

it's all about seashells & coral

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Maura McEvoy*

In every issue, *style director Rebecca Thuss* shares some simple ideas for personalizing your wedding. Here, invitations, centerpieces, favors, and more that borrow the enchanting shapes and colors of seashells and coral.



Top left: This *soap* is modeled after a real shell, and it is the perfect size for our favor bag (opposite). Top right: Available in red, black, or white. *glass coral* seems to glow when surrounded by flickering candlelight on reception tables.

I HAVE SEEN many weddings on and near the shore, and they're always romantic and beautiful. The beach and all that's associated with it—seashells, sand, water—evoke wonderful memories. And a wedding reception that incorporates these elements is sure to be unforgettable as well.

Shells are amazing objects, so inspiring with their unique shapes and hues. I love them scattered along an aisle or piled in glass bowls as a simple yet exquisite centerpiece. There are

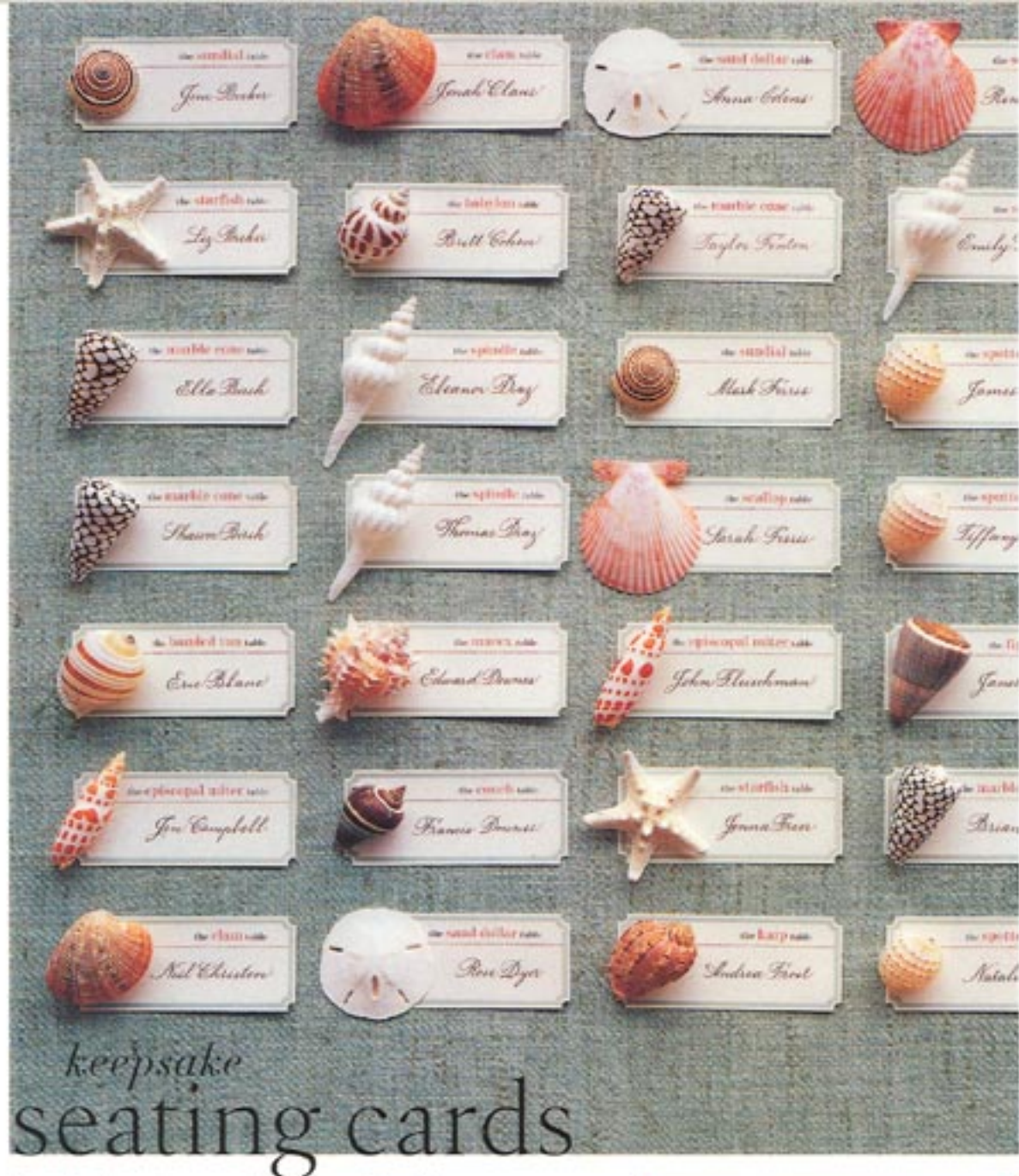
lots of websites that offer shells from all over the world. You might also decide to choose local varieties, such as clamshells for a Maine wedding.

Exotic coral has its own mysterious beauty. Real coral is endangered, but because its likeness is popular in fashion and decorating, you can easily find coral in other forms, including plastic, resin, and glass. The colors coral and aqua are also reminiscent of the sea and lovely for weddings. It's all about being inspired by nature.

sweet shells for your wedding guests

Shell-shaped candies are a great way to fill the packages opposite. Molded chocolates come in many shapes and sizes: Put a few in a box for every guest (set unwrapped ones in paper candy cups first). You can custom-order lollipops in a flavor and color you choose; wrap each in a fabric bag with its stick poking through the top.





keepsake seating cards

Instead of numbers to assign guests their tables, use names of seashells. Each type of shell represents a different table. Arrange seating cards and shells on aqua fabric to give the impression of water. On each table, display a card with the shell's name, or fill a bowl with those shells as a centerpiece.



