

Horseman Saddle Building School

6334 Dawn Dr.  
Belgrade, Montana 59714

1/1/2023

This is to certify that the information contained in this publication  
is true and correct in content and policy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## *Introduction*

Montana Horseman Saddle Building School evolved and grew beyond our imagination.

In the late 1950's to early 1960's Dale began building his own saddle. With a growing family and a tight budget he could not afford to purchase a new saddle. He soon became the "friend" who could build you a saddle or repair your old one. Over the years, Dale learned more about working with leather. He expanded into making anything and everything that had to do with horses or mules including pack saddles and tack. He was often in the mountains with a long pack string of mules winding around the trails. Friends, family, kids and grandkids all riding a horse fitted with a saddle built by Dale.

Dale's hobby turned into teaching others to build their own saddle. This came naturally to Dale as he had been a teacher and administrator in the public school system. Eventually, the garage led to the building of a shop and more students. This led to expansion of the shop to accommodate the growing class sizes.

We have trained students in the art of saddle building from all over the world, including New Zealand, France, Sweden, South Africa, Israel, Canada, and Australia to name a few. Students from almost every state in the U.S. have also attended our school.

Our mission is to teach anyone from anywhere how to build a saddle, learn leatherwork, and use your knowledge to get the job of your dreams, start your own business or many other employment options.

**Administration and Staff**  
Governing body: Dale E. Moore  
Cody McDowell

**Dale Moore:**

- saddle builder for over 50 years
- designed and marketed mule and horse related equipment
- mule judge at the Montana Winter Fair
- former licensed Montana hunting and fishing outfitter and guide
- has raised and trained horses
- grew up on a ranch
- has had articles published in the Saddlers Journal & honored as “Master Saddle Maker”
- masters degree in education
- retired Montana teacher and administrator
- organized and conducted clinics in back country packing
- organized and conducted clinics in the use and application of various types of horse and mule equipment
- 5 children, 12 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren

Some of Dale and Norma’s children and grandchildren have attended the class. Others own saddles built by Dale.

“The Montana Horseman Saddle Building School has been very successful in providing the learning and skills necessary for students to become proficient and prepared for the saddle building goals.” Dale

**Cody McDowell:**

-Cody is Dale’s grandson. He has spent many of his years with Dale learning about the outdoors, packing, horses, mules and saddles. He has spent the last 2 years apprenticing under Dale. He is planning to continue Dale’s legacy.

**Staff**

**Kim McDowell**

-Kim is Dale and Norma’s daughter. She keeps the records for the VA, making sure veterans can attend the school.

## *Facility*

Our school is located between Manhattan and Belgrade, Montana. A washing machine and dryer are also in the shop and available whenever needed. Our school space is 3000 square feet. Each student has their own 6'x8' work table, a large conference table is used for morning meetings.

## *Facility Rules and Information*

We provide a washing machine and dryer for your personal use. Please respect that others will also be using these machines. Again, we do not provide maid service for the shared bathrooms. Please respect your fellow students and leave the bathroom clean and tidy. The large sponges are for leather work only! There are disposable dish cloths, a tub and a drainer for your dishes.

Absolutely **NO SMOKING or Vaping** allowed in the shop. If you need to smoke outside, please pick up and dispose of your cigarette butts.

No firearms allowed in or around the shop.

## *Equipment*

Any equipment needed to complete your saddle and learn the art of leatherwork is available. Tooling equipment, large and small sewing machines, your own workspace, cutting tools for the leather, saddle stands, small power tools, a sink, any other tool you may need.

## *Additional Expenses*

You will incur expenses not covered under tuition costs. You are more than welcome to stay in one of the bedrooms in the school. This allows you to work on your saddle or practice tooling whenever you would like. Your cost for a room in the school is \$500.00 for the duration. There is no room service. We will need to buy or bring your own groceries. The rooms are equipped with kitchen supplies and a refrigerator. The easiest place to buy groceries is in Belgrade. Belgrade is about 8 miles away. If you do not have a vehicle, arrangements can be made for one of our instructors to take you to the grocery store. Often students become friends and go to the store or take advantage of activities outside the school. Additional expenses include:

