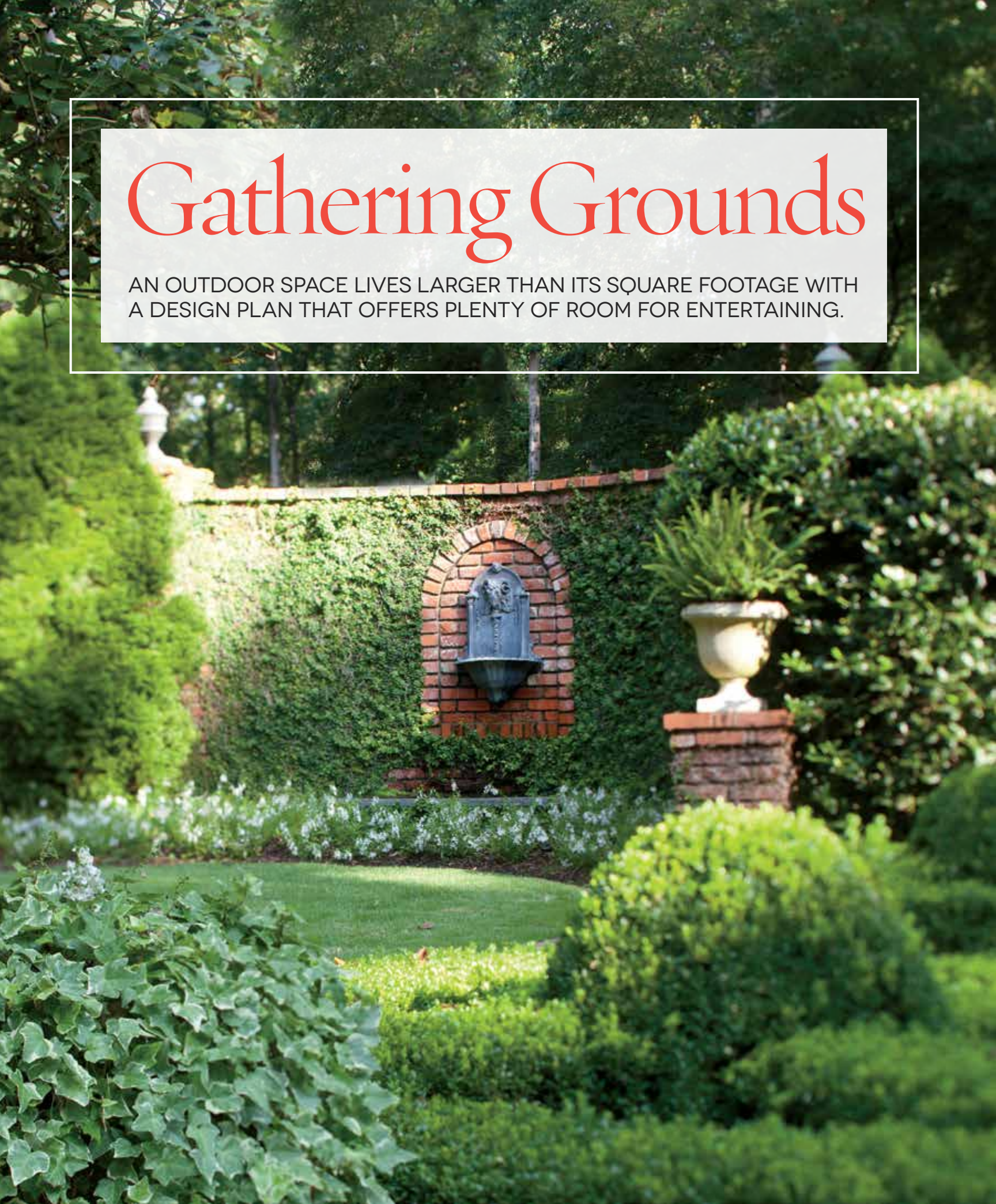


Gathering Grounds

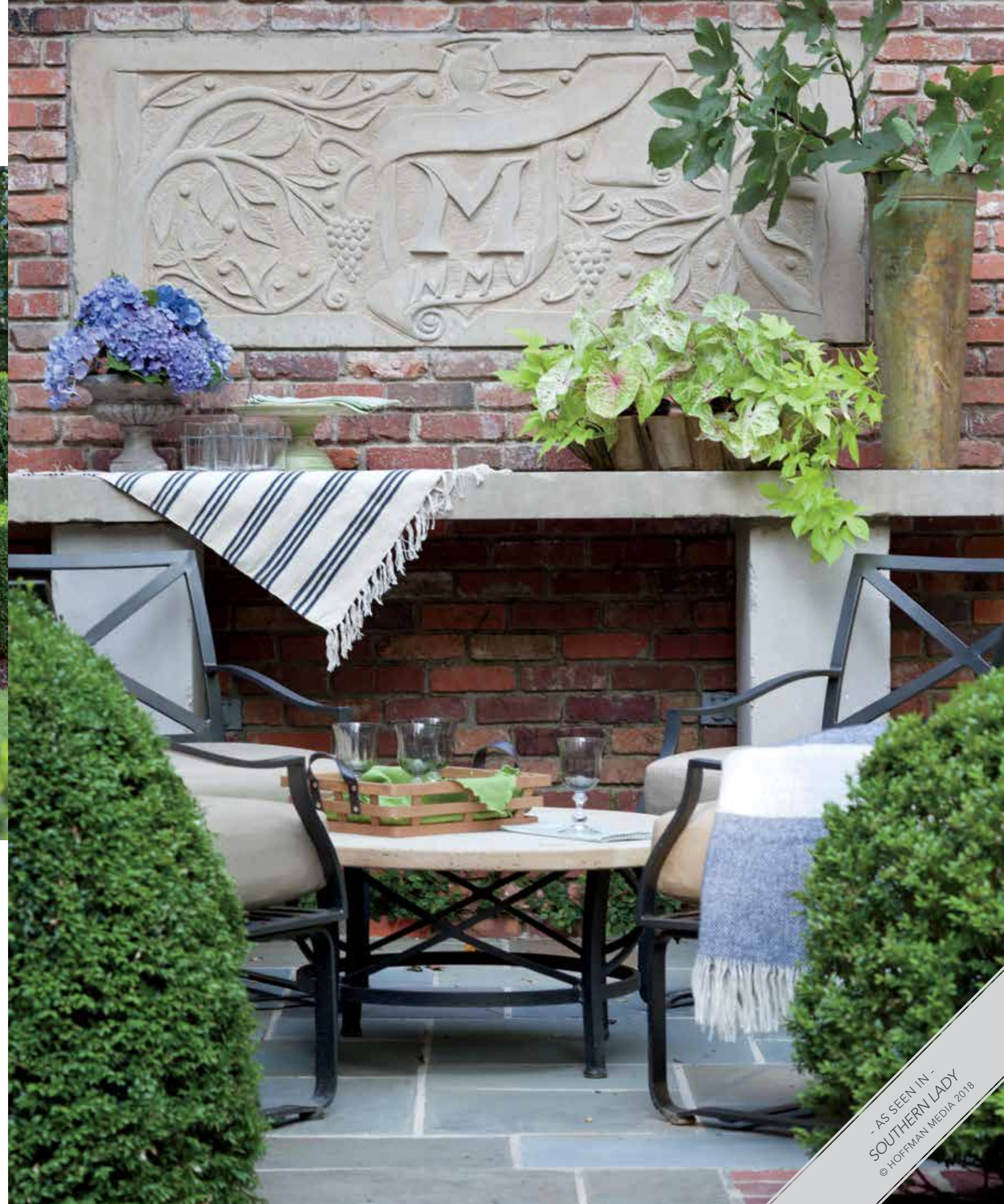
AN OUTDOOR SPACE LIVES LARGER THAN ITS SQUARE FOOTAGE WITH A DESIGN PLAN THAT OFFERS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR ENTERTAINING.





Room for Revelry

When this homeowner wanted to carve out more entertaining space in her mostly wooded backyard, she called on garden designer Troy Rhone of Birmingham, Alabama, to come up with a plan that offered cozy patio seating amid natural surroundings. With an expanse of French doors linking the home's interior to the outdoors, it was important to create a harmonious flow between the two. Troy 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. Bi-level patios are edged in the same red brick used for the retaining wall, where a concrete carving and a charming fountain add visual interest.



Garden Variety

Set in a thicket of trees, the backyard takes advantage of its natural Alabama setting while also providing privacy. With creating room to entertain as a top priority, Troy 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.





Glorious Green

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. The roses provide a dash of visual pizzazz amid their more subdued surroundings. Of his vision for the overall scheme, Troy says, "The idea is to keep the garden green, white, and silver in color all year round."

