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A STACK OF ATLANTA
AUTHOR EMILY GIFFIN'S
BEST-SELLING TOMES.
OPPOSITE: GIFFIN, AT
HOME IN HER DEN.

DESIGN DOSSIER

EMILY GIFFIN

Dubbed a "modern-day Jane Austen" and a "dependably down-to-earth storyteller," this Atlanta author is back with her fifth novel, set for publication this month

EMILY GIFFIN'S PREVIOUS NOVELS—*Something Borrowed*, *Something Blue*, *Baby Proof* and *Love the One You're With*—are bestsellers and have been translated into 29 languages. And, more than 5 million copies are collectively in print worldwide! On May 11, her latest, *Heart of the Matter* (\$26.99, St. Martin's Press), will debut and it has already been called her most ambitious, layered and emotionally charged novel to date.

Giffin's books are known for their endearingly flawed characters and emotional complexity; three of them have even been optioned for the big screen. *Something Borrowed* has been fast-tracked for an early 2010 shoot by the production companies of Hilary Swank and Edward Burns.

(At press time, actress Ginnifer Goodwin has been cast as Rachel, one of the lead characters.)

A Chicago native, Giffin graduated summa cum laude from Wake Forest University and the University of Virginia School of Law. After law school, she moved to Manhattan and practiced litigation at a large firm for several years while she paid back her school loans, writing a novel in her limited spare time and dreaming of becoming a writer.

Despite the rejection of her first manuscript, Giffin persisted; she retired from the legal profession and moved to London to pursue her dreams fulltime. It was there that she began writing *Something Borrowed* (2004), a story

of a young woman who, upon turning 30, finally learned to take a risk and follow her heart. One year later, Giffin's own gamble paid off as she completed her manuscript, landed an agent and signed a two-book deal on both sides of the Atlantic. The following summer, *Something Borrowed*—hailed as a "heartbreakingly honest debut" with "dead-on dialogue, real-life complexity and genuine warmth"—became a surprise sensation and Giffin vowed never to practice law again. After her husband accepted a job at Newell Rubbermaid, the couple moved from London to Atlanta. "I can't imagine a better place to raise a family," says the author, who is also the mother of three small children.



MY HOME REFLECTS...a love of books, art and photographs. I view my home as a sanctuary filled with memories—and decorating as the ultimate form of self-expression.

I GET MY BEST INSPIRATION...on long walks, alone, and from late-night phone conversations with my sister and friends.

MY FAVORITE SHOPPING SPOTS FOR CLOTHING ARE...Sandpiper, Poppy's, Jeffrey and J.Crew.

THE ONE BEAUTY PRODUCT I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IS...La Mer lip balm. I buy them by the half-dozen. There are two on my desk right now.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME IS...that I don't drive on highways.



STYLE (profile)

MY FAVORITE MUSEUMS ARE...

The National Portrait Gallery and the Tate Modern, both in London. I prefer smaller museums with more manageable collections.

WHEN I GET AN UNEXPECTED DAY TO MYSELF...

I love catching a matinee. There is nothing more satisfying than being alone in the middle of a dark theater with a box of Raisinets.

MY FAVORITE PLACE FOR QUIET CONTEMPLATION IS...

my attic office, although some of my best writing has taken place in the din of a crowded coffee shop.

MY FAVORITE WAY TO ENTERTAIN AT HOME IS...

casually, with close friends on the back porch.

THE PERSON I LOOK UP TO MOST IS...

anyone at the top of her game—whether a stay-at-home mother or Hollywood producer. I admire confidence and authenticity.

THE ONE PLACE IN ATLANTA I ALWAYS TAKE GUESTS IS...

the Georgia Aquarium. It is beyond compare. We took the kids to London one year and they thought the aquarium there was a pet store.

THE PLACE I LOVE TO TRAVEL IS...

anywhere exotic and very different from home. My favorite trips have been to South Africa, Israel and Iceland. And I adore France—from Provence to Paris, Normandy to Nice.

clockwise from right

A cozy reading nook at home. Orchids are always in bloom at the Giffin residence. The Georgia Aquarium is Giffin's go-to spot for out-of-town guests. The cover of *Heart of the Matter*, which debuts this month. For entertaining, Giffin relies on the "Convivio" collection of dinnerware by Match, available through The Mercantile, (404) 816-0060.

MY PROUDEST PROFESSIONAL MOMENT CAME WHEN...

my first novel, *Something Borrowed*, hit The New York Times best-seller list.

THE CAR I DRIVE IS...

a mini-van. Perhaps from living in Manhattan and London, I have zero car pride or interest. And with three children, I am all about convenience and ease.