Motel: motels in this area average \$200 per night

Food: a conservative estimate of groceries for 4 weeks would be \$300.00

## **Tuition for Saddle Building**

Saddle Building: \$6500.00 plus \$500.00 deposit(separate from tuition)

### **Tuition Breakdown for non VA-students**

**Tuition and Instruction: \$4500.00**

**Saddle Building Supplies: \$2000.00**

**This includes:**

Strings: \$160.00  
Latigos: \$70.00  
Skirting Leather: \$360.00 x 2 = \$620.00  
Tree: \$400.00  
Rigging Plates: \$70.00  
D rings: \$15.00  
Blevins & Stirrups: \$40.00  
Strainer: \$5.00  
Sheepskin: \$210.00  
Cinch: \$40.00  
Screws & Rivets: \$10.00  
Shop Supplies: \$5.00  
Misc. leather/Backing Padded Seats: \$150.00  
Misc. shipping costs: \$205.00

***Deposit required before arrival to save your place in the class and for your room: \$500.00***

**Total due before or upon arrival not including deposit: \$6500.00**

**Your tuition includes:**

- your choice of building a Wade Saddle, Bowman Saddle or a Flat Creek Packer Saddle
- saddle tree
- leather: latigo, skirting, padded seat
- saddle lining(sheepskin)
- hardware
- stirrups
- oils: cleaners, preservatives
- assembly materials
- you will have your own working area including a very large table

**Saddle Building Tools and Equipment:**

- all tools and equipment are provided for student use for the duration of the class
- lists of tools, equipment and suppliers are provided at the end of this handbook
- we are always available to answer questions about supplies, tools and equipment

**Horses and mules provided for the following:**

- teaching animal conformation relative to proper saddle fitting
- teaching slope of shoulders required for proper rigging placement
- saddle construction and saddle fitting relative to inherent saddle and conformation problems

**Room: \$500.00**

-Your room is not included in your tuition. We have rooms in the school where you can live during your class. Each room includes kitchen items for cooking and a refrigerator for your food. Your \$500.00 deposit not only ensures your place in class but will also reserve your bedroom.

## **Tuition for Saddle Building**

Saddle Building: \$6500.00

\$500.00 deposit: this is a separate, out of pocket expense

## **Tuition Breakdown for VA-students**

**Tuition and Instruction: \$4500.00**

**Saddle Building Supplies: \$2000.00**

**This includes:**

Strings: \$160.00  
Latigos: \$70.00  
Skirting Leather: \$360.00 x 2 = \$620.00  
Tree: \$400.00  
Rigging Plates: \$70.00  
D rings: \$15.00  
Blevins & Stirrups: \$40.00  
Strainer: \$5.00  
Sheepskin: \$210.00  
Cinch: \$40.00  
Screws & Rivets: \$10.00  
Shop Supplies: \$5.00  
Misc. leather/Backing Padded Seats: \$150.00  
Misc. shipping costs: \$205.00

***Deposit required before arrival to save your spot in the class and your room: \$500.00(not paid by the VA)***

**Amount that will be charged to the VA not including deposit: \$6500.00**

**Your tuition includes:**

- your choice of building a Wade Saddle, Bowman Saddle, or a Flat Creek Packer Saddle
- saddle tree
- leather: latigo, skirting, padded seat
- saddle lining(sheepskin)
- hardware
- stirrups
- oils: cleaners, preservatives
- assembly materials
- you will have your own working area including a very large table

**Saddle Building Tools and Equipment:**

- all tools and equipment are provided for student use for the duration of the class
- lists of tools, equipment and suppliers are provided at the end of this handbook
- we are always available to answer questions about supplies, tools and equipment

**Horses and mules provided for the following:**

- teaching animal conformation relative to proper saddle fitting
- teaching slope of shoulders required for proper rigging placement
- saddle construction and saddle fitting relative to inherent saddle and conformation problems

**Room/Deposit: \$500.00**

-Your room is not included in your tuition. We have rooms in the school where you can live during your class. Each room includes kitchen items for cooking and a refrigerator for your food. Your \$500.00 deposit not only ensures your place in class but will also reserve your bedroom.

