

New Tools for the Trades

by Clayton DeKorne

Cordless Finish Nailer



Paslode has finally introduced a cordless finish gun. The new *Impulse 250*, operates similarly to the *Impulse 325* framing nailer: A 6-volt battery ignites a measured amount of propane-like fuel, and the explosion forces the piston straight down to drive the nail. Since it takes less energy to drive a finish nail than a framing nail, the finish nailer uses a different fuel canister than the framing tool. But the 250 will drive everything from 3/4-inch brads to 2 1/2-inch (8d) finish nails, making it one of the most versatile finish guns on the market. For more information, contact ITW Paslode, Two Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire, IL 60069; 800/323-1303.

Laser Aim



Laser leveling seems to be getting simpler and more affordable. For the approximate cost of a 15-

minute transit (about \$400), you can get the *Laser Aim MiniLevel*. This 12-inch vial level projects a laser beam that can hit a reference point as far as 100 feet away. According to the manufacturer, the *Laser Aim* is accurate to within 1/8 inch over 100 feet. If true, this device would be precise enough for laying out everything from foundations to cabinet installations. An optional bracket for mounting the level on a tripod has vernier dials which measure 360-degree horizontal rotation and 90-degree vertical elevation. For more information, contact Emerging Technologies, Inc., P.O. Box 581, Little Rock, AR 72203; 501/375-2227.

Pointing Gun



Here's a heavy-duty drill attachment to speed up glass block installations and tuck point restoration of brick or stone. The *QuikPoint Mortar Gun* fits any 3/8-inch, variable speed drill. The drill motor powers an auger that vibrates as it turns to provide a constant bead of mortar. The 1/8 inch nozzle is elliptical and can be turned for horizontal or vertical joints. Special nozzles for filling smaller cracks are available. The impact-resistant, polyurethane hopper holds 1/2 gallon of mortar, and the gun weighs about 13 pounds when loaded. A *QuikPoint* set sells for about \$400, including a Milwaukee Hole Shooter and a canvas carrying bag. Without the drill or bag, it is available for about \$225. For more information, contact QuikPoint, Inc., 27 Seymour Street, Concord, MA 01742; 508/371-2292.

Portable Power Hoist

The *Ultra Light Portable Hoist* is a 110-volt power hoist that lifts 150 pounds up to 80 feet at a rate of 75 feet per minute. Yet this hoist is no bigger than a circular saw and weighs 38 pounds. It features a safety brake and an "up-limit switch" to keep a sleepy helper from driving a load off the top of the hoist. The



Ultra Light can be hung on just about anything that will support the load weight (the safety rail on the scaffold is probably not a good support), and an optional adjustable-length boom is available. The *Ultra Light* sells for about \$1,200. For more information, contact American Beta Corporation, P.O. Box 361124, Melbourne, FL 32936; 800/233-5112.

Support for the Single-Handed



Original Deadman

Either of these two "deadman" supports would be useful to a one-man crew.

The *Original Deadman* is a lightweight, adjustable version of the common 2x4 deadman you might make for hanging drywall or installing crown molding. This aluminum version has a couple of useful features you won't find on the site-made variety. A pivoting rubber foot prevents slipping when it is used to support the end of a sheet of drywall. The crossbar can be bro-

ken down for convenient storage. The crossbar is 42 inches wide, and its height is adjustable from 6 1/2 feet to 10 feet. By leaning it against a wall at a sharp angle, you can adjust the height a little lower than 6 1/2, but not enough to pick up cabinets. It sells for about \$50 and is available direct from the Small Tool Company, P.O. Box 8322, Salem, MA 01971; 508/745-5992.



T-Jak

The T-Jak adjusts from 53 inches (upper cabinet height) to 8 feet. Rather than a pivoting foot, it has a 6-inch-square plastic baseplate so it will stand up by itself in the middle of a room. To keep it from tipping over though, you need to have it under load. The height adjustment is a large diameter threaded rod that slides through a large quick-release nut. The nut turns easily under load for delicate adjustment, such as you might need for hanging wall cabinets to a level line. The impact-resistant plastic crossbar is about a foot long with a hole for screwing on a longer support. The T-Jak sells for about \$90. For more information, contact The Patterson Avenue Tool Co., P.O. Box 127, Glenview, IL 60025; 708/998-6990.

Close Quarters Ratchet



The Sidewinder Speedwrench combines a 32-tooth reversing ratchet with a T-handle for turning in tight spaces. One 360 degree turn reportedly equals about eight standard ratchet motions. This may make it an ideal tool for seismic retrofits of

foundation bolts, or even just that occasional anchor bolt that falls in a narrow stud bay. The 11 3/4-inch-long wrench is available in 1/4, 3/8, and 1/2 inch drives. The 1/2 inch model is rated at 18 foot-pounds of torque using the T-handle, or 190 foot-pounds using the conventional ratchet. For more information, contact Sidewinder Products Corporation, 2066 Old Rocky Ridge Road, Birmingham, AL 35216; 205/823-3405.

Job Site Organization



The Tool Kaddie was developed by a contractor to reduce the time his carpenters shuffled to the truck. These rolling tool carriers are designed as secondary tool boxes which a carpenter stocks at the beginning of a task. The contractor who now manufactures these boxes claims he not only cut down on wasted time, but his workers started thinking through jobs more carefully and increased their productivity. And Tool Kaddies are a whole lot better looking than mud buckets. They are made of a double-wall, molded polyethylene that can be modified to suit a particular need without compromising strength or appearance. Features include adjustable shelves, a lid which folds back to become a work tray, and a rear bin for holding long items such as brooms and levels. The Tool Kaddie can be locked and is reportedly leak-proof. It measures 41 inches high, 18 inches wide, and 20 inches deep, and is available in white or gray. The price is about \$170. For more information, contact Kaddies, Inc., 1601 N. Main Street #203, Walnut Creek, CA 94596; 800/523-3437.

Super Scraper

For tearing off old roofs, peeling up linoleum or ceramic tile floors, scraping off dried adhesive and mastic, ripping up glued down carpeting, or chipping the ice off a winter job site, the SlamScraper may give you an edge. The manufacturer calls this scraper an "impact tool" because the 58-inch handle slides up and down over a lubricated shaft,



reportedly generating 150 pounds of pressure per square inch with each push. The slide can also be fixed for use as a conventional scraper. Two blades are available — a heavy steel blade for busting up thick materials — and an additional super-sharp, spring-steel blade is used when a keen edge is needed. All components are replaceable. For more information, contact Red Devil, 2400 Vauxhall Rd., Union, NJ 07083-1933; 800/247-3790.

Japanese Utility Knife



The same company that offers a full line of fine Japanese pull saws, has introduced a utility knife designed specifically for working with drywall. The 3-in-1 Drywall Tool combines an awl, a keyhole saw, and a breakaway knife. The knife resembles a heavy-duty matte knife. There is a slotted cap on the butt end of the tool which pops off for safely snapping off blade sections. The awl is pushed forward with a lever that locks into position. Though I've never had much use for an awl while hanging drywall, it would be handy for other building tasks, which makes this an all-purpose utility knife despite the name. One possible drawback may be getting replacement blades. But given the ubiquitous presence of other Japanese tools, I wouldn't be surprised if replacements are soon as available. For more information, contact Takagi Tools, Inc., P.O. Box 14355, Torrance, CA 90503; 213/544-7344. ■