

# Gender neutrality

Designer Michael Payne  
calms spouses' decor wars

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# HGTV's hit show puts landscapers to the test

## landscapers' challenge



Maggi and Erick Avari's home reflects their own casual style, but their outdoor living space needs professional help. Are the show's landscapers up to the challenge?

Erick and Maggi want to turn a choppy outdoor space into a lush, dog-friendly yard that's suitable for entertaining

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### the problem

The Avaris want to put in a water feature to mask traffic noise while saving the mature bougainvillea in a problem corner, left. They also want to get rid of their driveway, below, and create an outdoor space with functional rooms.

Maggi and Erick Avari had spent four years in their Spanish-style Los Angeles home. They had thoroughly updated the interior, and it was time to move outside.

Their patio furniture was on an unused concrete driveway. Their bedroom door opened to another concrete slab. The rest of the yard was mostly barren, and their view of the neighbor's house was too close for comfort. ➤







The couple love the changes to their yard. As Erick Avari said, "We're finally proud of our back yard, as opposed to trying to keep people away from the back of the house!"



The finished product. Joan Gabel used a dark, bushy bamboo to mask the neighbor's yard, top, and the Avaris love the various colors of the stone in their water feature. Above, the reshaped bougainvillea shades fragments of the concrete driveway, reused as pavers in the lush lawn. At right, the new deck features low benches that provide added seating while entertaining. A potted ivy geranium adds a splash of color. ■