### **Advanced Saddle Building**

The Advanced Saddle Building Class allows you to build one or two saddles. You also have the option to build a different saddle than you built during the Saddle Building Class. For example if you built a Wade Saddle during the Saddle Building Class, you can build a Bowman Saddle during the Advanced Saddle Building class. After the initial morning meeting the Advanced Saddle Building Class students will work separately from the Saddle Building students. The Advanced students are not required to build a “class saddle”, giving advanced students extra time to hone their skills with the sewing machines and saddle building equipment. You will also gain more confidence using patterns and having more time to understand the handling and cutting of leather. Having Dale or Cody helping with any “hands on” problems or issues that arise will give you practice in dealing with those problems or issues.



## **Tuition for Advanced Saddle Building for non VA-students**

Advanced Saddle Building: \$7000.00 plus a \$500.00 deposit

(you may build 2 saddles, 1st saddle materials are included in tuition, 2<sup>nd</sup> saddle materials must be paid for separately: please talk to Dale or Cody about plans to build a 2<sup>nd</sup> saddle as they will need to order supplies, approximate cost of 2<sup>nd</sup> saddle materials is \$2000.00)

**Tuition and Instruction: \$5000.00**

**Saddle Building Supplies: \$2000.00**

**This includes:**

- Strings: \$160.00
- Latigos: \$70.00
- Skirting Leather: \$360.00 x 2 = \$620.00
- Tree: \$400.00
- Rigging Plates: \$70.00
- D rings: \$15.00
- Blevins & Stirrups: \$40.00
- Strainer: \$5.00
- Sheepskin: \$210.00
- Cinch: \$40.00,
- Screws & Rivets: \$10.00
- Shop Supplies: \$5.00
- Misc. leather/Backing Padded Seats: \$150.00
- Misc. shipping costs: \$205.00

***Deposit required before arrival to save your spot in the class and for your room: \$500.00***

**Total due before or upon arrival not including deposit: \$7000.00**

- your choice of building a Wade or Bowman Saddle or a Flat Creek Packer Saddle
- saddle tree
- leather: latigo, skirting, padded seat
- saddle lining(sheepskin)
- hardware
- stirrups
- oils: cleaners, preservatives
- assembly materials
- you will have your own working area including a very large table

**Saddle Building Tools and Equipment:**

- all tools and equipment are provided for student use for the duration of the class
- lists of tools, equipment and suppliers are provided at the end of this handbook
- we are always available to answer questions about supplies, tools and equipment

**Horses and mules provided for the following:**

- teaching animal conformation relative to proper saddle fitting
- teaching slope of shoulders required for proper rigging placement
- saddle construction and saddle fitting relative to inherent saddle and conformation problems

**Room: \$500.00**

-Your room is not included in your tuition. We have rooms in the school where you can live during your class. Each room includes kitchen items for cooking and a refrigerator for your food. Your \$500.00 deposit not only ensures your place in class but will also reserve your bedroom.

## **Tuition for Advanced Saddle Building for VA-students**

Saddle Building: \$7000.00      \$500.00 deposit: this is a separate, out of pocket expense  
(you may build 2 saddles, 1st saddle materials are included in tuition, 2<sup>nd</sup> saddle materials must be paid for separately: please talk to Dale or Cody about plans to build a 2<sup>nd</sup> saddle as they will need to order supplies, approximate cost of 2<sup>nd</sup> saddle materials is \$2000.00)

**Tuition and Instruction: \$5000.00**

**Saddle Building Supplies: \$2000.00**

**This includes:**

- Strings: \$160.00
- Latigos: \$70.00
- Skirting Leather: \$360.00 x 2 = \$620.00
- Tree: \$400.00
- Rigging Plates: \$70.00
- D rings: \$15.00
- Blevins & Stirrups: \$40.00
- Strainer: \$5.00
- Sheepskin: \$210.00
- Cinch: \$40.00,
- Screws & Rivets: \$10.00/ Shop supplies: \$5.00
- Misc. leather/Backing Padded Seats: \$150.00
- Misc. shipping costs: \$205.00

***Deposit required before arrival to save your spot in the class and your room: \$500.00***

**Amount that will be charged to the VA not including deposit: \$7000.00**

- your choice of building a Wade Saddle, Bowman Saddle or a Flat Creek Packer Saddle
- saddle tree
- leather: latigo, skirting, padded seat
- saddle lining(sheepskin)
- hardware
- stirrups
- oils: cleaners, preservatives
- assembly materials
- you will have your own working area including a very large table