rebecca's picks

shells from Sea Shell City
 fabric by the Silk Trading Company
 hole punch by Fiskars
 adhesive dots by Glue Dots
 International
 calligraphy by Gail Brill Design
 paper by Crane's

how to create the seating cards

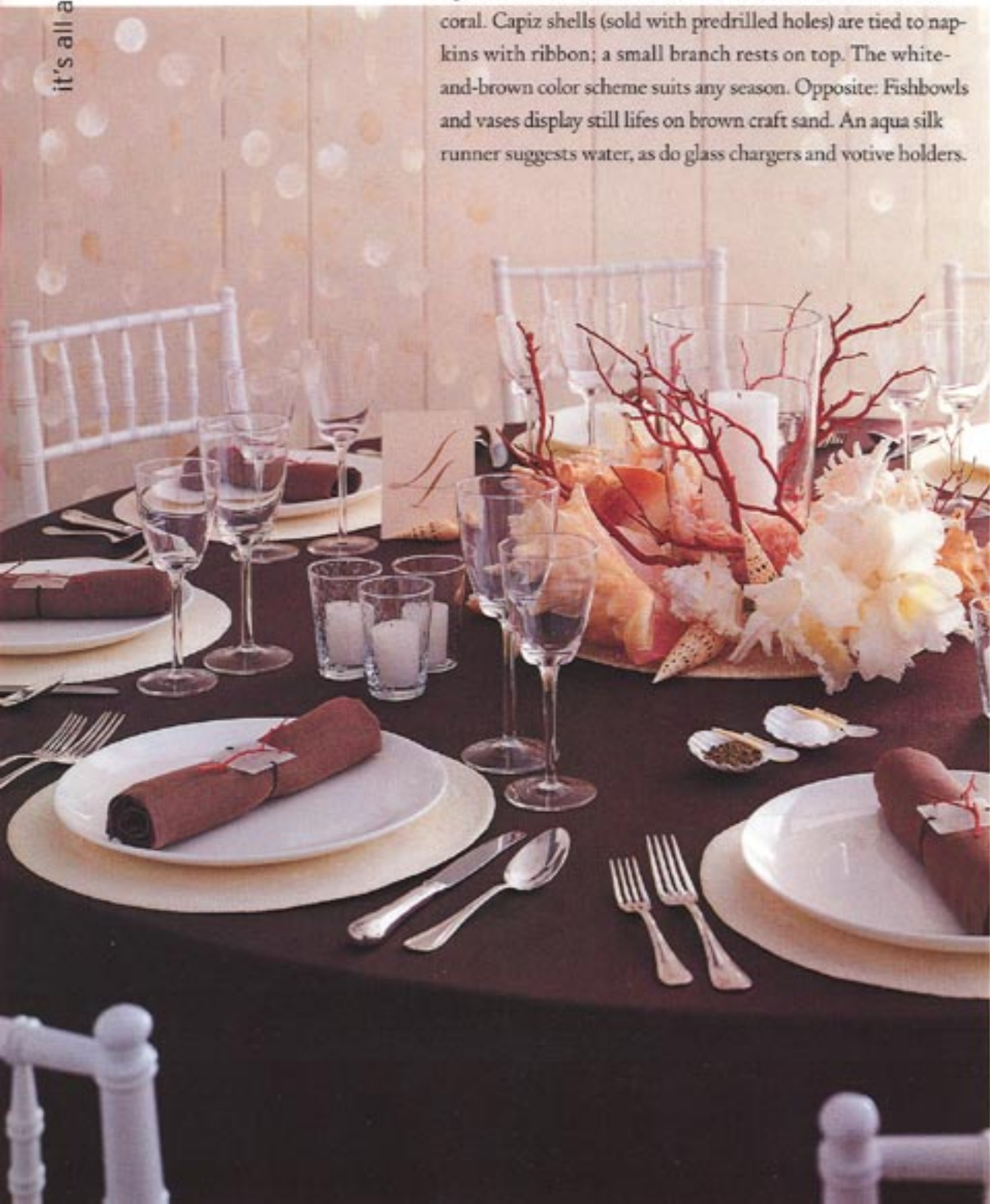
Make simple rectangular tags on a computer (ours have coral-color words and aqua borders). For notched corners, clip with a 1/4-inch hole punch. Apply an adhesive dot to the shell's flattest part; it's removed easily, so guests can have their shells to take home.

seascape

centerpieces



Dress tables at a beachside reception with sculptural shells and corallike pieces. Below: Large conch and murex shells with cattleya orchids nestled in their openings and smaller marlin spike shells surround a vase filled with tiny shells and a pillar candle. Painted manzanita branches stand in for real coral. Capiz shells (sold with predrilled holes) are tied to napkins with ribbon; a small branch rests on top. The white-and-brown color scheme suits any season. Opposite: Fishbowls and vases display still lifes on brown craft sand. An aqua silk runner suggests water, as do glass chargers and votive holders.





rebecca's picks

centerpiece shells and virtual coral
 from Sea Shell City
 branches from Dry Nature Design
 spray paint by Floralife
 capiz shells from Shell Horizons
 vase by Ikea (opposite)
 beaded mat by Moyna
 votive candleholders from HomeArt
 table number from Anna Griffin
 white plates by Red Vanilla (opposite)
 woven place mats by Design Ideas
 brown napkins from West Elm
 fishbowls and vases from Jamali
 Garden Supplies (above)
 sand by Sand Blast Entertainment
 aqua fabric from Butterfly Fabrics
 cotton mini pouches from Bliss
 Wedding Markets



about synthetic coral

The pieces above, called virtual coral, resemble the shape and texture of the real thing, but they're made of resin. To replicate the look of spindly red coral, we used an old florists' trick: spraying manzanita branches (often used as perches for pet birds) with floral paint.