MY SIGNATURE COLOR IS...navy, although I am currently enjoying turquoise and purple in both fashion and home accents—and book jackets!

MY SUNDAY ROUTINE...varies, but it always involves family time. My current favorite is to take my kids to Dunkin' Donuts where we read together (and I try to resist that second doughnut).

THE FIRST THING I SEE WHEN I WAKE UP...

is my BlackBerry on my nightstand and the emails that came in from the West Coast while I was sleeping.

FAVORITES AT HOME

FAVORITE TABLE LINENS: Vintage

FAVORITE FASHION DESIGNER:

Dolce & Gabbana

FAVORITE DINNERWARE: Convivio

White by Match

FAVORITE FLOWER: Orchid

FAVORITE WINE: a very cold, crisp Sancerre

FAVORITE ARTISANAL FOOD:

Blue cheese from King Island, Australia

FAVORITE ARTIST: Robert Motherwell

FAVORITE MUSIC: Ray LaMontagne and other sensitive male vocalists

FAVORITE FURNITURE STYLE:

Soft contemporary

FAVORITE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

Classical with streamlined, modern details

EMILYGIFFIN.COM



Marks of Distinction

A blue Swedish armoire contains Westbrook's collection of coats; its crackly finish serves as the perfect foil for a petrified wood table, nailhead-trimmed chairs and a pair of intricately adorned pillows from South of Market. A lampshade with an architectural illustration speaks to the designer's love for historically sound design, while a collection of art above represents her most individual tastes. "Art is always incredibly personal, for clients and for myself," she says. "Usually, there's a little memory attached to each piece. I enjoy having that at home."



Rustic Glamour

In the breakfast room, a rusted iron lantern feels right at home amid the rugged interior walls. Westbrook keeps a matching fixture at her Buckhead office, and says it generates so many inquiries that she's thinking about having reproductions made. The Swedish wedding cabinet holds her household paperwork on the bottom and everyday supplies on top. The modern white Klismos chairs are from Donghia. Antique leather tooling table, through J. Tribble Antiques. *opposite* Linen panels conceal pair-upon-pair of covetable footwear. A petite step ladder helps make the most of the vertical space, granting access to storage above and serving as a frequent perch for Westbrook's orange tabby, Okie.





Elegant Repose

The bedroom is practical but pretty, thanks to a dreamy iron bed and glamorous Art Deco chaise with gilt accents, freshly upholstered in heather gray wool. The fruitwood veneer wardrobe is more than deep enough to contain all of the designer's clothes, but the gorgeous finish is just a bonus. The walls throughout the home are awash in Pemetec Trail, a warm Sherwin-Williams neutral that Westbrook says goes with just about anything. *opposite* Westbrook may not have the luxury of traditional bookshelves in her small space but that hasn't stopped her from displaying tomes at every turn. Stacked atop and under tables, the lovely overflow speaks to how we really live today. "Books give you such a sense of who a person is and add warmth to a space," notes the designer. "I love to see stacks and stacks of them."



while, next to her bed, she piled a round Art Deco table high with stacks of magazines and books, plus a few sophisticated tortoiseshell boxes for stowing odds and ends. "I like anything glamorous," she notes. "Even though this space is a little rough around the edges, I threw in a little glamour."

It's also a case study in maximizing a small space. Fortunately, the building's previous life as a general store gave Westbrook 18 feet of shelving in which to store the essentials. Draped casually with linen, they provide a place for almost everything, from cleaning supplies to baskets of sweaters to the owner's prized collection of shoes. "I have a little bit of a shoe fetish," she laughs.

Beyond that, she's filled the space with a number of handsome case pieces. One standout is a red painted chest with bronze edging from Linda Horsley Antiques, which cleverly doubles as a bedside table. "It's my favorite piece," says the designer. "I love everything about it, and I think I'll love it the rest of my life."

Additionally, in lieu of closet space, armoires and wardrobes contain clothes, coats and an array of household necessities. "I think the thing about a space like this, where storage is limited, is that it keeps you from collecting too many things you don't need," notes Westbrook. "You have to put things back where you found them—there's a spot for everything and, if not, it's chaos. You aren't tempted to accumulate things like you would in a house with a big basement, when many times you don't even know what's down there."

Like a luxurious approach to loft style, her home exudes a scaled-down, modern way of living—an unexpected mix in a building as historical as this. Still, it maintains the comfortable, inviting style this designer brings to all of her projects. One-thousand square feet may not seem like much at first measure but, for Westbrook, it's turned out to be the perfect fit. **SEE RESOURCES, BACK OF BOOK.**