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137
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page 93

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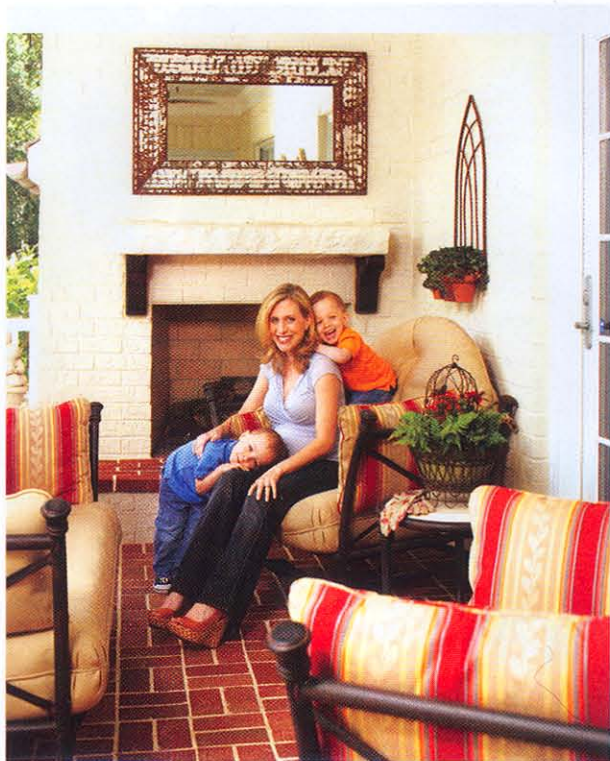
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A Happy Ending

A best-selling author and her young family create an ideal backyard retreat.

BY LISA MOWRY





COZY COURTYARD “The back yard was a definite selling point for us when we were looking for a home in Atlanta,” says Giffin. “We moved here from London, and before that, New York City, so we weren’t used to a lot of space. We didn’t place a huge premium on acreage.” Instead, she and her husband liked the cozy factor, how private and peaceful the garden is. The main house is L-shaped, and a vine-covered brick wall and guest house help enclose the other sides.

EMILY GIFFIN’S LATEST NOVEL, *Baby Proof*, dealt with the complications of choosing to be child-free in today’s society. When Giffin and her husband Buddy Blaha moved to Atlanta a few years ago, they faced baby-proofing of a different sort—with the births of their twins Edward and George.

The charming courtyard garden at their Brookhaven home had a two-level hot tub in the middle, complete with waterfall.

“I didn’t fully anticipate how scary it would be to have an uncovered pool in the back yard,” says Giffin. “Once our sons began to crawl, we knew we had to come up with a safety solution.” Fencing, an alarm system, and pool covers were all options they considered, but none were particularly aesthetic. It was Buddy who came up with the idea of topping the pool with removable wooden panels, even sketching out a herringbone design before they called contractors. The structure covering their hot tub is now a sturdy deck—though it takes two adults to move any one piece (and there are six pieces), so Giffin and her husband know the boys can’t budge it. >>



