



# LANDSCAPE LIFESTYLES

Tips & Tools For Landscape Professionals

April 2004



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# Increasing Demand for New Design Elements in Landscaping

Thirty years ago, landscape professionals had limited choices of design elements and materials. Patios were poured-concrete. Decks were cedar. Retaining walls were plain concrete blocks. Even when it came to foliage, only basic choices for plants, flowers and shrubs were available. People lived indoors and their yards were an after-thought.

Today, people are passionate about their home's outdoor environment and want to integrate it with interior space and lifestyle. They want to do more to enhance their home's curb appeal and value - and they are willing to pay for it.

For landscape professionals, this is an opportunity to separate themselves from their competition by promoting and installing the latest generation of landscape products. Homeowner demand for new innovative designs spells business opportunity for the progressive landscape professional.

For more than 15 years, Allan Block has been leading the industry by innovating new types of stackable concrete blocks. Allan Block has a wide variety of blocks in many colors, sizes and shapes. Developed

for both beauty and durability, these products give designers and contractors many new options. Distinctive outdoor spaces can be designed that are creative, cost effective, attractive and long lasting.

*We're seeing a dramatic shift towards tumbled blocks, blended colors and natural looking hardscape products. Homeowners and building owners are looking for upscale landscaping that compliments their buildings.*

Source:  
Dan Mechley, Hardscape Sales Mgr, Reading Rock

Today, landscape design is a dynamic art form. Using Allan Block's full product line, landscape architects and contractors can easily construct flowing designs which take into account yard shape and topography, plantings and traffic patterns. They can develop plans to incorporate the lifestyle needs of the customer and design landscapes that add value for years to come.

Landscape professionals know they need quality and variety in blocks and materials. Details are critical in all designs. The color, texture and size of the materials must come together to create a synergy that makes the designs come alive. The materials used should enhance the design options, not limit them.

Allan Block products are virtually limitless in their application and are of the highest quality. New block designs have rich blended colors, tumbled textures and modular designs. Designers can mix block colors or sizes to create a natural stone effect.

No matter whether the project is a private residence, a commercial property, or a public construction project, block design details add great visual impact for very little cost. Using the latest block designs from Allan Block makes the details of each plan unique. It's a far cry from the days of poured-concrete patios!



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To receive the AB Landscape Lifestyles Newsletter directly in your e-mail box each quarter, sign up online at [www.allanblock.com](http://www.allanblock.com).

# Minnesota Dream Yard

Minnesota may be known for its harsh winters, but that just makes spring, summer and fall much sweeter.

This project began when a Minnesota family decided to replace the aging, concrete-block retaining wall in their backyard. Because the family wanted greater outdoor space for entertaining and relaxing, it quickly evolved into a lifestyle showpiece. Knowing that wall construction was critical, they hired an expert in landscape wall design and construction.

**Plan:** The homeowners wanted to create more useable space in the backyard and eliminate the unattractive straight walls built close to the house. Due to the proposed wall heights and steep slope above the wall, the new walls would have to be reinforced in order to retain the hillside above the home. But most of all, the



Ashlar Blend

"It's probably the most beautiful job I've ever done. No other product could have met all the requirements of this project."

Source: Project Manager

Collection to create a beautiful random ashlar pattern. These striking design elements met the customer's requirements for a more usable yard and created a beautiful outdoor living space. With the design concept approved, the contractor hired a local engineering firm to provide structural design and engineering support.

**Build:** The masonry walls and footings were removed and the hill was excavated to allow for base block installation. The sandy soils at the site allowed for good compaction and were suitable for backfilling. A bed of crushed limestone was placed for the base trench, and clear stone was brought in for the drain rock. AB Classic blocks were used for base installation, followed by stacking of the Ashlar pattern. The design called for a modified, three course pattern, with geogrid layers placed according to the engineered drawings.

The homeowners are delighted with the final result, and sure that Allan Block was the only product that could have been used to meet all the engineering and aesthetic requirements of this project. This beautiful, new outdoor living space is a landscape masterpiece that can be enjoyed all year - even in the Minnesota winter.

homeowners wanted a beautiful, flowing outdoor space that could be used every day.

