

Products

by Patrick McCombe

Faster Fastening

If there's a tool ideally suited for fastening materials to brick or metal with efficiency, the *DX 351E Powder-Actuated Fastening System* is it. Hilti's newest version has a slender nosepiece designed to fit into narrow spaces like uni-strut and electrical junction boxes. An optional extension pole lets you fasten into 13-foot ceilings while your feet remain firmly on the ground. An optional ten-pin magazine provides fully automatic operation with minimum reloading. A unique power adjustment reduces the impact when fastening into softer materials, allowing users to carry fewer types of loads without sacrificing versatility. Price on the DX 351E is \$555.



Hilti
800/879-8000
www.us.hilti.com

Tool Caddy

Next to driving your truck up to the front door, the *Bull Dog Tool Wheeler* might be the best thing for getting your tools on the job quickly and easily. The 82-pound, portable scaffold does double duty as a tool hauler when folded. Eight-inch dolly wheels roll over obstacles, and a 22-inch frame allows passage through almost any door. The tool tray serves as the dolly platform when the scaffold is in tool transport mode. The adjustable work platform measures about 2x4 feet; the scaffold has a 500-pound rating and a list price of \$270.

Warner Manufacturing
877/992-7637
www.warnertool.com



Rust-Free Rack

If you're looking for the ultimate truck rack, a new line of *stainless-steel racks* promises unsurpassed durability and good looks. Made for full-size pickups and vans, the new racks are stronger than aluminum and won't rust like plain



steel. They feature heavy-duty welded construction and capacities from 700 to 1,000 pounds (depending on the model). Most include adjustable ladder positioners. The starting price for pickups with a cap is \$600; for pickups without a cap, they start at \$550; van racks start at \$290.

Vanguard Manufacturing
800/624-5000
www.vanguardtruckracks.com

Metric Ridge Vent

Metric roof shingles are one of the few products to survive the stateside conversion uproar. One remaining problem, however, is that the larger, metric size requires trimming to fit correctly over a standard, roll-type ridge vent. Nail-gun-compatible *Rapid Ridge vent* is now available in a metric-sized, 11¹/₂-inch-wide roll with visible nail lines. The package includes a coil of 1³/₄-inch collated nails. A 20-foot roll costs \$50.



Benjamin Obdyke
800/346-7655
www.benjaminobdyke.com

Products

Above-Ground Wine Storage

A bottle of wine close at hand could put some spark in a marriage or close a deal, easily making the *KitchenAid Wine Cellar* your customer's favorite appliance — way cooler than a tumble washer. And speaking of cool, the wine storage unit has three zones to keep whites, reds, and sparkling wines all at their optimum temperatures. A top-mounted key lock keeps the Dom Perignon safe from unruly guests. The cellar can be installed under-counter or used free-standing in any room of the house; a glass door and interior light keep the wine aficionado abreast of dwindling stock. The suggested list price is \$1,500.

KitchenAid
800/253-3977
www.insideadvantage.com



Ladder Upgrades

Anything that makes extension ladders safer and easier to use deserves a boost. The Grippster Company offers a collection of well-made and useful ladder accessories. The original *Grippster* prevents sliding or rolling on curved surfaces like poles, trees, and columns. Similar to the special ladders used by utility workers, the lightweight *Grippster* is easily removed when you don't need it. It retails for about \$20. The company's *Ladder Stops ladder mitts* (\$15) prevent sliding and scuffing, while a suction cup design holds better than traditional mitts, according to the company. Finally, the *Hold-It drill holder* (\$15) allows easy access to your drill while you're on a ladder and avoids frustrating snags when you descend.

The Grippster Company
800/292-9124
www.grippster.com



Safer Concrete Etching

Muriatic acid, the traditional product for cleaning masonry or prepping concrete for painting, can cause blindness or burns, and it kills plants and vegetation. According to the maker, *Safe-T-Etch* is a safer alternative to acid solutions because it won't burn skin or eyes and the organic salt formulation is less harmful to plants. Its heavier, water-borne solution is said to provide more uniform etching and clings better than acid to vertical and sloped surfaces. *Safe-T-Etch* sells for about \$18 per gallon.



