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TOOL KIT

Thoughtfully Designed Toolbelt

B5625 Tool Belt
Occidental Mfg.
707/824-2560
bestbelt.com
Street price: \$250

by Mark Clement

Searching for the right tool or fastener on the job gets expensive, one second at a time all day long. I'm costing myself effort and bucks every time I have to fumble for something or pry a pocket open, so a belt that holds the stuff I use 80 percent of the time is elemental to profit and production. With Occidental's American-made, all-leather B5625 Tool Belt, I can snatch a tape or a knife with a no-look grab and I have room for fasteners, yet I'm not weighted down by pointless slots or stuff that should be in the toolbox.

On the right side are seven sleeves, for pencils, a utility knife, extra driver tips, a chisel, and the like. The rig ships with plastic cases slotted inside a loop in each main pocket, but they don't hold anything I use so I nixed them; turns out the empty loops hold my painter's

multi-tool and dikes. I can store three separate types of fasteners on the right side, which I don't often do, but it's nice to have the option.

The leather hammer ring on the outside of the bag is the perfect spot to hook my impact driver. My hammer hangs in the metal loop at the small of my back, and within the hammer holder is a slot where I carry my scratch-awl.

On the left, I carry my tape in the fitted pouch so I always know where it is. Next to that is an open pouch, ideal for a phone or a chalk reel. A big bin below is meant to house fasteners, but I try to keep that empty because there are always gloves, snips, or bolts that need a quick home. A slot between the pouches secretes away my layout square — an outstanding feature. I carry most of my fasteners in the pouch below that.

You can buy a cheaper toolbelt, but not many deliver the smart storage and tool access of the B5625. This is definitely a daily-wearer. ❖

Contributing editor Mark Clement is a deck builder and writer in Ambler, Pa.

