



as seen in
SOUTHERN
Lady
southernlady
magazine.com

GATHERING GROUNDS

by Karen Callaway

A small outdoor space lives larger than its square footage with a design plan that offers plenty of room for entertaining.





GARDEN VARIETY Set in a thicket of trees, the Meyerson family's backyard takes advantage of its natural Alabama setting while also providing privacy. With room to entertain as a top priority, Garden designer Troy Rhone divided the area into a central lawn and a series of patios that hold several seating and dining options. The space works beautifully whether the couple hosts cocktails for a large crowd or invites just a few friends for a more intimate meal.



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ike most Southerners, Candy Meyerson loves to host outdoor get-togethers, especially during balmy summer months. When she wanted to carve out more entertaining space in her mostly wooded backyard, she called on Birmingham garden designer Troy Rhone to come up with a plan that offered cozy patio seating amid natural surroundings.

With an expanse of French doors linking the home's inside to the outdoors, it was important to create a harmonious flow between the two. The designer echoed the clean lines of the interiors with a simple but polished layout. He enclosed the newly expanded garden with a hedge of 'Mary Nell' holly and added creeping fig to existing brick walls. Classic, low-maintenance boxwood makes up the majority of the landscape plantings. Containers of hardy 'Macho' ferns lend texture that contrasts nicely with the finely clipped boxwood, while larger planters hold topiary roses surrounded by variegated ivy. Troy explains, "The idea is to keep the garden green, white, and silver in color all year-round."

Bilevel patios are edged in the same red brick used for the retaining wall, where a concrete carving and a charming fountain add visual interest. A pair of dining areas and comfy seating complete the scene, and the end result is a beautiful garden space ideal for sharing with family and friends.