Duckback Products
800/825-5382
www.superdeck.com

Benchmark Wrench

Some tools, like Rigid's classic pipe wrenches, seem tough to improve upon — the ones I inherited from my grandfather still perform well, 50 years on. But the new, self-adjusting *Rapidgrip* has done just that, by eliminating the adjusting



nut, a real improvement over the older design. The 12-inch wrench has a 2-inch pipe capacity, with a forged-steel jaw for good grip and durability. The \$25 price tag is a little higher than for a traditional pipe wrench, but if my old wrenches are an indication, you're buying a future family heirloom.

RidgeTool
800/769-7743
www.ridgid.com

Products

The Clamp Champ

Turning the tensioning screw on an ordinary bar clamp can be awkward, making one wish for that elusive third hand. The cam-actuated *Quick-Jaw PowerCam Clamp* works one-handed and can provide over 500 pounds of clamping pressure. The signature “power cam” uses a ratcheting lever, providing greater force with more precision than screw-adjusted clamps. Large non-marring pads feature an integral V-groove to allow clamping of pipe or dowels, and a quick-release button on the



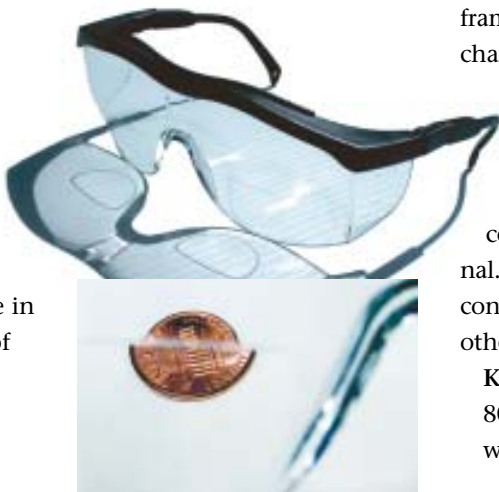
handle allows easy removal, according to the maker. The clamp has a 4-inch throat depth and comes in 6- and 12-inch lengths. Prices range from \$8 to \$28.

Wolfcraft
630/773-4777
www.wolfcraft.com

Safety Specs

If you're not ready to hang up your toolbelt but are having trouble seeing the fine print in your contracts or the small marks on your tape measure, you may want a pair of *Shop Specs*. The polycarbonate safety glasses with built-in bifocal magnifying lenses help the “experienced” tradesperson see more clearly without having to constantly switch glasses. Four-position, adjustable ear stems ensure comfort, and integral side shields provide maximum eye protection. Shop Specs sell for about \$25 and are available in five different levels of magnification.

Wizard Industries
888/346-3826
www.wizdist.com



Safer Paint Stripper

There's little good to say about stripping paint, but a new tool imported from Sweden promises to make the slow and miserable task a little easier. By using infrared heat to soften multiple layers of old paint for easy scraping, the *Silent Paint Remover* works without the mess and odor of chemical strippers and without the danger of heat guns or torches. Its lower operating temperature won't



vaporize lead, and the scraping technique reduces the amount of toxic, airborne particles produced by grinding or sanding. The tool sells for \$395 and includes a hands-free attachment for use on vertical surfaces.

Advanced Repair Technology
607/264-9040
www.advancedrepair.com

Non-Checking Decking

Promising the best attributes of vinyl and composite decking, *Timberlast decking* installs with a patented fastening system. A brushed texture aids traction in wet or slippery conditions. The virgin polyethylene deck boards, available in driftwood and redwood colors, offer greater strength than those of competitors, claims the maker. The unique fastening system allows the decking to float on the framing, so it can expand and contract with temperature changes. While most composite decking requires 12-inch joist spacing when installed in a diagonal pattern, Timberlast can go over 16-inch on-center spacing on a diagonal. Pricing is said to be consistent with pricing of other composite decking.

Kroy Building Products
800/933-5769
www.kroybp.com

