

Products | by Tom O'Brien

Low-Cost Backup Power. According to Generac, the new *CorePower System* offers all the safety and convenience of an automatic standby power supply at a price only a little higher than that of a portable generator. The 7-kilowatt unit comes prepackaged with a 50-amp transfer switch and eight circuit-breakers. It operates on natural gas or liquid propane and is at least 10 decibels quieter than competitive units, the company says. Prices start at \$1,700.



Generac Power Systems, 888/436-3722, generac.com.

Any-Color Caulk. *OSI QUAD* is a premium exterior sealant that sticks to wet surfaces, does not accumulate dust, and “self-tools” into a concave shape, says the maker. It comes in 350 standard hues and can be formulated to match just about any color. The company offers a smartphone app that includes a database of standard window, door, and siding colors. A 10-ounce cartridge of OSI QUAD costs about \$5.50.

Henkel Corp., 800/624-7767, osipro.com.



Volcanic Work Surface. *Pyrolave* is made from slabs of lava extracted from a volcanic crater in France, then glazed with enamel and fired in a 1,000°F kiln. Its maker says that the resulting work surface is unaffected by corrosive products, acids, or extreme temperatures and can be used indoors or out. The product comes in 32 colors and finishes; pricing starts at \$330 per square foot.

Pyrolave USA, 919/788-8953, pyrolave.com.



Slate Look. CertainTeed's *Highland Slate* is a single-layer fiberglass shingle that duplicates the texture and color of natural slate. The four-tab 18-by-36-inch shingles are rated for high-wind zones (an impact-resistant version is also available) and come in six colors. They cost about \$130 per square.

CertainTeed Corp., 800/233-8990, certainteed.com.

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Clean Flush. Kohler's *Wellworth Toilet* — which has been around for 75 years — hasn't changed much on the outside, but its inner workings have been completely re-engineered. According to the company, the new version uses only 1.28 gallons per flush and can clear out more than 2 pounds of bulk waste in a single flush, making it virtually plug-free. It comes in 10 styles and six colors and costs \$275.



Kohler Co., 800/456-4537, kohler.com.



Draft-Stoppers. Instead of replacing a leaky window or door, consider using *Window and Door Weatherseals* from Conservation Technology to fill in the gaps. The company stocks a wide assortment of shapes, sizes, and colors, most of which are installed in a 3mm groove that you cut with a router bit. Options include tubes, flippers, and sweeps made of silicone rubber; plastic leaf seals; nylon brushes; and urethane-foam compression seals. Prices range from 36 cents per foot to \$3.60 per foot.

Conservation Technology, 800/477-7724, conservationtechnology.com.



Effortless Opener. Designed specifically for overhead cabinets, the *Aventos Lift System* makes it possible to lift even the heaviest door with the touch of a finger, says the maker. The product can also be adjusted to leave the door open in any position. The five available hinges accommodate a range of cabinet sizes and styles. Using an Aventos hinge instead of conventional hinges adds about \$50 to \$100 to the cost of a cabinet.

Blum, 800/438-6788, blum.com.



Secret Water Stash. Looking for a way to capture water that doesn't involve conspicuous rain barrels? The *Original Rainwater Pillow* collects large amounts of precipitation but is easily tucked away in a crawlspace or beneath a porch. It's made from a reinforced polymer alloy that the company claims is tear-resistant and tolerant of extreme temperatures. The product can be configured to store up to 200,000 gallons of water. A basic 1,000-gallon kit containing the pillow, filters, pump, hose, and fittings costs \$2,500.

Rainwater Collection Solutions, 770/853-9918, rainwaterpillow.com.

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Stonelike Laminate. Formica says its *180fx* laminates look just like natural stone countertops but cost a lot less. The recently expanded lineup contains 13 variations of granite as well as marble, slate, and petrified-wood patterns. Prices average between \$16 and \$19 per square foot installed.

Formica Corp., 800/367-6422, formica.com.



Premium Decking. Each board in the new *Heritage Collection* of 2x6 redwood decking is hand-picked and run through the planer at low speed to give it a refined finish, says the maker. The boards are milled with a crowned top surface, beveled edges, and drip channels that shed water. Prices start at \$1.75 per linear foot. The collection also includes two types of railings.

California Redwood Co., 866/797-7474, californiareadwoodco.com.



Pop-up Power. The *Kitchen Power Grommet* provides convenient access to electricity on virtually any countertop. It pops up and clicks into place when power is needed and disappears when it isn't. A gasket keeps out spills when the unit is closed. Model PCS34 (\$127) has three receptacles, and model PCS34A (\$140) has two electrical outlets and two Category 5e data modules. Note that the product is intended for retrofit purposes and may not satisfy all local electrical codes.

Doug Mockett & Co., 800/523-1269, mockett.com.

Fancy Knobs. An easy way to add pizzazz to a humdrum kitchen is to upgrade the cabinet pulls. The knobs in Atlas Homewares' *Dream Glass Collection* feature swirling patterns created with fused glass and metal. They're

1½ inches wide, come

in round or square shapes with bronze or chrome trim, and cost \$22 apiece.

Atlas Homewares, 800/799-6755, atlastothetrade.com.

