

Traditional Sinks

by Charles Wardell



If your clients long for a country kitchen with that 19th-century look, then they may want to consider the *Dickinson* and the *Hawthorne* double-basin kitchen sinks. Both measure 33 inches by 22 inches, come in enameled cast iron, and include integral front aprons and optional hardwood cutting boards. They're available in tile-in and undercounter versions. All models have a faucet deck, but the undercounter versions also let you mount the faucet on the countertop or on the wall behind the sink. White sinks sell for around \$650, while special enamel colors can cost over \$1,100.

Contact: Kohler Co., Kohler, WI 53044; 414/457-4441.

Electric-to-Gas Conversion



Want to lower your electric bills? If you live in a region with high rates and own an electric water heater, one option is to switch to gas. The *Seahorse* gas hot-water conversion system lets you convert from electricity to gas without buying a new tank. The self-contained Seahorse heater consists of a 28-inch-high, 18-inch-wide, and 12-inch-deep box that mounts on an outside wall. The "box" heats the water, while the old water heater serves as a storage tank.

Suggested list price is \$795. The manufacturer claims a two-year payback, however. Using the Department of Energy's 1992 average unit energy costs, water consumption, and design heat load, it estimates that the Seahorse can reduce the annual water-heating bills for the average family of four to about \$150 — \$300 to \$400 below the national average.

Contact: Gas-Fired Products Inc., P.O. Box 36485, Charlotte, NC 28236; 704/372-3485.

Stand-Up Framing Jig



After ten years swinging a hammer, I've spent enough on lower back repairs to buy my chiropractor a new car. But if I'd had the *Wall Master* framing table, I might have those wheels instead. The *Wall Master* is a 32-inch-high portable wall-building jig that lets you work at waist height — no bending over. It can handle walls from 8 feet to 10½ feet tall and is premarked for 16- and 24-inch centers. Once a wall is framed and sheathed, you need only roll the table into position and tip the wall up. Pivoting metal brackets attached partway up the stud every 8 feet or so mean that you're lifting only one third of the wall's weight.

The company that sells the *Wall Master* claims that it also lets you frame faster and with fewer hands. They say that three carpenters framing a motel were able to frame 1,000 lin. ft. of 2x6 wall (16 o.c.) each day, including a 6-foot bay window every 12 feet. On a similar job without the *Wall Master*, they averaged only 600 feet.

The table can be taken apart and put back together in a few minutes, which means that it's easily moved between floors in a multilevel home. The *Wall Master* comes in 8-foot sections that cost \$1,200 apiece.

Contact: PB Distributing Inc., 5962 N. Tischer Rd., Duluth, MN 55804; 218/525-7654.

Blow-Dried Cellulose



Demand for "green" products has given loose-fill cellulose — made from recycled newspaper — a growing share of the attic insulation market. But walls are a different story. To help the cellulose fibers stick together, the stuff is usually mixed with water before being blown into open wall cavities. The problem with this technique is that most builders don't want water in the walls of their houses — and they certainly don't relish having to wait for the insulation to dry before hanging the wallboard.

The *Dry Pac Wall System* claims to have the solution. In fact, its manufacturer is billing it as the first cellulose wall insulation that can be blown dry into an open wall cavity. The secret is in the nonelastic, polyester-reinforced vapor retarder. The sheet is stapled across the face of the wall studs, and the insulation is blown through slits made near the top of each bay. Unlike other polyethylene products, the reinforced sheet won't stretch, so it can hold the 3-lbs/cu ft cellulose in place without bulging. And the dry-wallers can come right behind.

Contact: Parco Inc., P.O. Box 1533, E. Hwy. 24, Norfolk, NE 68702; 800/228-0024.

Erect-a-Roof



Now even your painters can work on wet days. *Flex-I-Cover* is a portable, self-supporting canopy designed to shield people and materials from rain, snow, and sun. The *Flex-I-Cover* consists of a lightweight aluminum frame covered by a waterproof, flame-retardant, UV-resistant fabric. With a length of 20 feet and a center hinge that lets you adjust the span from 12 to 26 feet, each *Flex-I-Cover* can blanket an area up to 500 square feet. And when you need to shield a larger area, two or more units can be combined, their built-in collars providing a weather-tight joint. At its maximum width, the canopy is just over 7 feet tall, but the center hinge means that it's taller when adjusted to narrower dimensions. Telescoping support legs provide an additional 2½ feet of height and serve as an adjustment on uneven ground. The unit can be divided into separate lean-to sections, furnishing weather protection for people to work on outer walls. A section weighs only 20 to 30 pounds (depending on the fabric used), so it can be moved around by one or two workers. The structure sells for \$3,200 and can be ordered directly from the manufacturer.

Contact: Lindome Structures Ltd., 7584 Vantage Pl., Delta, BC, Canada V4G 1A5; 604/946-7966.

Tough Chute



Let's face it, those foam attic ventilation chutes are pretty flimsy. The ones that aren't damaged while being taken out of the package and hauled up to the attic often fall victim to errant hammer blows by overzealous laborers, while staples have a nasty habit of cutting through the flanges. By the time all the chutes are in place you start to wonder how much long-term good they're doing.

You'll rest easier with the *ProVent* attic chute. The *ProVent* is made from recycled plastic that, according to the manufacturer, neither rots nor warps — and that stays firmly in place once stapled to the underside of the sheathing. It's available in 48-inch lengths for 16- and 24-inch on-center framing and costs \$1.40 and \$1.80 apiece, respectively.

Contact: ADO Products, 7357 Washington Ave., Edina, MN 55439; 800/666-8191.

Draft Evader



Is your house giving you cold feet? Maybe your doors are drafty. *Corner Seal Pads* are designed to plug that pesky gap between the door bottom sweep and the side weatherstripping. They consist of 1¼-inch-wide by 2-inch-long adhesive-backed PVC pads. Fourteen flexible fins act as a barrier against unwanted drafts. The pads come in brown or white.

Contact: Jarrow Products Inc., 2000 N. Southport Ave., Chicago, IL 60614; 312/525-4780. ■