**Design:** The project took a unique approach to transforming the back yard. The design included a raised patio and seating area, sweeping curves in the walls and a built-in fire pit wrapped in natural Chilton stone. The wall construction combined the four block shapes in the AB Ashlar



Ashlar Blend

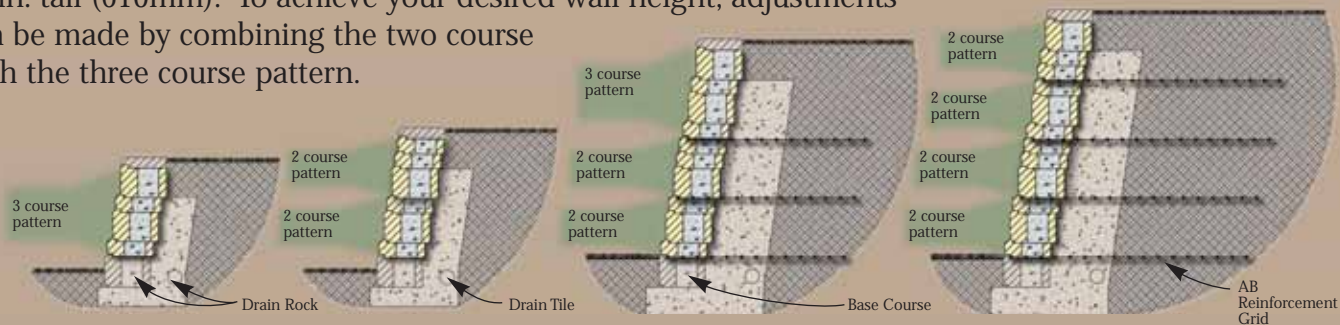
# How-To: Building Ashlar And

Want to take the look of your wall up a notch? Try an Ashlar or Abbey Blend patterned wall. The random, natural feel of a blended wall adds another dimension to your landscape.

**Plan:** Building blended walls will take a bit more planning and a bit more time on the job site. But for high profile projects - the results make it worthwhile. There are two collections to choose from; the Ashlar and the Europa Collection. Choose the one that best compliments your project.

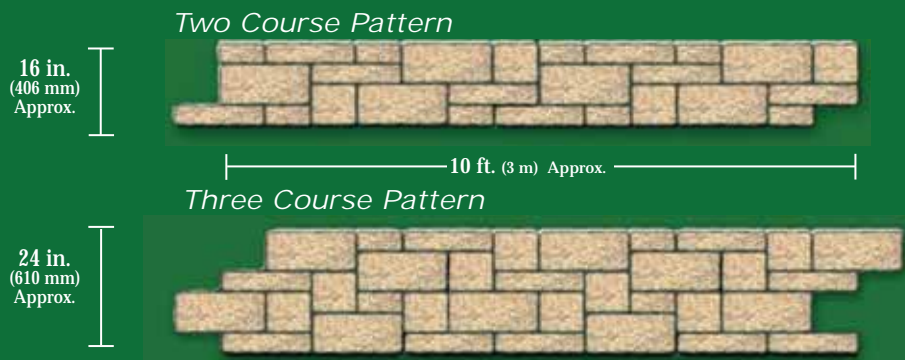


**Design:** There are two pre-set patterns you can choose from; a two course pattern that is approximately 16 in. tall (410mm) and a three course pattern that is approximately 24 in. tall (610mm). To achieve your desired wall height, adjustments can be made by combining the two course with the three course pattern.



Note: Minor height adjustments can be made by burying more of the base block.

**Estimating Block Patterns** - The charts below indicate the block required to build a 10 ft (3 m) long section of wall. Note: The base course of block will need to be determined separately.



Europa Collection Blocks Required
6 Dover
4 Palermo
8 Barcelona
8 Bordeaux

Ashlar Collection Blocks Required
6 AB Classic
4 AB Jumbo Junior
8 AB Lite Stone
8 AB Half Lite*

Europa Collection Blocks Required
10 Dover
10 Palermo
10 Barcelona
4 Bordeaux

Ashlar Collection Blocks Required
10 AB Classic
10 AB Jumbo Junior
10 AB Lite Stone
4 AB Half Lite*

\* Note: In the Ashlar Collection, the half lites are created by cutting a Lite Stone in half.

# Abbey Blend Walls

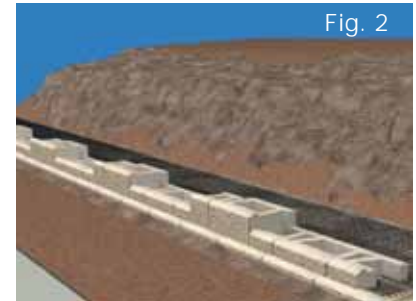
## Build:

