

Products



Adjustable Niche

It takes time to build a truly waterproof tiled shower niche, but using one of Schluter's kits can speed up the job. Made from the company's 1/2-inch-thick Kerdi-Board tile backer, *Prefabricated Shower Niches* have presealed inside corners and 2-inch-wide integrated flanges that sit flush with the surrounding wall. They come in four sizes, from 12 by 6 inches to 12 by 28 inches; the larger models include an optional shelf that can be set to any height before tile is laid. Prices range from \$55 to \$105.

Schluter-Systems, 800/472-4588, schluter.com.



Germ-Fighting Faucets

Moen now offers faucets treated with "Microban antimicrobial protection," which the company says prevents bacterial growth on surfaces. Faucets treated with Microban also feature the company's Spot Resist stainless finish, which is supposed to keep the surface clean-looking by resisting fingerprints and water spots. These finishes are available on the *Ashville* two-handle center-set bathroom faucet (\$100) and the *Walden* single-handle kitchen faucet (\$160).

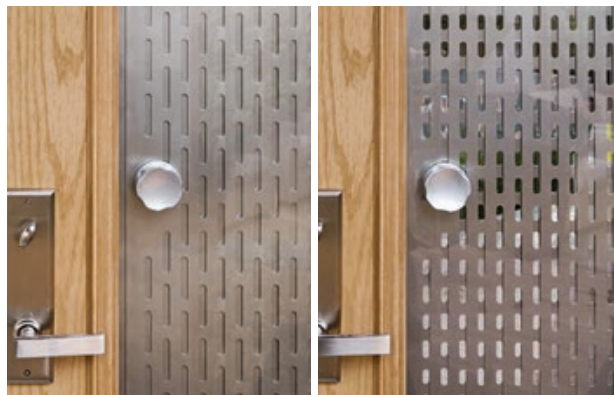
Moen, 800/289-6636, moen.com.



Power Nap

The motorized *Power Screen* is a cool way to extend a home's living area in summer by converting a covered porch or patio into a screened and shaded private space. The system can be installed in existing porch openings or mounted during construction. Widths from 4 to 25 feet and drops from 3 to 20 feet are available. The price to the builder ranges from \$15 to \$30 per square foot, depending on the fabric.

Trivantage, 866/888-8120, peopleloveshade.com.



Light Control

The modernistic *Array* door light system can be retrofitted to any door that will accept a 22-inch by 64-inch glazing panel. It consists of two sliding panels of perforated, powder-coated aluminum placed between panes of tempered low-e glass. A simple interior control knob lets the user adjust light levels by setting the perforations to open, closed, or anywhere in between. Cost for the panel is \$600.

ODL, 800/253-3900, odl.com.

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Easy Chair

The locking heads on *Prolok* rebar and mesh chairs mean that no bar ties are required — the worker just snaps the rebar into place. The high-chair design will accommodate two perpendicular rebars. A Sandplate base is available that adds stability when pouring over a sand base; it won't puncture plastic vapor barriers. Cost ranges from 33 cents to \$1.06 per piece.

Grip-Rite, 800/676-7777, grip-rite.com.



Instant Arbor

Trex *Pergola* kits feature fiberglass columns in round, tapered, and square profiles and a mounting system that secures the columns to the foundation or deck. Horizontal members have an aluminum core with a Trex exterior. The pergolas can be freestanding or attached to a structure, and can be fitted with retractable or fixed canopies. Kits come in nine finishes and cost \$5,000 to \$13,000, with \$8,000 being the average.

Trex, 800/289-8739, trex.com.



Quick Cable

Slender steel cable is currently a hot item for exterior deck rail assemblies, but its minimalist look can also be a great fit for interiors. Feeney's *CableRail* can be used inside or outside the home and includes quick-connect fittings. The cables are made from 316-grade stainless steel and come in precut lengths from 5 to 70 feet. The average length sold is 20 feet, which costs about \$40.

Feeney Products, 800/888-2418, feeneyinc.com.



Attic Ladder

The *Energy Seal Attic Ladder* combines an R-5 insulated, 1-inch-thick door with an integrated weatherstripping system that supposedly reduces air leakage by 60%. Rated for loads up to 375 pounds, the folding aluminum ladder costs \$200.

Werner, 888/523-3371, werneratticladders.com.

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Central Vac

With the *Intervac*, remodelers can offer their clients an inexpensive alternative to a whole-house vacuum. The machine is installed in a central location and — instead of using wall piping — comes with a 30-foot hose. Measured suction is about the same as with a good upright. The *Intervac* filters out 99.9% of particles down to .3 micron, including fine dust, allergens, and pet dander. Two models are available: a flush-mount unit that's recessed into the wall surface and hardwired; and a surface-mount model that plugs into a standard 100-volt outlet. Both cost around \$250.

Intervac Design, 888/499-1925, intervacdesign.com.



No-Prime Spackle

Patch Plus Primer is both spackle and primer — a handy product for small patching jobs. It uses “engineered nanoparticles” to create a primer-like film on the surface of the repair, so all that's needed is a finish paint coat. According to the maker it reduces the skill level needed to achieve professional-looking results. It can be used on drywall, plaster, wood, stucco, and concrete, and costs about \$6 for 8 ounces.

3M, 888/364-3577, 3mdiy.com.

Retrofit Toilet

The new two-piece *Riase* wall-outlet toilet is designed for retrofit jobs where the floor won't accommodate a drain pipe. The gravity-only flushing system uses just 1.28 gallons per flush; clogging problems are addressed with an oversized 3.15-inch trapway and a 3-inch flush valve. The chair-height ADA-compliant bowl is elongated and includes a soft-close seat, and the inside of the bowl has an anti-microbial surface. The toilet costs \$465.

Icera, 855/444-2372, icerausa.com.



No Sweat

According to Lennox, the advantages of the new XC25 SEER 25 air conditioner go beyond energy efficiency. One of the company's installing dealers told us that because the unit ramps up from just 30% of its full capacity (compared with 60% for the SEER 21 model), it can dehumidify a house without overcooling it during humid but cool evenings and mornings. Lennox has not yet released final pricing, but the cost of replacing an existing 4-ton unit should be around \$11,600 (including labor).

Lennox, 800/953-6669, lennox.com.



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