**Saddle Building Tools and Equipment:**

- all tools and equipment are provided for student use for the duration of the class
- lists of tools, equipment and suppliers are provided at the end of this handbook
- we are always available to answer questions about supplies, tools and equipment

**Horses and mules provided for the following:**

- teaching animal conformation relative to proper saddle fitting
- teaching slope of shoulders required for proper rigging placement
- saddle construction and saddle fitting relative to inherent saddle and conformation problems

**Room: \$500.00**

-Your room is not included in your tuition. We have rooms in the school where you can live during your class. Each room includes kitchen items for cooking and a refrigerator for your food. Your \$500.00 deposit not only ensures your place in class but will also reserve your bedroom.

## **Class Schedule**

Saddle Building: 176 classroom hours: 4 weeks/ 9 hours per day/ Monday thru Thursday and 8 hours on Friday.

Advanced Saddle Building: 176 classroom hours: 4 weeks/ 9 hours per day/ Monday thru Thursday and 8 hours on Friday.

## **Class Content**

### **Saddle Building:**

- orientation.....4 hours
- saddle history beginning with the early 1880's.....2 hours
- how the western saddle emerged and changed to meet the different demands.....1 hours
- Saddle building procedures and methods.....6 hours
- fitting saddles, inherent problems with saddles and animal conformation.....6 hours
- information on saddle styles for intended use.....1 hours
- types of leather and how to deal with inherent leather problems.....5 hours
- saddle building tools, sewing machines, and general procedures.....6 hours
- demonstration saddles, we build two, a wide swell and a slick for style.....50 hours
- designing and tooling to make your saddle a custom design.....4 hours
- each student designs and builds their custom saddle.....91 hours

### **Advanced Saddle Building:**

This class is for students who have completed the Saddle Building Class or students who have prior saddle building experience.

- orthopedic balanced ride saddles.....4
- roping saddles.....5 hours
- trail saddles.....4 hours
- cutting saddles.....4 hours
- barrel racing saddles.....4 hours
- padded seats.....3 hours
- mounting silver trim.....1 hours
- tooling and carving techniques.....8 hours
- replica saddles.....3 hours
- refurbished saddles.....6 hours
- saddle repair procedures and techniques.....10 hours
- each student designs and builds their custom saddle.....124 hours

## *Calendar*

### Class dates include Saddle Building and Advanced Saddle Building **2023**

January 9-February 3

Class operates on:

1/16-Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 13-March 10

Class operates on:

2/20-President's Day

March 20-April 14

April 24-May 19

May 30-June 23

Class operates on:

5/29-Memorial Day

Summer Break

**School Policies**  
**School Policies apply to all students**

**Refund Policy**

We understand refunds may be necessary due to family emergencies, health issues or unforeseen circumstances.

**VA Students:** Our refund policy is a daily pro-rated system. A complete course runs for 24 days. For example, if a student is unable to attend the last 14 days of the course a refund of \$3500.00 will be sent to the VA. A VA student does not need to contact the VA. Montana Saddle School will contact the VA and appropriate measures will be taken.

**Non VA Students:** Non VA students are required to make a \$500.00 deposit to guarantee placement in the course. This deposit is non-refundable. If a student is unable to attend the full course, a refund to the student determined on a daily pro-rated system will be granted in the same manner as a VA student. If a student stops attending class with no reason or explanation no refund will be granted.

All refunds will be sent to the Veteran's Administration or to the non-VA student within 40 days.

**Enrollment**

In order to meet the enrollment date we require students to provide a completed application available via mail, email, or thru the Montana Saddle Building School website. Prior to enrollment all VA students must supply a copy of your **VA Certificate of Eligibility**. All students must be 18 years or older.

**Enrollment in the Advanced Saddle Building Class**

In order to meet the experience requirement for the Advanced Saddle Building Class, students need to have completed the Saddle Building Class. If a student hasn't completed the Saddle Building Class they need to show a level acceptable for entering the Advanced Saddle Building Class. For example: a student needs to understand how to build a saddle as well as having built a western saddle to completion.