### Begin with the Base Course:

- Step 1. For a **gravity wall** (no grid reinforcement needed), excavate a 7 in. deep x 18 in. wide (180mm x 460mm) base trench. For a **reinforced wall** (requiring grid reinforcement), excavate a 12 in. deep x 24 in. wide (305mm x 610mm) base trench.
- Step 2. Place, level and compact a layer of base rock. For **gravity walls** 4 in. deep (105mm) or for **reinforced walls** 6 in. deep (155mm). Install the base row using full size blocks (Classic or Dover), level as you go.
- Step 3. Fill the hollow cores and behind the blocks with drainage rock. For **gravity walls**, fill behind 6-8 in. (155mm - 205mm); for **reinforced walls**, fill behind 12 in. (305mm). Use on-site soil to fill area behind the drain field.
- Step 4. Compact parallel to the wall, with the first pass directly over the top of the blocks (Fig.1). Continue to compact the on-site soil until the soil no longer settles.



Install, level and compact base course and backfill behind wall.



If grid reinforcement is necessary, install on base course.

### Building Patterns

- Step 5. Use the charts in the **AB Product Sheets** to determine if your wall needs grid reinforcement. If the wall requires reinforcement, then install the grid on top of the base course (Fig. 2). Next, select the pattern that provides the correct spacing, as shown in your engineered drawings, to allow for the next row(s) of grid.
- Step 6. Place the first row of your pattern on top of the base course. Fill the hollow cores and compact with a shovel handle (Fig. 3). Add the drain rock and remaining backfill and compact thoroughly.
- Step 7. Continue building the pattern, filling and compacting in 8 in. lifts (20cm).
- Step 8. At the top of the pattern, use the plate compactor to complete the compaction process. Add grid if required and begin again (Fig. 4).



Backfill the blocks and behind the blocks. Use a shovel handle to compact inside the blocks.

### Additional Courses

- Step 9. Repeat steps 5-8 for each two or three course pattern.
- Step 10. Check blocks for level after compacting each lift.

For complete installation guidelines, visit your AB dealer or [www.allanblock.com](http://www.allanblock.com).

Contact your local AB dealer to register for one of our Contractor Certification classes. Receive an AB Estimating Wheel upon class completion.

### AB Estimating Wheel



Install the second row of the two course pattern. Backfill and compact, adjust for level as necessary.

### Calculating Block Quantities - Example:

This wall example is 4 ft tall x 40 ft long and uses the two course pattern 3 times with Abbey Blend.

- A. Divide the wall height by the pattern height.  
 $4 \text{ ft} \div 1.3 \text{ ft} = 3$
- B. Divide the wall length by the pattern length.  
 $40 \text{ ft} \div 10 \text{ ft} = 4$
- C. Multiply the totals together -  $3 \times 4 = 12$
- D. Multiply each block quantity for the pattern by 12.  
 $6 \times 12 = 72$  Dover Blocks  
 $4 \times 12 = 48$  Palermo Blocks  
 $8 \times 12 = 96$  Barcelona Blocks  
 $8 \times 12 = 96$  Bordeaux Blocks  
Base Row =  $40 \text{ ft} \div \text{Dover length (18 in.)} = 27$  Dover Blocks



Abbey Blend



# The Latest in Professional Landscaping Solutions

## Introducing The Courtyard Collection



Old Country Courtyard

Now you can easily create elegant and stylish courtyard walls and architectural accents for residential and commercial applications. This mortarless, two-sided vertical wall system includes two handsome finishes: **Courtyard** with the look of classic cut stone, and the **Old Country Courtyard** with a tumbled texture that looks like weathered stone. Blend the timeless elegance of traditional stone walls with the style and beauty of the new Courtyard Collection. With your imagination and this vertical system, you can create stunning elements including:

- Patio enclosures
- Seating walls
- Mail box and light posts
- Entry monuments
- Fountains and planters
- Landscape accents



Courtyard

For further information and resources to help design and build beautiful and permanent Courtyard walls, visit [www.allanblock.com](http://www.allanblock.com). We're introducing the Courtyard Collection into the AB dealer network through our the 2004 season. Check with your local AB dealer for availability and color selection.

## Tools of the Trade - Help To Grow Your Business

Allan Block offers a vast array of resources to help with all aspects of your next project. From design ideas to guidelines for estimating material, see your Allan Block dealer for a selection of CDs, specification books and literature. All materials, literature and dealer information are also available at [www.allanblock.com](http://www.allanblock.com).



### Landscape Design CD - Complete Design & Installation Information

For professional landscape ideas and inspiration, sign up to receive Allan Block's Landscape Design CD at [www.allanblock.com](http://www.allanblock.com). Packed with information to help you plan, design and build landscape walls up to six feet high, this CD includes product specifications, installation guidelines and a valuable material estimating program.

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