

Toolbits



High End Level

The first thing we noticed about the Sola *MM Torpedo Level* was its heft and solidity. Weighing in at 1 pound, with a solid, powder-coated aluminum frame, it's clearly a tool that will stand up to job-site abuse. It's also extremely easy to read: The top bubble is surrounded by a magnifying lens, and rather than lines, all vials have a clear center space inside wide ink-jet rings. Each vial is embedded in a thermoplastic block glued securely into the housing. The magnetized base ensures a tight grip on metal. (This tool is great for leveling appliances.) It costs about \$50.

Sola, 414/471-3883, sola.us.



Portable LP Generator

Generac's new *LP5500* is an LP-powered portable generator that holds a 20- or 30-pound fuel tank. A "PowerDial" mechanism at the top of the housing puts all of the starting and operating controls in one place. The dial has three positions — one to prime the engine, one to run the generator, and one to stop the unit. The priming bulb is integrated into the dial. Runtime is 4.75 hours on a 20-pound tank. The generator costs \$800. Unlike gas, LP fuel can be stored indefinitely without deterioration.

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



Compact Band Saw

Powermatic's new *PM1500* 15-inch band saw has a relatively small (30¹/₄-inch by 34³/₈-inch) footprint, heavy-duty steel and cast iron construction, and a 3-hp 230-volt motor that delivers a blade speed of 3,100 surface feet per minute. It features a fully adjustable fence and multi-step blade tensioning. The table tilts 45 degrees to the right and 10 degrees to the left. A magnetic switch protects the motor from power spikes and prevents it from starting unexpectedly after a power interruption. A removable magnetic key disables the machine when left unattended. There's a foot-operated braking system for quick blade stops. The machine costs \$2,800.

Powermatic, 800/274-6848, powermatic.com.



Pencil Blade

Here's a unique take on the lowly carpenter's pencil. The *Accutrax Pencil Blade* is a utility knife blade made from graphite. It's not designed for taking notes, as the blade won't take sideways pressure, but it draws crisp, accurate cut lines. You can continue to use it even if it breaks, and it never needs sharpening. A three-pack sells for around \$5.

Prazi USA, 800/262-0211, praziusa.com.

For more information about these products, go to <http://jlc.hotims.com>.