

BRINGING BEAUTY

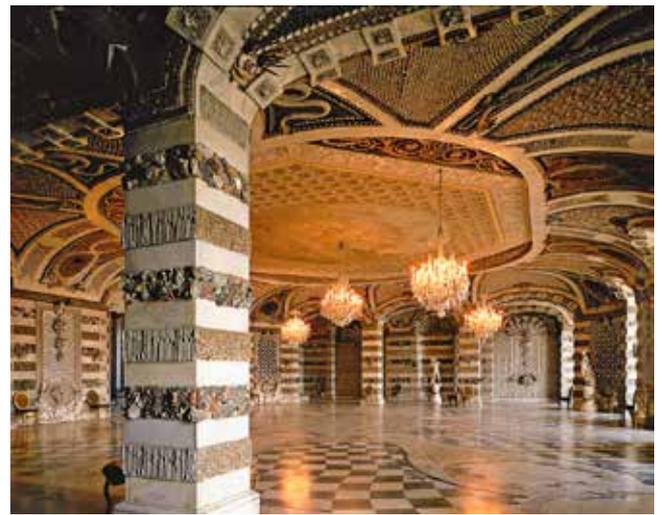
Home

history lesson

SHELL CHIC

Intricately patterned shellwork has enraptured everyone from the ancient Greeks to Marie Antoinette—and still feels stylish today.

Shell-encrusted panels by Thomas Boog gloriously mimic wallpaper in a Palm Beach home by Sarah Ramsey and Claire Ratliff of Cullman & Kravis.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The grottoes at Palazzo Borromeo, on an island in Lake Maggiore, Italy. The intricately inlaid Grotto Hall at the New Palace in Potsdam, Germany, built at the end of the 18th century, was a testament to Frederick the Great's power and wealth. The Little Chapel on the island of Guernsey, United Kingdom, was a labor of love for a French monk at the turn of the 20th century. A detail from the Palm Beach installation by Cullman & Kravis. The Shell Cottage at the Château de Rambouillet, France, commissioned as a gift for the Princesse de Lamballe, a friend of Marie Antoinette's.



Shellwork can trace its roots to ancient Greece, where grottoes decorated with the stuff were constructed as shrines to the Muses; the Romans built shell-clad nymphaeums throughout their empire. Flash-forward to the Renaissance: Grottoes resurfaced, along with much else from the classical world.

It's been a series of revivals ever since, especially during the 18th century, when Europeans returning from the Grand Tour spread a rage for shellwork across the Continent. Notable examples exist at estates like Frederick the Great's New Palace in Germany and the Château de Rambouillet in France. Modern iterations mine that oceanic allure while upping the style ante: See Sarah Ramsey and Claire Ratliff's recent showstopping powder room for a client in Palm Beach. With a diamond pattern rendered in shells by artisan Thomas Boog, the room gains an extraordinary level of sophistication while also packing in a beachload of charm.

TOP RIGHT: ERIC LESSING/ART RESOURCE NY; ALAMY (3). DETAIL AND PREVIOUS PAGE: ERIC PHASECKI. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE SOURCEBOOK

Catch the Wave

You don't have to pave a room in scallop shells to capture that nautical allure. An array of artisan-crafted shell-clad accessories evoke seaside enchantment, whether you live by a coast or not.



Mask 42, \$910; carolineperrin.fr.



Senssouci chandelier, \$9,800; csseashell.com.



Shell mirror, price upon request; ateliermvm.com.



Sailor's Valentine, \$2,150; 1st dibs.com.

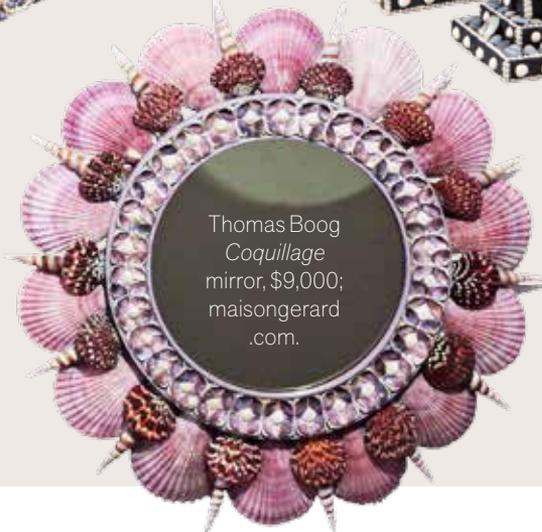


Table tazza, price upon request; tessmorley.co.uk.



Shellwork table, \$19,600; howelondon.com.

Tess Morley Shell obelisks, \$3,800 for a pair; tarquinbilgen.com.



Thomas Boog Coquillage mirror, \$9,000; maisongerard.com.



Marchmont sideboard, \$1,990; curreyandcompany.com.