



Siding, Painting: An Overview

"Hometime" Siding and Exterior Painting Videos with Peggy Knapp and Dean Johnson. Hometime, 6213 Bury Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55346; color VHS videotapes, 40 minutes and 30 minutes respectively; \$15.50 each.

Regular readers of this column will be familiar with the generally high regard I have for "Hometime" videos. The "Siding" tape concentrates on the application of redwood lap siding (clapboards, as we say in New England) and trim, from tear-off to final caulking. Introductory remarks describe the components of a typical studwall, useful tools and equipment, measuring, and estimating. The scene then shifts to the site, where removal of the old, badly deteriorated siding begins. Here I find one fault—both Ms. Knapp and Mr. Johnson wear gloves and safety goggles, but they work with bare arms and no hardhats, which in my experience is unwise and unsafe during demolition activities.

After inspecting and repairing damaged portions of the building's sheathing, the two are ready to apply a housewrap and start nailing up boards. Here the tape shows them taping the seams of the Tyvek, which I thought was an important point to include. But Ms. Knapp tells the viewers that after old siding is removed there is an opportunity to upgrade the thermal insulation of the walls.

How so? She doesn't say, but the only effective method I can see would be to apply foam boards to the outside of the building. Leaving aside the thorny questions of an exterior vapor barrier (in cold climates) and CFC foaming agents possibly affecting the earth's ozone layer, Ms. Knapp fails to point out that precautions must be taken to prevent siding failure when applying clapboards over foam. And she doesn't mention that special detailing will be necessary when abutting siding to existing trim (due to the added thickness of the insulation). Then again, she never actually suggests using foam panels, so these are technically moot points, I suppose.

The demonstrations of applying corner boards and siding are straightforward, clear, and easy to follow. I wasn't forced to resort to my "replay" button. My only quibbles here are with the use of 2x2s (instead of 1x1s) as stops at interior corners, and the fact that we aren't shown how to adjust coursing when approaching heads and sills so that clapboard bottoms will exactly align with horizontal trim. Instead Mr. Johnson demonstrates how to make a

"pocket cut," which is required when notching a clapboard over head trim on a window. (It is purely a matter of personal preference, but I think the former method of aligning clapboards with trim makes a better and more attractive detail.)

Back in the shop the program closes with a brief demonstration of how to apply plywood sidings, shakes and shingles, and how to do staining.

Once the siding is up, you can simply pop in the second tape, "Exterior Painting" for painting instructions. This cassette covers surface prep, paint selection (pros and cons of oil and latex), color schemes and selection (what really counts, says Ms. Knapp, is "that you like it"), and specialty tools (including heat guns and sprayers). The second cassette also covers use of ladders, jacks and scaffolding, repainting, glazing, masking, mixing, and brush application techniques. In the end, Ms. Knapp concludes that a paint sprayer really isn't much faster if you include the time required for masking unpainted areas of the house (such as windows, roof, shrubs, and driveway).

Taken together these two videos are excellent resources for exterior work.

Door, Window Tips on Video

Installing Doors and Windows—A Video Workshop with Tom Law. Taunton Press, Box 355, Newtown, CT 06470; 1989; 60 minute color VHS or Beta videocassette; \$29.95.

If "Hometime" videos are generally good, those of Taunton Press are excellent, especially this hour-long exposition on how to install doors and windows by regular *Fine Homebuilding* contributor Tom Law.

Law opens his presentation with an acknowledgement of the debt he owes to the old-timers who taught him the fine points during his early apprenticeship in the trades. By the end of the tape I felt just that way toward Law for his clarity, depth of knowledge, and thoroughness.

Law takes viewers step-by-step through installation of a number of types of windows and doors, including a pre-hung exterior door, double-hung vinyl clad window, fixed-glass insulat-

ing window, knock-down jamb, and a split jamb interior door. He even shows how to work on a misaligned "disaster door," such as might be found in rehab work. Mr. Law covers every aspect from plumbing and straightening a jamb to chinking cracks, installing locksets, "throwing a hinge" and fine-tuning a sticky door. Along the way he even manages to show you how to make a mortising jig and a wonderfully useful door buck.

But the best part of the whole thing is Mr. Law's attention to detail, as when he recommends coping the side stops to the head stop (instead of mitering) because it makes a tighter joint, or the care he takes to demon-

strate why you chisel across grain first and then *with* the grain when squaring the corners of hinge mortises. I could go on, but it would all be icing on the cake.

My only quarrel is with the video format for teaching finish carpentry techniques. Watching a video is awkward, to say the least, when you are simultaneously trying to do the work. A book is better in this respect, and sadly there isn't a companion volume by Mr. Law to supplement the tape (a small printed manual does accompany the cassette, however). Nonetheless, this tape is worth every cent of \$29.95, and probably a bit more. —Paul Hanke

Free & Cheap

High Tech How To's: For builders computerizing their office procedures, *Computer Handbook for Builders* is available from the National Association of Home Builders.

This 137-page book first explains computer basics and describes applications useful to builders: accounting, estimating, scheduling, and purchase order control. The entire computerization process—from needs assessment, to the right questions to ask before purchasing a computer system, to actually setting up and using the system—is then covered. The handbook also provides steps to follow to help staff convert to computerization of tasks, and a complete glossary. To order, send \$19 (NAHB members) or \$23 (non-members) to NAHB Bookstore Orders, 15th and M Streets NW, Washington, DC 20005; 800/368-5242, ext. 463.

Fire-Rated Wood: What's Good: What's available, what's acceptable, and what's the best use of fire-rated wood construction is explored in *APA Design/Construction Guide: Fire-Rated Systems* from the American Plywood Association (APA). This 20-page brochure contains fire protection basics, design recommendations and specifications, as well as information on building code requirements and insurance provisions. For those needing additional information or assistance with specific design problems, a listing of APA regional field offices, bibliography, and other resources are included. The brochure is available for \$1 from the American Plywood Association, Department W305Q, P.O. Box 11700, Tacoma, WA 98411; 206/565-6600.

Guide to Gypsum: *The Gypsum Construction Handbook* from United States Gypsum Company is a comprehensive guide to gyp-

sum drywall, veneer plaster, and conventional plaster construction. It offers 520 pages of information on how to simplify and speed installation while keeping costs down.

Up-to-date physical test data and information on products, tools, and equipment are also included. Send \$5 to U.S. Gypsum Co., Department 147-5, 101 South Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606-4385; 312/606-3703.

Flushing Money Away: *Water Efficiency For Your Home* from the Rocky Mountain Institute provides tips on how to save money, energy, and water by installing efficient water fixtures in homes. The ten-page booklet gives facts on the cost-saving benefits of using low-flush toilets, faucet aerators, and efficient showerheads; and also explains how this enables builders to install smaller septic leachfields and water heaters. Send \$5 to Rocky Mountain Institute, 1739 Snowmass Creek Road, Snowmass, CO 81654-9199; 303/927-3851.

Opening Doors: *Recommendations to HUD for Implementation of Handicapped Accessibility Provisions* (of the 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act) is available from the National Association of Home Builders. This free 99-page report contains recommendations from NAHB and the National Coordinating Council on Spinal Cord Injury to HUD to adopt as handicapped accessibility guidelines for multi-family housing. Sample floor plans, specifications, and case studies of how floor plans can be reconfigured are included. This report can be obtained from the NAHB Technology and Codes Department, 15th and M Streets NW, Washington, DC 20005; 202/822-0246.

—Lauren Chapman