

Products

by Dave Holbrook

Welding in the Wild

On-site welding comes in plenty handy, but calling in a specialist does not. The *Handler 175* runs on 230 volts and comes complete and ready to weld 22-gauge, 1/4-inch-thick steel, stainless steel, or aluminum, with or without gas. My first, brief experience with the unit, using both flux-cored wire and gas-shielded solid wire, was easy, uncomplicated, and *fun*. The *Handler 175* weighs 65 pounds, comes with a 10-foot gun, 10-foot cable and clamp, gas hose and regulator, solenoid valve, wire spool adapter, and more — no additional kits needed. Start sticking your own steel together on a routine basis for \$643.

Contact: Hobart Welders, 600 W. Main St., Troy, OH 45373; 800/626-9420; www.hobartwelders.com.



Comeback Kid

The bigger a worklight is, the harder it falls, and the more it costs, the more it hurts. Been there, done that? The 20-pound, 36-inch-high *Wobble Light* keeps getting up and coming back for more every time you knock it down. A shock-protected 500-watt halogen lamp supplies 360-degrees of bright light. The safe-to-touch “bulletproof” dome is fan-vented to dispel excess lamp heat. The durable light sells through distributors for \$159.

Contact: Wobble Light, 4518 N. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; 773/463-5900; www.wobblelight.com.



Travel Kit

Will you feel like a tourist, pulling the *BucketBoss Rolling Tool Organizer* around the job site? Get over it — the less you bend and lift anything heavy, the better. The manufacturer has equipped a version of their *Crate Boss* like a sophisticated suitcase, with soft rubber wheels and a collapsible extension handle, making up to 50 pounds of hand tools easy to move from one work station to the next. A ticket to ride costs \$50.

Contact: Fiskars Consumer Products, 7811 West Stewart Ave., Wausau, WI 54401; 715/842-2091; www.fiskars.com.



Impatience Made Virtue

Fast-setting joint compound makes heavy fills and two-coat days possible. If you're good enough to race your mix to its setting point, you may be ready for some *USG High Strength Accelerator*. Add 2 tablespoons to an 18-pound bag of 90-minute compound and reduce the set time to 30 minutes; 6 tablespoons gives you a 20-minute batch. A 2-pound tub costs under \$5.

Contact: U.S. Gypsum, P.O. Box 806278, Chicago, IL 60680; 800/874-4968; www.usg.com.



V Is for Vinyl

As long as you know that vinyl siding must be fastened through the sheathing into solid framing, you'll appreciate the new *STUDfinder* feature of Monogram RigidForm 180 Siding. For 16-inch on-center applications,



there are 10 nail slots in the hem, each with a designated letter that repeats every 16 inches. After locating the first stud, you should find the next one at the next matching letter, or every 10th slot. Very handy for siding over building paper, and if you don't know your alphabet, just match the funny shapes.

Contact: CertainTeed, P.O. Box 860, Valley Forge, PA 19482; 800/233-8990; www.certainteed.com.

Trophy Door

The 3'6"x8'0", the *Classic-Craft* six-panel fiberglass entryway will be hard for anyone to miss. The compression-molded, simulated oak-grain surface caps an insulating core of polyurethane foam, and can be stained to enhance the wood look. Unlike wood or steel, this door is unlikely



to split, warp, rust, or dent. Like all things big and beautiful, it'll cost you — just ask your local distributor.

Contact: Therma-Tru Doors, 1687 Woodlands Dr., Maumee, OH 43537; 800/843-7628; www.thermatru.com.

Gepetto Touch

Mies van Der Rohe has labored in vain, because ornamentation is back, and less is no more. Called gew-gaw, gingerbread, filigree or fancywork, over 250 stocked styles of *Decorative Wood and Resin Appliqués* give interior and exterior



woodwork a distinct, period look. The price varies by taste.

Contact: Architectural Products, P.O. Box 347, Wood Ridge, NJ 07075; 800/835-4400; www.archpro.com.

Recessed Roof

The space under a second-story deck is a tempting place to install a screened porch or protected outdoor space, but how do you keep the rain out? The off-white *DrySpace* deck drainage system offers one solution. Dedicated F-brackets, mounted at a 2/12 pitch inside a 16-inch on-center joist bay, support rigid, delta-profiled PVC panels. Runoff is



directed beyond the outer perimeter or into a gutter. Panels can be trimmed for narrower bays, and come in 6- and 12-foot lengths for \$3.25 per linear foot, including brackets. Exterior-grade adhesive caulking behind the brackets enhances dripless performance.

Contact: Crane Products, 2141 Fairwood Blvd., Columbus, OH 43207; 800/200-6121; www.dryspace.com.

Stealth Caulk

Of course, we'd rather see good workmanship subtly sealed with the appropriate caulk than glaring gobs of caulk in a gaping, butchered joint. When the caulking must show, *Pro Series PR-256 Textured Polyurethane Sealant*, available in eight standard colors as well as in custom colors, is as subtle as they come. The sealant cures to a textured, paintable surface that is said to blend in well with rough surfaces like concrete, rough cedar siding, and stucco. The manufacturer promises superior adhesion to most metals, wood, and masonry. A 10.3-ounce tube costs \$5.

Contact: OSI Sealants, 7405 Production Drive, Mentor, OH 44060; 800/321-3578; www.osisealants.com.



Shingle Siding Shortcut

If you've installed cedar shingle siding, you may be familiar with the time and patience required, especially to weave Boston corners. Skip the learning curve, waste, and pricing uncertainty using custom-designed and quoted



Western Red Cedar Valley Shingle Systems column returns and radius flare corners. The cost for their standard, kiln-dried multi-course shingle panels and corners ranges in price nationally

between \$260 and \$290 per square, which is certainly competitive with traditional installation methods.

Contact: Cedar Valley Shingle Systems, 943 San Felipe Rd., Holister, CA 95023; 800/521-9523; www.cedar-valley.com.

Knock on GRP

Despite their inability to hold refrigerator magnets, fiberglass-reinforced plastic (GRP) doors have been nudging steel-clad entries aside, mostly due to their superior imitation of the look and feel of wood. The *2000G Patio System* has a prefinished white exterior, low-e insulating glass, vinyl-wrapped jambs, a multi-point locking system, and a "high-performance" insulating core of rigid polyurethane foam. The system is available in center-hinged, French, and fixed designs; single, double, and triple panel widths; and 80- and 96-inch heights. The door is priced to compete with premium-priced wood patio doors.



Contact: Premdor Entry Systems, 911 E. Jefferson St., Pittsburgh, KS 66762; 800/835-0364; www.premdor.com.

Closet Case

Lack of closet space can kill a home sale; conversely, the old shelf and pole routine can kill a closet's functionality. And you can kill a good chunk of a week detailing a reach-in or walk-in closet, or consider the *MasterSuite* system of melamine-laminated shelves, drawers, and accessories. Kits come complete with all the necessary hardware, and less-costly coated wire components may be readily interchanged in the system. A typical 3-foot-wide reach-in closet kit costs in the vicinity of \$350. Trained dealer installation is also available.

Contact: ClosetMaid, P.O. Box 4400, Ocala, FL 34478; 800/874-0008; www.closetmaid.com.

