

Products | by Tom O'Brien



Hard Rock. Compared with standard drywall, *ToughRock Gypsum Board* is less likely to crack, sag, or absorb moisture, the maker says. It also weighs 25 percent less and is Greenguard-certified for low VOC emissions. The product is suitable for interior walls and ceilings, veneer plaster base systems, and fire-rated assemblies. A 1/2-inch-by-4-foot-by-8-foot sheet costs about \$8.

Georgia-Pacific Building Products, 800/225-6119, gp.com/build.



Durable Doors. *Nantucket Collection* solid wood exterior doors are built to withstand whatever nature throws at them, says the manufacturer. They come in four species — Douglas fir, mahogany, black locust, and cypress — and feature mortise-and-tenon joinery with face-driven wood pins. Design options include five profiles and two thicknesses (1 3/4 inches or 2 1/4 inches); glazed units contain 3/4-inch insulated glass. Prices range from \$650 for Douglas fir to \$1,200 for mahogany.

Simpson Door Co., 800/746-7766, simpsondoor.com.

Roof Saver. *Surround SR Underlayment* is a waterproof synthetic polymer that's 40 percent lighter than 30-pound roofing felt — as well as more durable and slip-resistant and less prone to tearing, says the maker. It's unaffected by moisture and has a reflective surface that reduces heat buildup on the roof. According to the company, a 45.25-inch-by-267-foot roll covers 10 squares; the manufacturer declined to provide pricing.

Fiberweb, 615/847-7000, surroundtypar.com.



Water Break. *The Delta Footing Barrier* is a three-ply impermeable membrane that goes on top of freshly poured footings before the foundation is built. Its purpose is to prevent water from wicking up through the concrete and saturating the basement walls. According to the maker, the membrane is flexible enough to follow the contours of a keyway. It has an anti-slip surface, a polyethylene center, and a polyester needle-punched fabric bottom that sticks tightly to fresh concrete. It costs about \$1.20 per square foot.

Cosella-Dörken Products, 888/433-5824, cosella-dorken.com.

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Sump Switch. *LevelGuard* is a submersible electronic sump pump switch designed to replace a mechanical float. Rated for up to 1/2-horsepower sump-pump applications, it mounts on the discharge pipe and sends power to the pump through a piggyback plug. It's compatible with both new installations and retrofits but won't work with an integrated switch pump system. According to the manufacturer, the switch will complete more than one million cycles without failure and last seven times as long as traditional float switches. It costs \$130.

TouchSensor Technologies, 630/221-9000, levelguardproducts.com.



Filter and Softener. The *Kenmore Elite Hybrid Water Softener* does more than soften water and prevent scale buildup in fixtures and appliances. It also functions as a whole-house filter, reducing chlorine taste and providing cleaner water to every faucet in the home, says the maker. The unit is compatible with municipal water systems and most private wells and features a tank design that allegedly makes it easier to pour in salt. It's available online for about \$760.

Sears Brands, 888/536-6673, kenmore.com.



One-Piece Fan. The company best-known for making silent remote-mounted ventilation products now offers a lineup of conventional bath fans. Fantech's FQ Series Quiet Bath Fans come in 80- and 110-cfm versions — with or without fluorescent lights — and produce extremely quiet sound levels of 0.3 sone or even lower, says the manufacturer. Prices range from \$130 to \$200.

Fantech, 800/747-1762, fantech.net.

Simplified Rough-In. The new *GroheFlex* universal valve system uses a one-size-fits-all rough-in box to serve a wide variety of tub and shower fixtures.

Because the product accommodates so many different options, it reduces delays caused by indecisive clients. Five "Bath Solution Kits" are available for single- and dual-outlet applications and custom showers; each offers

three trim styles and four finishes. The rough-in box lists for \$135; trims range from \$160 to \$475.

Grohe America, 630/582-7711, groheamerica.com.



New Double-Hungs. Hurd has added a double-hung unit to its line of H3 windows. Like the casement, awning, and fixed units in this midpriced collection, the

new window is made from extruded aluminum, vinyl, and solid wood, a combination meant to balance good looks and energy efficiency, says the company. It can be ordered with an integral nailing fin or as an insert window. Prices for the most popular sizes start at about \$270.

Hurd Windows and Doors, 800/433-4873, hurd.com.



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Light and Stiff. *Easi-Lite* gypsum board weighs up to 30 percent less than standard gypsum board and has a high-strength core that allows it to span 24-inch on-center ceiling joists without sagging, says CertainTeed. The company also claims that the material is easy to score and snap and is made with 100 percent recycled face and back paper. It's sold in 4-foot-wide sheets in 8-, 9-, 10-, and 12-foot lengths for \$7 to \$10 apiece.

CertainTeed, 800/233-8990, certainteed.com/easi-lite.



High-Class Mud. *R-777 Premier All Purpose Ready Mix Joint Compound* may not be a household name, but its maker says it contains less air than better-known products and yields more working time with less tool drag. It also adheres well, shrinks very little, and works nicely with automatic taping tools, says the company. It comes in a 4.5-gallon pail or a 3.5-gallon box and costs about the same as the all-purpose compounds from the big brands.

Magnum Products, 800/255-6678, magnum-products.com.