorning.com



Off the Tracks

Most two- and three-door pocket doors include a recessed floor track. Johnson's Sliding Multi-Pass and By-Pass Pocket Door Hardware replaces that with J-shaped guides that fasten to one door's side and fit in a channel in the adjacent door's bottom, locking them together. Overhead tracks support doors up to 200 pounds. Hardware for the doors shown should cost about \$150. LE Johnson Products, 800.837.5664, johnsonhardware.com



Nearly Custom

Wolf's new semi-custom, American-made Designer Cabinet line offers dozens of styles and hundreds of finishes, and can match any paint color. Boxes can be ordered in stock sizes or in custom sizes in 1/2-inch increments in plywood or particleboard. Drawers are 5/8-inch solid wood with dovetailed corners and soft-close glides. Cost is about twice that of the Classic line. Wolf, 800.234.9653, wolfdesignercabinets.com



Tank-Tankless Hybrid

By blending on-demand heating with a 40-gallon storage tank, Rinnai's Hybrid Tank-Tankless Water Heater delivers more than twice the first hour water-heating capacity of a traditional 50-gallon tank. Aimed at replacement jobs where customers want more hot water but don't want to remodel their plumbing, it installs like a traditional unit, with the same gas line and water connections. Rinnai, 800.621.9419, rinnai.us



Bamboo Lumber

If you like the look of bamboo, check out Plyboo dimensional lumber, an interior-grade product made from Moso bamboo with a urea-formaldehyde-free binder. It comes in two colors, in edge-grain or flat-grain profiles. Dimensions range from 2x2 to 4x4, with lengths of 72, 96, and 120 inches. At \$37 to \$58 for an 8-foot 2x4, you won't be framing with this; its real use is as an interior finish. Smith & Fong, 866.835.9859, plyboo.com



HEPA Ventilators

Broan claims that the filtration on its new Energy Star-qualified heat recovery ventilators (HRVs) and energy recovery ventilators (ERVs) will remove 99.97% of airborne bacteria and viruses. HRVs transfer heat from warm to cold ventilation streams; ERVs also transfer moisture. A compact, 70 cfm model is available for small homes and a larger, 140 cfm unit for average homes. Prices range from \$760 to \$1,800. Broan, 800.558.1711, broan.com



Insulating Tyvek

An alternative to exterior rigid foam, ThermaWrap R5.0—Tyvek bonded to R-5 polyester insulation—can be installed as part of a rainscreen system under most sidings except cedar shingles and shingles. It comes in 25-pound, 4- by 40-foot rolls, with uninsulated flaps for taping pieces together. DuPont estimates a 15% to 20% higher installed cost than 1-inch XPS with standard house wrap. DuPont, 800.448.9835, weatherization.tyvek.com



Pressurized Water Saver

Gerber's new WaterSense-approved 1.28-gallon Ultra Flush toilet pressurizes the air in the tank as it fills, then uses the compressed air to force the tank water into the bowl. A MaP score of 1,000 grams puts it at the top of the high-efficiency category. Round and elongated bowls are available with 10-, 12-, and 14-inch rough-ins. List price: \$407 with a 12-inch rough-in. Gerber, 866.538.5536, gerberonline.com



Quick Stain

Small staining jobs often fall to the carpentry crew, many of whom hate to paint. Enter Wood Finishing Cloths. There are no brushes to clean or cans to knock over: Just wipe with the pre-soaked cloth and remove the excess with a clean cloth. We tested one against a liquid Minwax stain and the results were comparable, though the colors weren't an exact match. Cost: \$9 for a pack of eight. Minwax, 800.523.9299, minwax.com