

# Products

by Patrick McCombe

## ASPHALT SHINGLES

### Regal Roof.

Asphalt shingles may not strike most people as the best way to dress up a house, but IKO's *Royal Victorian* line can turn an ordinary roof into an attention-getting design element. Available in four colors, the shingles weigh about 100 pounds per square and feature a Class-A fire rating. They cost approximately 10 percent more than the company's 30-year architectural shingles.

IKO, 800/433-2811, [www.iko.com](http://www.iko.com).



**High-Performance Three-Tab.** Although three-tab shingles can provide a decent roof at an affordable cost, most aren't made for areas that regularly experience high wind or damaging hail. A notable exception, however, is Atlas Roofing's *StormMaster ST*. This rather ordinary-looking shingle boasts some extraordinary qualities, including Class-4 impact resistance and a 110-mph wind rating based on both UL and ASTM standards. It's available in six colors and has a 30-year prorated warranty. Prices vary by region but generally run about \$60 per square.

Atlas, 800/261-2852, [www.atlasroofing.com](http://www.atlasroofing.com).



**Peak Ventilation.** If you're looking for a shingle-over, externally baffled ridge vent that won't sacrifice your asphalt roof's Class-A fire rating, you've got only one real choice, according to Air Vent: the *ShingleVent II-9*. Designed for roofs from 3/12 to 12/12, this low-profile, black-plastic vent is tough to spot from the ground and delivers 16 square inches of ventilation per foot. It also has an internal weather filter that purportedly stops wind-driven rain and blowing snow. A 4-foot length sells for between \$9 and \$10.

Air Vent, 800/247-8368, [www.airvent.com](http://www.airvent.com).

**Installer-Friendly.** Improper fastener placement and poor sealing are two of the most commonly cited reasons for blown-off shingles. In an effort to address both of these problems, Owens Corning recently introduced *Woodmoor* and *Woodcrest* shingles. They have a wider nailing area to help installers hit their mark and an improved sealing strip that's meant to seal more effectively in cooler temperatures and on steep roofs. And, unlike many other architectural shingles, these can be installed both left to right and right to left. They're available in Southwest, Rocky Mountain, and Western regions.

Owens Corning, 800/438-7465, [www.owenscorning.com](http://www.owenscorning.com).



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### ASPHALT SHINGLES

#### Heavy Weight.

Looking for a durable asphalt shingle? Add the *Camelot* from GAF to your list of contenders. Weighing in at roughly 460 pounds per square, these shingles have two rows of adhesive and a 110-mph wind warranty. They are made of two layers, each of which is about 60 percent thicker than the layers in other premium asphalt shingles. The 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch exposure should speed installation — provided you can get the shingles delivered and don't have to hump the seven-bundle squares up a ladder. The manufacturer claims that they cost a fraction of the price of cedar or slate.

GAF, 973/628-3000, [www.gaf.com](http://www.gaf.com).



**Lighten Your Load.** Because they're more reflective, white shingles don't add to a house's cooling load the way darker ones do. Unfortunately, though, they can start looking pretty nasty and lose their reflectivity as algae and air pollution discolor them. A good alternative is Elk's *Cool Color Series* shingles, which use 3M granules with up to three times the reflectivity of conventional shingle granules. Cool Color shingles come in three hues (cool weathered wood, cool antique slate, and cool barkwood) in the Prestique line and one (cool browncastle) in the Domain Winslow line.

Elk, 800/354-7732, [www.elkcorp.com](http://www.elkcorp.com).

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### HEATING AND COOLING EQUIPMENT

**Fresh Air.** Heating plants with insufficient air for combustion do not burn fuel efficiently, which often leads to increased production of carbon monoxide and efficiency-killing soot deposits. To bring outside combustion air to an oil-fired boiler or a forced-air furnace, check out the *Air Boot* and *Furnace Boot* from Field Controls.



