

Products | by Tom O'Brien



Big Power, Small Package.

According to Rheem, the 29-gallon XR90 Extreme Recovery Gas Water Heater exceeds the performance of most 50-gallon water heaters but costs less to operate than any standard 30-, 40-, or 50-gallon model. The appliance has an Energy Factor of .70, a first-hour rating of 90 gallons, and a recovery rate of 61 gallons per hour (at a 90°F rise in temperature). The company attributes the XR90's efficiency to a baffle and flue design that retains the burner's heat longer. Pricing ranges from \$750 to \$950.

Rheem Manufacturing Co., 800/621-5622, rheem.com.

Interior Paint. Advance Waterborne Interior Alkyd flows on and levels out like a traditional alkyd but has low VOC content (less than 50 grams/liter) and cleans up with soap and water. In addition, it offers a longer working time and dries to a harder, more durable surface than an acrylic while staying white longer than most alkyds, says the company. It comes in high-gloss, semi-gloss, satin, and primer versions and costs about \$45 per gallon.

Benjamin Moore & Co., 855/724-6802, benjaminmoore.com.



Sun-Powered Fan. Broan's 20-watt Solar-Powered Attic Ventilator can ventilate up to 1,600 square feet. It features an efficient ultra-quiet DC motor and a highly sensitive solar panel that keeps the fan blades turning even in low light, says the maker. The fan can be configured for surface-mount, curb-mount, or gable-mount installation, and the solar panel can be placed in a separate location. The product comes in three colors and costs about \$1,200.

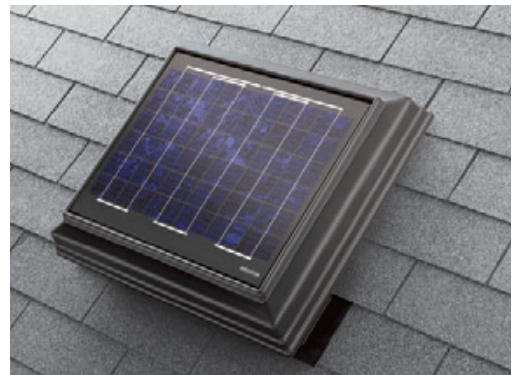
Broan-NuTone, 800/558-1711, broan.com.



Safer Spray-Foam Cleaner.

Touch 'n Seal now offers a more environmentally friendly way to clean uncured spray foam from hands, tools, and applicator guns. Poly-Clean is VOC-free and nonirritating to skin, says the manufacturer. The can is compatible with all standard applicator guns and includes a removable spray tip for cleaning the gun's exterior surfaces and a screw-top for attaching directly to the gun barrel. A 12-ounce can costs \$9.50.

Convenience Products, 800/325-6180, touch-n-seal.com.



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Green Grass. Pearl's Premium *Ultra Low Maintenance Lawn Seed* grows at a quarter the rate of blue grass and puts down 12-inch-deep roots that tap into naturally occurring moisture, says the maker. The resulting lawn requires no chemical fertilizer, little or no watering (after the first year), and mowing only once a month, the company claims. The seed comes in 5-, 25-, and 50-pound bags for \$35, \$170, and \$300 respectively.

Pearl's Premium, 508/521-9940, pearlspremium.com.



Ready-to-Go Blower Door. The *Minneapolis Blower Door* comes equipped with everything needed to measure airtightness or diagnose air-leakage problems, says the manufacturer. In addition to a lightweight injection-molded fan, the standard Model 3 kit includes analysis software, communication cables, a "Cruise Control" feature that lets the operator maintain consistent building pressure without a computer, a nylon panel, and an aluminum frame that fits an 8-foot-tall door. It costs \$2,500.

The Energy Conservatory, 612/827-1117, energyconservatory.com.



Quick-Change Locks. With *SmartKey Locks* you can turn a project over to the homeowners without worrying about who might still have access to the house. At the end of a job, you insert a special tool into the keyhole along with the old key to reprogram the lock to accept a new key. SmartKey deadbolts, knobs, levers, handle sets, and electronic locks are available. Deadbolts — which the maker says resist drilling, lock-picking, and bumping — cost about \$30.

Kwikset Corp., 800/327-5625, kwikset.com.

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Cabinet Glass Upgrade. The manufacturer best-known in this country for reproductions of historic “wavy” glass also makes replacement inserts for built-in cabinets and furniture. Bendheim’s *Cabinet Glass Collection* contains more than 150 frosted, etched, linear, geometric patterned, and antique styles. Prices range from \$10 per square foot for machine-made textures to \$50 per square foot for mouth-blown varieties. The collection also includes glass for entry doors and sidelights.

Bendheim Cabinet Glass, 800/221-7379, bendheimcabinetglass.com.



Recycling Center. Blum’s two new waste/recycle drawer sets fit 15-, 18-, and 21-inch base cabinets. The *Tandembox* is a pre-assembled metal drawer with runners. The *Tandem* is a hardware set for use with wood drawers. (Neither product includes drawer fronts and bins.) Both have soft-closing runners, with the company’s Servo-Drive touch-to-open feature available as an option. Prices range from \$300 to \$365 for each set.

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



Post Wrap. Versatex has added 4-by-6-inch and 8-by-8-inch sizes to its pre-cut *Versawrap* PVC column cladding for rough-sawn wood posts (existing sizes are 4 by 4 inches and 6 by 6 inches.) All the wraps have three premitered grooves that surround the post and lock together with a friction fit joint. Various molding kits and post caps are also available. These products undoubtedly come at a premium; the manufacturer declined to give pricing but said the material costs “about the same as high-end cedar.”

Wolfpac Technologies, 724/857-1111, versatex.com.



Retrofit LEDs. Nora Lighting recently added a 4-inch 10-watt model to its Diamond Series of LED retrofit downlights. Like the series’ 5-inch (12W) and 6-inch (12W) fixtures, the new model can be installed in an existing Nora or third-party housing and is energized through a medium screw base or a Gu-24 adaptor. Prices for Diamond Series downlights run from about \$120 to \$170.

Nora Lighting, 800/686-6672, noralighting.com.

