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INSIDE:
TRAVEL
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+PLUS

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The New Beach Regency?!

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VIEW FROM THE TOP

THE RADAR | DESIGN



BEACH CURRENT The living room in Kelly Weardale's new Malibu house includes a Moroccan gold bar rug, two vintage chaises, French 70s copper lighting and a Scuryo sofa and chairs.

Beach Regency!

Glam hits the sand this summer with designers going ga-ga for seaside high style

By Audrey Davidson

So long, seagrass rugs and wicker baskets. Goodbye, striped ticking and pewter pendant lamps. After years of simplifying beach interiors to the point where they all look like so much blue-and-white flotsam, it seems designers are finally ready to bring some swank to the shore.

Call it Beach Regency. From homes and hotels to retail, the decorati are importing the glamour of the popular Hollywood Regency style to the coast. The colors aren't nearly as outrageous—this new look creates a tidal wave of chic by combining the timeless shades of sand and driftwood with lush textures, rich surfaces and perfectly curved *pièces de résistance*. Think oversized furniture, shimmering accessories, seashell-encrusted *objets*, even statement-making marble just steps from the sand.

In East Hampton, Arin Lauder just outfitted her shore estate with fabulous Regency flourishes. In the dining room, for instance, antique delt vases are displayed atop mosaic, shell-inspired wall brackets, while a zebra skin rug anchors the space. On the West Coast, Kelly Weardale, Miss Hollywood Regency herself, has gone coastal with a luxurious new Malibu beach retreat. Though she's kept the palette neutral, it's both exuberant and grand, with its boldly patterned Moroccan rugs, perfectly tanned leather chaises, and light fixtures that call to mind swaying kelp.

"For so long people have been taking their design cues from the seashore's surface," says interior designer Jamie Bush, "but if you actually go under the ocean, there's this world that's decadent, that's layered with contrasts."

Photo: Steve Delaney; Design: Kelly Weardale



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Designer Barclay Butera couldn't agree more. Last year, he glammed up the historic L'Auberge Del Mar hotel in Del Mar with his signature brand of Hollywood chic. In the lobby—along with the requisite black-and-white shots of former celeb guests (Bing Crosby, Lucille Ball)—you'll find shell-encrusted Louis XV console tables, lamps bedecked in mother of pearl and plenty of animal skin rugs glamorously hanging out on the floor.



Mae West and Cary Grant—all of whom inhabited their own lavish estates along the area that came to be known as the Gold Coast. But over the years, the glitz-by-the-sea movement dimmed as shaggy-haired surfers and Shabby Chic slipcovers took over.

"Marion Davies was Beach Regency back when Beach Regency was the real deal," says designer Mary McDonald, who channeled Davies-esque glamour when designing Melrose Avenue's Seaton beachwear boutique, splashing the store in bright aqua and lemon colors along with a giant, playful mural of silhouetted jellyfish and seaweed. "We were thinking of the old-school era when the beach was about cabanas and dressing and entertaining."

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As Bush sees it, that mix of rustic and polished, texture and shimmer, is what it's all about right now. "What's interesting is the exotic vibe of the ocean and that crazy layering of textures. If you think about it, that's what the Regency look really is, so it's about time we put the two together!"

"If you actually go under the ocean, there's this world that's decadent, that's layered with geometry and organic life that's totally out of control," says interior designer Jamie Bush.



...CONTINUED geometry and organic life that's totally out of control." At the Venice bungalow he shares with his boyfriend, Bush transformed the 1,200-square-foot house with mirrors to create a sense of depth, then filled the space with such glam objects as nickel-plate vintage lotus flower lamps, glass orbs and plenty of pearlescent seashells. The most outlandish gesture Bush is now envisioning? An oversized chandelier made of rustic oyster shells for his parents' beach home on Fire Island. "It's almost grotesque. It looks like it was ripped out of some Italian grove."

Across town, at Pollen Botanical Design in Eagle Rock, owner Craig Powell says that he can't keep his beach-chic creations such as amethyst sand terrariums and twinkling seashell mobiles in stock. His designs, he says, are "becoming bigger and bolder, and also more luxe. Now the seashells and starfish are encrusted in Swarovski crystals and semi-precious stones."

Of course, coastal couture isn't an entirely new development. In 1929, William Randolph Hearst built a grand 110-room showplace in Santa Monica for his mistress, Marion Davies. Today, it's the site of the Annenberg Community Beach House, but back then, the three-story manse boasted such fantastic features as a pool with marble ladders, a room finished in gold leaf and 35 fireplaces. Davies' neighbors included such Hollywood nobility as Louis B. Mayer,



SHELL SHED: Designer Jamie Bush's latest seaside room glam features a seashell mobile by designer Jamie Bush's studio here. With linear lotus flower lamp, \$200 (11" tall) at \$100 (14" tall), available at Moss Garden, West Hollywood (Laurie's); Lucille Ball room, \$1,000 at 4200 Sunset; and, Brenda Butera's custom console with hand-painted shells in the lobby is designed at Chicago Del Mar.