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ALI WENTWORTH AT HOME

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*flower power!*





Poseidon Adventurer: Ali Wentworth sits in her "shell room" where the sea reigns.

## THE SHELL SHOCKER

ALI WENTWORTH TURNS COLLECTING FROM KITSCH TO COOL WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HER FRIEND

BY KATE ARCIERI PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HEALEY

Picture *Thelma and Louise*, had they not driven off the cliff. That's the image that emerges of high-school friends Ali Wentworth and Elizabeth Martin back in the day: two gamines, relentlessly raucous, wreaking havoc. Now they're back together, touting grown-up careers. Ali's an accomplished actress/author/comedian who writes for *Marie Claire* and created a new show for the Starz network, *Head Case*. Elizabeth's an in-demand San-Fran-based interior designer with clients in DC, NYC, LA and beyond. The duo has tackled the interiors of two Wentworth homes, both shared with Ali's husband George Stephanopoulos, and their two daughters. First came the family's East Hampton summer house. Then last year Wentworth and Martin took on a new DC abode, where Ali has fully embraced her love of

all things oceanographic. "I have her on a 12-step program for the shells," jokes Martin, who admits she actually loves Wentworth's extensive collection, but did need to manage it. Her challenge was weaving the contents of an 11' x 40" display cabinet from the old house—shells, coral, abalone, etc.—into the new pad without overwhelming the home's elegance. How to? "Constantly edit, be discriminating." And though the living room shell wall's clearly ground zero for sea-centricity, clustering like objects isn't Martin's only move. It's dramatic, she says, but also nice is dropping them throughout the house as a nod to what one treasures. Casa Stephanopoulos is peppered with the collections, but each instance, like Ali herself, strikes just the right note between unruly and refined.



## MUST-HAVES

*Under the Sea: Crystal urchin light:* Wentworth's chic powder room is papered in a black-and-white shell print by Lulu DK and presided over by one of Elizabeth and Alexandra's choice-est finds, a stunning glass fixture (1) the two picked up in San Francisco. *Shell Game: Collections under glass:* Martin enclosed coral, puffer fish and other seaside finds under cloches (2), adding importance to these specimens that could otherwise be just bric-a-brac. Available at [www.englishcreekgardens.com](http://www.englishcreekgardens.com). *Throwing Down: Pillows with pop:* Both pals toss throw pillows in to add personality and pattern. In the living room, Soft Goods' bird pillows with a block-print flavor (3) add whimsy. Available at Azalea. *Art House: Etching by Lucian Freud:* Original works dominate the couple's art collection, including this one by Freud (4), a favorite of Wentworth's hubby. *Pony Up: Seahorse as sculpture:* They hit far-flung flea markets wherever they could find them. "I don't want to have the same things as everyone else," says



Wentworth. At one, they scooped up a seahorse carcass (5) that is now displayed in the dining room. To ensure Wentworth had truly one-of-a-kind finds, they repurposed items such as the army cot from Goodwood that became a glass-topped coffee table. *Show Your Metal: Gilded conch:* Though the shell theme runs strong, it doesn't get old thanks to innovative techniques such as painting the found objects (6). To get the look, try Christofle's silver shells at [www.vivre.com](http://www.vivre.com). *Designing Woman: Elizabeth Martin:* Ali's most-important secret weapon? Interior designer and close friend Martin (7). The design devotee started with neutrals, then threaded color through the home with accent walls, furniture and accessories. [www.elizabethmartindesign.com](http://www.elizabethmartindesign.com).