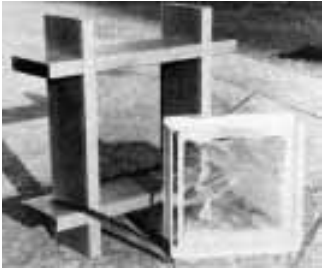


Wood-Framed Glass Block

by Sal Alfano



If you're looking for a way to lay up glass block without mortar, *WoodGlass* may do the trick. The unique wall system uses a prefinished wood frame to enclose the manufacturer's line of metric-sized glass block and can accommodate straight, angled, or curved wall designs. Installation requires no special tools because the glass blocks are held in place by precut vinyl strips, which friction fit into grooves in the frame, a feature that also makes it possible to disassemble the wall and relocate it. According to the manufacturer, *WoodGlass* is suitable for both interior and exterior applications, such as entry door sidelights, as long as there is limited exposure to moisture. Each frame is custom-made of beech, but other species are available at an added cost, and the company is developing a synthetic, vinyl-covered frame for watertight applications. *WoodGlass* costs between \$23 and \$38 per square foot installed, depending on the size and kind of glass block used. For more information, contact Italian Glass Block, 3911 So. Mariposa St., Englewood, CO 80110; 800/878-3436.

Stealth Tambour Door



You can identify most tambour doors from across the room because of the V-groove or half-round slats that make up the flush panels. Not so with *Camouflage Tambour Doors* because they come in cathedral and square raised-panel designs. The grain is matched on the cloth-backed, 3/4-inch-wide slats to give a

uniform appearance across the front of the solid red oak or maple doors. Sold in pairs, the 5/8x18x32-inch doors can be rabbeted to fit the company's plastic tambour door channel. For more information, contact Outwater Plastics, 4 Passaic St., Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075; 800/543-3217.

Intelligent Vent



I can't think of an easier way to control air distribution in forced air heating and air conditioning systems than with the *Smartvent*. On the surface, it looks like a conventional air register, but a bimetallic coil inside causes the louvers to open or close as the temperature fluctuates. According to the manufacturer, the *Smartvent* reduces hot and cold spots in buildings that have a single thermostat by damping the flow of air to rooms as they reach comfort temperature and allowing more conditioned air to reach rooms that still need it. As an added advantage, the vent closes when exposed to heat from a fire, preventing the spread of smoke and sparks and limiting the air supply to the blaze. *Smartvents* fit most standard vent sizes, so they can replace existing registers. But to avoid excess back pressure, the company recommends consulting with an hvac contractor before installation. The list price is between \$32 and \$60. To find a distributor, contact Air Systems Plus Corp., 1035 Beaverdale Rd., Dalton, GA 30721; 706/259-4446.

Beguiling Breaker Box



You don't have to hide the less-than-glamorous electrical panel in the basement anymore. The low-profile access door on the *Trilliant Home Power System* has concealed hinges and completely covers the face plate of the load center. You can select from three colored inserts to match kitchen appliances or paint or paper right over it. The *Trilliant* is made of a non-conductive polymer, so it's well-insulated, and the rocker-style circuit breaker handles feature the company's exclusive red "Visi-Trip" flag to indicate a tripped breaker. For more information, contact Square D Co., 3201 Nicholasville Rd., Lexington, KY 40503; 606/245-7924.

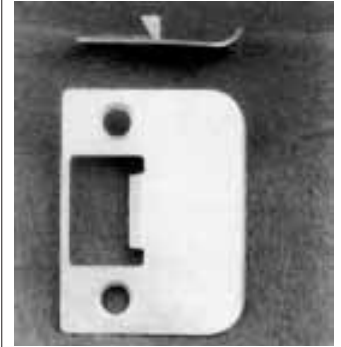
Old Screw — New Twist



Sometimes less gives you more. The *New Tapcon* still includes a large thread to cut into the concrete and a small thread to give the fastener stability. But in the new "two-stage thread form," the small thread is only included near the tip of the fastener. The result is a heavier shank with increased torsional strength and shear performance, making it less likely that you'll snap the head off during installation. And the new "Hi-Lo Plus" thread design adds an extra shoulder to the large thread that reduces the torque needed to tap into the concrete. It also increases the fasteners' pull-out strength and makes them easier to remove and reinstall. New *Tapcons* are coated with *Corteal*, a corrosion-resistant organic polymer, and are available in lengths up to five inches. A *Tapcon Drill Bit* is included in every box of 100 fasteners. For more

information, contact ITW Buildex, General Construction Systems, 1349 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Itasca, IL 60143; 800/323-0720.

Call-Back Cure



Next time you have to return to a job to adjust the strike plate, replace it with the *Door-Tite*, a one-of-a-kind strike plate that automatically eliminates rattling doors and reduces air infiltration. The secret is a series of small steps on an extra wedge of metal in the latch cutout. As the door closes, the latch moves from step to step until the door is tight against the stop or weatherstripping. The *Door-Tite* costs about \$1.50 from Trion Company, P.O. Box 110358, Carrollton, TX 75011; 800/532-9995.

Facelift for Grout



There's no need to replace perfectly good grout just to change or restore the color. According to the manufacturer, one coat of a solvent-based pigment called *Hydroment Grout Stain* is usually enough to stain even the darkest grout joints to a light color. Because the stain penetrates the surface of the existing grout, it conforms to the existing texture and the color won't wear out unless the grout does. Joints should be cleaned with a very mild (1:9) solution of muriatic acid in water before applying the stain. *Hydroment Grout Stain* dries in about three hours and can bear heavy traffic within 24 hours. To find a distributor, contact Bostik Tile & Flooring Group, Boston St., Middleton, MA 01949; 800/726-7845. ■