



editor's page

BY SCOTT TAPPA

Catalogs, columns, and camshafts

It's common knowledge that women love catalogs, right? Throw a mailer from Pottery Barn, JC Penney, or Victoria's Secret on the coffee table, and there's a good chance the credit card will be getting a workout later that night.

Well, guys, you can admit it: you like catalogs too, whether it's tools, lawn mowers, sporting goods ... or whatever's in Victoria's Secret. Which is why, year after year, the *Rural Builder* Buyers' Guide is our largest and most often referenced issue. Granted, this is not a typical catalog — no prices, few photos, no sales pitch — but it covers just about every product and company a rural builder will need on a day-to-day basis, and gives you the contact information you need to track down key companies.

The Buyers' Guide is yours, so let us know how you use it, what you think of it, how it could be more user-friendly. Last year we instituted some drastic changes to the Buyers'

Guide — did they help?

This year's Guide will look much the same as last year, with a few notable exceptions. We've decided to axe the brand name guide, and add a more useful feature, company descriptions. In case you were wondering, say, what Chem Link is all about, here's your answer. And it will be easier to find certain companies with the debut of four-color company logos.

Tell us what you think. After you've read your Buyers' Guide, fire an email to tappas@krause.com or send a letter to 700 East State St., Iola, Wis., 54990-0001. Remember, this is your guide, so let us know how we can continue to improve it.

If you tend to glaze over our Supplier News section, break the habit this issue. On page 14 is the story of Perma-Column, a company whose eponymous product could revolutionize the way post-frame builders look at columns.

That's not hype — the company is introducing its concrete columns at precisely the right time. With zoning officials calling post-frame's durability into question, and the uncertain status of wood treatments, the Perma-Column has the potential to grab significant market share right away.

Sure, the product will cost more than all-wood columns, but the guess here is that its permanence and environmental friendliness will be a strong enough selling point to overcome price objections. The company seems to have the right combination of industry experience and entrepreneurial enthusiasm to make this thing work.

Confession time: never been a big trucks guy. I drive a Nissan Pathfinder, and it's a durable son of a gun, pushing 160,000 miles. I can definitely relate to builders who develop an affinity for a brand.

Which is why Nissan's new Titan is so exciting (page 24). The company is better known for its compact trucks, and is not the first foreign automaker to enter the full-size game (thank you, Toyota), but it's worth checking out. The 180 degree-opening rear doors and factory-applied spray-in bedliner are notable cool features.

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