**Prior Credit**

Montana Saddle School will evaluate all previous postsecondary education and training, including military experience. If credit is granted, program length and cost will be adjusted accordingly. If a student has attended a particular lecture or learned the contents of the lecture at another school or at this school during previous class participation this would qualify as prior credit. If a student applies for admission to the Advanced Saddle Building course they must submit in the form of transcripts from another saddle building school or their certificate of completion of Montana Horseman Saddle Building School's Saddle Building Course.

## **Standards of Conduct**

-Each student will receive a briefing of school policies and rules of conduct while attending each course. A document of agreed student conduct must be signed and returned with school application.

-Any student participating in any unsafe act towards other students, instructors, equipment, or property will be immediately dismissed from the school.

-During morning group meetings, we ask that you turn off your phones and remove your earbuds.

-We strive to keep our facility a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, however, attending class in pajamas and having just rolled out of bed is disrespectful to fellow students and faculty.

-We don't allow alcohol or drugs in the saddle school.

-Unless previously obtained permission, we do not allow family or friends to visit or stay in the shop with you.

-Activities resulting in dismissal include but are not limited to the following: physical or verbal aggression, sexual abuse or threats of same to others; dishonesty including stealing, cheating, or other dishonest acts; unlawful, immoral or unprofessional behavior; or disruption of classes and activities.

Montana Saddle School reserves the right to evaluate conduct related violations on a case-by-case scenario to determine what specific action is appropriate. All conduct related violations or infractions will be documented and kept in student's file.

## **Attendance Policy**

**Unexcused Absences** – A student who acquires 2 unexcused absences will be dismissed from the school. Daily attendance is tracked and recorded.

Excused Absences – Excused absences may include: illness or personal emergency. If an excused absence of 4 days or less is needed or occurs, the school will work with the student to make up the excused hours in the evenings or on the weekend. In general, when a student requires a leave of absence longer than 4 days, we will require a withdrawal from the school and a re-enrollment at a future date when the entire program can be attended.

**Tardiness** – Class begins at 8 a.m. Any student who shows up after 8 a.m. will receive a tardy/late mark. Three late marks will count as an unexcused absence.

**Makeup Work** – Makeup work hours due to excused/unexcused absences will be determined by the school administrator and discussed with the student. Potentially, hours can be made up during the evening or on weekends.

## **Reinstatement Policy**

If a student is dismissed from a program due to conduct or attendance and wants to re-enroll, the student will be required to contact the school for readmission approval. The Montana Saddle School has sole discretion for determining if a student who was previously terminated can be re-enrolled.



### **No Show Policy**

If for whatever reason a student does not show on day 1 of the first week of class an attempt by the school to locate student will be forthcoming.

**If no contact is made:**

**VA Students:**

Montana Saddle School will notify the VA and 100% of student's VA funding will be returned to the VA.

**Non VA Students:**

A non VA student will not be refunded their deposit of \$500. If a student has paid the balance of their tuition, an attempt to locate the student will be conducted. If the school is unable to make contact to arrange a refund their tuition will be held until further contact is made.

### **Student Evaluation**

-Student evaluation is a constant process since saddle building is a hands-on learning environment. Instructors work with students on a one to one basis. Daily meetings are held each morning and at the end of each day. Discussion at the end of the day includes work related issues such as problems encountered that day, question discussions and planning work schedules for the following days.

-3 quizzes are given during the course. Students are told when a quiz will be given and basic information of what the quiz will entail. A student evaluation form is completed after 2 weeks and again at the end of the course.

-All instructors will participate in the final student evaluation which will be discussed with each student individually. The final evaluation will be given to the student, signed by both student and instructors and placed in the student's file. The included form will be used for the student evaluation.

### **Policy for School Graduation Certificate**

-The Montana Horseman Saddle Building School provides each student a graduation diploma signed by all instructors. The diploma signifies a graduate satisfactorily completed the course and is eligible for future consultations regarding help and advice.

-In the student handbook is a copy of how each student is evaluated. Evaluations are determined on an excellent, good, or fair scale. If a student fails to receive a 'fair' evaluation in all 10 categories, he/she will be able to complete the course but will not receive a certificate of successful completion. Any student dismissed for unsatisfactory grades or progress may re-apply for a future program. However, our owner and lead instructor must approve/authorize any re-enrollment of a student who was previously dismissed for unsatisfactory grades or progress. An evaluation is done at the end of 2 weeks and at the end of the course.

