

Atlanta, Georgia

LAUMER- GIDDENS CONDO

CHALLENGE

Selecting a system with a significantly reduced footprint to increase space within a single condo unit

SOLUTION

Zoned Comfort Solutions® from Mitsubishi Electric

RESULT

Significant gains in storage space and personalized comfort as well as noticeably reduced utility bills



Viewpoint is an eight-year-old high-rise located along Atlanta's vibrant Peachtree Street, and was also the first taste of city living for Chris and Jodi Laumer-Giddens. Jodi said, "We were moving from a circa 1916 bungalow in Florida. We wanted to really 'do city life,' so we downsized our space and got rid of half our stuff." The promise of a streamlined space and fewer possessions made it logical to assume that energy costs would be lower and storage space would be no issue. When neither assumption proved true, the couple knew that both problems could be solved by Zoned Comfort Solutions® from Mitsubishi Electric.

Jodi and Chris are both building industry professionals. Together, they handle architecture, construction, HVAC and interior design projects through their firm, LG Squared, Inc., Atlanta. Normally for these self-proclaimed "energy geeks," designing a cooling and heating system is a straight-forward process. However, their **800-square-foot condo with floor-to-ceiling windows and an unusual layout**

posed quite the challenge.

"The building is meant to have this modern, trendy, all-glass look, with all the amenities you could want—and it is – but when we were moving in, they made a point of telling us our average energy bill would be about \$40 to \$50 each month. In reality, our first January cost about \$300. Everyone wants all glass, but that's hard to insulate—we lost a lot of heat," said Chris. Conversely, in the summer months, the glass windows easily caught the sunlight. Jodi said, "We really got cooked in the summers. In Atlanta, it can easily be 100 degrees on the other side of that glass. It's quite a bit for any HVAC to combat." Even when the couple's conventional cooling and heating system managed to cool the living area, the bedroom and bathroom felt stuffy and sticky.

Moving from a conventional cooling and heating system to a Mitsubishi Electric zoned system was a dream for Chris. "Mitsubishi Electric has a reputation; this is what they do. This is a system that is good for Japan

and it's good for the world." More than anything, it's the continued reliability that has long drawn Chris to the products: **"Mitsubishi Electric has the best client service of any brand. They've perfected it. The systems are so well-made and efficient."**

He continued, **"We wanted to go ductless. We wanted to increase space and have more comfort. We were tired of never being cool enough. We wanted lower costs and we just wanted more elbow room."**

As a first step, Chris began pulling out the conventional ductwork and quickly realized why the bedroom and bathroom seemed to never be comfortable: "Our bedroom was never getting the air it was supposed to. There were four flex-ducts and a metal bath exhaust duct that were all between 6 and 8 inches wide. All five of these had been pinched together to fit through a 12-by-18-inch hole in the firewall, between the bathroom and living area." Moving refrigerant rather than air easily solved this problem.

A Mitsubishi Electric zoned system also made it possible to locate the indoor and outdoor units exactly where the couple wanted them, freeing up additional square footage in their condo. Jodi said, "Most of the condos in the building are attached to standard high-rise HVAC systems on the roof. We are unique in the building, in that our HVAC unit was located in the garage, adjacent to our unit. We were able to replace our conventional HVAC unit with a split-ductless outdoor compressor, and then put indoor units in the living room and bedroom. **That let us reclaim the space where the old air handler was, so we turned the old HVAC closet into a pantry off of the kitchen.** For an 800-square-foot condo, having a closet that's 36 inches deep really helps."

She continued, "I'm also really pleased with the dehumidifying feature. I keep it on that most of



"Chris was like a kid on Christmas when those units arrived. I've never seen a grown man so excited to install an HVAC system."

— Jodi Laumer-Giddens, homeowner

the time, especially in the hot, sticky South. Even the towels dry faster after taking a shower." While the bathroom is made comfortable, the bedroom is finally getting the conditioning it requires, thanks to the system's zoning abilities. "We really love the ability to control the bedroom and living room independently. You're either in one or the other. Now we run the living room all day and we only turn

on the bedroom unit when we're getting ready for bed, then turn it off first thing in the morning."

The utility savings have been overwhelming. "Our bills were ridiculous for such a small unit," said Jodi in reference to their first January in the condo. Now, Chris said that "the most expensive energy bills in the winter were about \$100, but that was while we were working



from home. Now the bills are about \$60 to \$80 each month.” That’s one-third to one-fifth of what the couple was spending previously.

The Laumer-Giddens are finally satisfied with their home’s cooling and heating system. As Jodi said of the comfort and reliability, “The units are so quiet you can’t even tell

when they’re on. They’re on all the time and you never know. They just work. When you’re in a tiny space, that’s really nice.” Chris added, “Now I can finally say, ‘Ah, this is what I want to come home to.’”

EQUIPMENT

- ▶ (1) MXZ M-Series Outdoor Unit
- ▶ (2) MSZ Wall-mounted Indoor Units

PROJECT TEAM

Architect, Builder, HVAC Designer, Interior Designer:
LG Squared, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia