For Immediate Release

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Editor's Note: High resolution photography is available at www.BelgardMediaRoom.com

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Rock, Water and Fire Elements a Growing Trend in Outdoor Living Designs

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Atlanta, Ga. – April 9, 2012 – Using rock, water and fire to add texture and dimension to outdoor living spaces is a growing trend among homeowners seeking to convert their backyards into decorative extensions of their living space.

"Homeowners are embracing remodeling solutions instead of relocation to create spacious and functional living space for their families, and part of that renovation is to their backyards," said Ken O'Neill, vice president of marketing for Belgard® Hardscapes. "The most recent trends in outdoor living include the integration of natural elements, such as rock, water and fire, into an outdoor room to create beautiful transitional spaces that blur the lines between indoors and out."

Landscape designers are finding creative ways to integrate myriad natural elements in backyards of all sizes.

Create Texture and Interest with Rocks

Pavers aren't just for covering the area underfoot. Pavers can be textured to look like rock, and used in many settings. They're ideal for inclusion in waterscapes, and they create easy-to-install yet durable garden retaining walls that double as extra seating space. They also can be used to create beautiful columns that frame an area to establish where one space ends and the next begins. And looks can vary, from richly dimpled surfaces and gently distress edges of aged rocks to rough-hewn, cut stone character of

mountainous outcrops. Using multiple textures in landscaping design adds even more interest.

Listen to Nature's Music with Water

Feng Shui has long noted the health benefits of communing with the environment, and landscape designers seemingly agree as water features abound in today's backyard designs. Water features can offer the relaxing sounds of a trickling fountain to an energizing rock waterfall. Homeowners are putting pools, ponds and reflecting pools in their outdoor living spaces to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature's music.

Light Up the Night with Fire

Adding a fire feature to an outdoor space completely changes the ambiance and atmosphere; fire brings a certain warmth and intimacy to an outdoor space that only a natural element can.

Fire features are practical, as well: they extend the outdoor season, with fire places and fire tables adding warmth near a dining area or seated fire pits creating a setting around which to linger – ideal for large spaces or small; and, fire features offer year-round cooking options, as well, when incorporated into outdoor kitchens.

"Brick oven fireplaces are the top choice in fire features for outdoor kitchens, thanks to the visual appeal offered by the inset flame as well as the culinary creativity it allows for cooking," O'Neill said.

"Whether homeowners are developing an outdoor space as a functional, social area or as a way to add value to their house, they're being creative in design," he said. "Natural elements are a growing component to those features."

About Belgard Hardscapes

Since 1995, Oldcastle® has set the standard for innovative outdoor hardscapes with the Belgard® collection of paver and wall products. Offering a versatile range of styles - in antiqued, classic, and natural textures - premium Belgard products are found in America's finest homes and dream homes. When quality matters - Choose Belgard. 1-877-Belgard (235-4273). For additional information and product offerings from Belgard Hardscapes by Oldcastle, visit www.belgard.biz.

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