-In order to graduate a student must meet attendance qualifications explained on previous pages.

-A student is required to attend all morning and afternoon meetings.

-A student is required to have at least a fair evaluation in all 10 categories on their student evaluation forms.



### *What can I do with this education?*

Upon graduation from our school you have numerous ways to use your education.

- Ranch hand: it would be invaluable to be able to repair tack, repair or build saddles for the ranch.
- Open your own business as a saddle maker. Numerous graduates own and operate their own saddle building business. You will have to check in your state the requirements for a business license.
- Ranch supply stores: these stores often carry leather goods and saddles. The ranch supply stores in this area sell horse tack and saddles that are made by local people.
- One student went on to build saddles and making detailed tooled belts. Another graduate successfully designs tooled tops for shoes.
- Saddle building school: open a saddle building school.
- Rodeos: sell your saddles at the rodeos.

### *Student Records*

#### **Student Records Include:**

##### **VA Students:**

- copy of certificate of eligibility
- copy of graduation certificate
- student evaluation reports
- student attendance reports
- dismissal report if applicable
- copy of VA ONCE input
- photo of student with finished saddle
- copy of acceptance letter

##### **NON VA Students:**

- copy of graduation certificate
- student evaluation reports
- student attendance reports
- dismissal report if applicable
- photo of student with finished saddle
- copy of acceptance letter

Student records are maintained offsite with Kim McDowell. The offsite address is 6290 Dawn Dr. Belgrade, MT. If a student would like a copy of their records please contact Cody McDowell or Kim McDowell.

Kim McDowell: 406-209-0058 or Cody McDowell: 406-570-6709

**In compliance with 38 USC 3679**

-In compliance with 38 USC 3679. Our policy will permit any Chapter 31 or Chapter 33 student to attend or participate in the course of education during the period beginning on the date on which the individual provides to the educational institution a certificate of eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 31 or 33. A certificate of eligibility can also include a ‘statement of benefits’ obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs’ VA website, or a VAF 28-1905 form for chapter 31 authorization purposes and ending on the earlier of the following dates:

1. The date on which payment from VA is made to the institution.
2. 90 days after the date the institution certified tuition and fees following the receipt of the certificate of eligibility.

Our policy ensures that our educational institution will not impose any penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the requirement that a covered individual borrow additional funds, on any covered individual because of the individual’s inability to meet his or her financial obligations to the institution due to the delayed disbursement funding from VA under chapter 31 or 33.

## **Tools Needed for Startup Saddle Building**

Heavy-duty sewing machine-depends on quality.....\$3000-\$5500  
Medium sized sewing machine needed for horse related tack.....\$1500-\$2500

Basic Tools can be purchased through the Weaver Catalog. To order from Weaver you must establish a business. You will need to get a tax id number from the federal government. Find an application at: <http://isr.usa-taxid.com>.

### **CS Osborn tools:**

-end punches: 1/2", 1", 2".....\$30/\$45  
-hole punches: 1/8", 3/16", 1/4", 3/8"....\$5/\$10 each  
-slot punches: 1/2", 1".....\$30/\$40 each  
-edgers, sizes 2&3.....\$25/\$30 each  
-stitching awl.....\$10/\$15  
-skiving knife and blades.....\$30/\$35  
-leather scissors.....\$25  
-lace cutter.....\$25/\$35  
-draw knife.....\$35/\$40  
-tooling mallet.....\$35  
-wing divider.....\$40  
-assorted stamping tools.....\$300/\$500  
-concho cutter: 13/4", 11/2".....\$75 each  
-candle-horn pliers.....\$60/\$80

### **Can obtain locally:**

-box cutter and blades.....\$20  
-dremel tool.....\$65  
-hammers and pliers.....\$50  
-laser level (line level).....\$100  
-laser level (hand).....\$25/\$30  
-electric drill.....\$25/\$50  
-hair dryer.....\$20  
-cutting board.....\$25

(available at Montana Leather in Billings, MT., refer to compo soling, 10.51-1102470)

-marble slab

(available from building contractors-it is the cutout from a sink installation)

Be Aware: prices may vary slightly









