

Toolbits | by Tom O'Brien

Whimsical Welding. Hard hats festooned with sports logos have been available for years. Now welders can have some fun on the job too. Lincoln Electric's Viking series of self-darkening welding helmets offers eight patterns — movie characters, race cars, and the American flag — as well as basic black. No word yet on when the Green Bay Packer version will be released. Prices range from \$175 to \$240.



Lincoln Electric Co., 216/481-8100, lincolnelectric.com.



Affordable Inspection. With a price tag of just \$200, the VS36-10WD Video Scope may hasten the day when every remodeler has an inspection scope in his or her tool kit. Instead of an eyepiece, this scope has a full-color 2.5-inch LCD screen. It operates with a simple toggle switch. An RCA jack lets you connect it to an external monitor or a video recorder. The basic model comes with a 36-inch lighted shaft; a 72-inch shaft is also available.

Voscope, 405/665-9000, voscope.com.



Big Brake. Aluminum fabricators who fly solo might appreciate the *Ultima Plus Alum-A-Brake*, which has a removable work table that pops off in five seconds, lightening the load by 20 pounds. Other features include a built-in track-mounted slitter and a slitter guide bar that eliminates the need to account for the offset. The 10-foot 6-inch brake costs about \$1,350; 7-foot 10-inch and 5-foot 11-inch versions are also available.

Alum-A-Pole Corporation, 800/421-2586, alumapole.com.



Nastier Nibbler. Kett recently upgraded its AN3000 nibbler. The new and improved model — AN3500 — has a 6-amp electric motor and can chew through 10-gauge cold rolled steel or 12-gauge stainless at a rate of 90 inches per minute, the maker says. Thanks to a redesigned plunger, die holder, and punch, it also operates more smoothly and should last longer than its predecessor, the company says. It costs \$188.

Kett Tool Co., 513/271-0333, kett-tool.com.