These retrofit devices connect Wayne MSR, Carlin EZ-1, and RW Beckett AFG and AF burners to an outside air intake by means of a 4-inch round duct. The installation looks straightforward, but be sure the completed assembly includes a vacuum-relief valve to prevent starving the burner of oxygen should the air supply become obstructed. A *Combustion Air System Kit* (model CAS-2B) — which contains the intake, vacuum-relief valve, and boot — can be ordered at heating and plumbing suppliers for about \$75. The company also makes draft inducers and other problem-solvers for heating equipment.

**Field Controls**, 252/522-3031, [www.fieldcontrols.com](http://www.fieldcontrols.com).



**Pump It Up.** Effectively and efficiently heating and cooling a room addition or bonus room can be a real problem, but a split-system heat pump like the *Mr. Slim* from Mitsubishi can be a great solution. It heats and cools a space as needed — and, aside from the refrigeration lines, there's no plumbing or ductwork to run. The newest versions, models MSZ09UN, MSZ12UN, and MXZ30TN, have variable-speed compressors and can produce 9,000 to 30,000 Btu per hour. They also include remote controls, so you can mount them high on the wall where they're less noticeable and won't interfere with home furnishings. Contact your installer for pricing.

**Mitsubishi**, 800/687-1966, [www.mrslim.com](http://www.mrslim.com).

**Heat From Above.** You've probably seen ceiling-mounted infrared heaters at your local home center or warehouse club. They're very popular in those huge spaces because, unlike forced-air systems that heat from the top down, radiant heaters heat from the bottom up, which means people and merchandise get warmed first. They also offer relatively low operating and installation costs. Now the same technology is available for residential applications. Space-Ray's *CB30 Infrared Gas Heater*, at about 9 feet long, is a good choice for residential two- and three-car garages. The vent-free heater has a maximum capacity of 30,000 Btu per hour and is available in both natural-gas and propane models. Prices vary by region, but the product usually sells for about \$700.

**Space-Ray**, 800/438-4936, [www.spaceray.com](http://www.spaceray.com).



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### HOME AUTOMATION

**Easy Listening.** Some types of home automation have a long way to go before they gain widespread consumer acceptance. After all, how many people want to call home and talk to the refrigerator? On the other hand, homeowners comfortable with technology often see the value in a distributed audio system like the *XDM4600KIT*, which allows them to listen to music from multiple locations inside the home. A universal remote and small wall-mounted receivers control individual room speakers and remotely located audio components. The *XDM4600KIT* doubles as a whole-house intercom, so the owners can communicate with family members or guests at the door. It sells for about \$2,600, installation not included.

M&S Systems, 800/877-6631, [www.mssystem.com](http://www.mssystem.com).



**Call for Heat.** I think one of the best applications of home automation is the ability to adjust the temperature of your residence or vacation home from a remote location. Products like HAI's *Omnistat B* work with most home-automation systems and allow you to use the telephone or the Internet to change a home's temperature from an energy-saving level to something more comfortable — or the other way around. The dimmable backlight won't disturb your sleep, and the time is set automatically, which makes the *Omnistat B* easier to program. Models are available for most single- and two-stage heating/air-conditioning systems as well as for heat pumps. The manufacturer-suggested price is \$199.

HAI, 800/229-7256, [www.homeauto.com](http://www.homeauto.com).

**Radio Control.** Unlike most lighting controllers, which rely on X10 technology, the *C-Box LE* uses wireless radio signals to control lights and electronic devices from up to 100 feet away. Lights can be controlled by scene or timer, or they can be programmed to switch off at sunrise and on at sunset. To prevent other electronics from interfering with the signal, the *C-Box LE* transmits at 900 MHz over 25 FM channels. One note: You'll need to replace the conventional wall switch with one that can process the FM signal for every light you want to control; the manufacturer suggests its *Scene Point Controller* (\$200–\$300 each). The *C-Box LE* sells for about \$1,000.

Vantage Controls, 800/555-9891, [www.vantagecontrols.com](http://www.vantagecontrols.com).



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