

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Today's Retaining Walls Offer Variety, Style, Color

(NAPSA)—When it comes to intriguing designs for the exterior of the home, many people have hit a wall—a retaining wall, that is. No longer unimaginative edifices, today's segmental retaining walls swoop, curve and sculpt in a variety of shapes, colors and textures.

Comprised of high-strength concrete, segmental retaining walls are less expensive than poured-in-place concrete and more durable than landscape timbers. What's more, they do not require mortar or footings, so they are relatively easy to install for do-it-yourselfers.

Various design options include corners, curves, columns, stairs and terraces. Some systems are hollow on the inside—you need to order special units to make corners, and you must fill each block with crushed gravel to make the wall structurally safe. On the other hand, with a solid system, you avoid having to order extra pieces for curves and corners—the blocks can be cut and split as needed—and the structure tends to be more durable than its hollow counterparts.

The more premium systems use high-strength nylon pins inserted into engineered slots and pinholes to make alignment fool-proof and to interlock the units together. This added assurance that the wall is properly aligned is a big plus for the homeowner, says John Glockner, vice president of Patio Town, a leading landscape supplier in the Twin Cities region.

Manufacturers have responded to the growing popularity of seg-



Today's retaining walls come in many styles and colors, so they can be tailored to the property.

mental retaining walls by offering even more choices to the homeowner in style, texture and color. The hottest trend these days is block that has been specially treated to look like old stone. These “weathered” products beautifully capture the essence of handcrafted European stone walls.

Popular random pattern

Another trend in segmental retaining walls is the random pattern style, such as Versa-Lok's Mosaic system. This involves using blocks of varying sizes to construct the wall, giving the appearance that they have been crafted by skilled stone masons. The effect, again, is reminiscent of charming natural stone walls.

Landscape dealers offer a variety of color options that allow you to coordinate your retaining walls with your home and yard. Some also offer blends of more than one color in the same unit, creating a particularly rich, granite-like appearance. To learn more about segmental retaining walls, visit www.versa-lok.com.