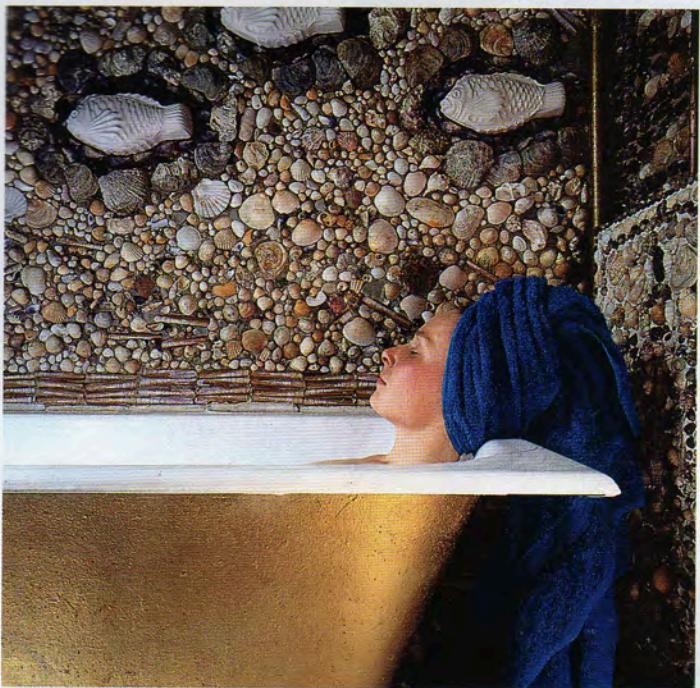


THE WORLD OF INTERIORS

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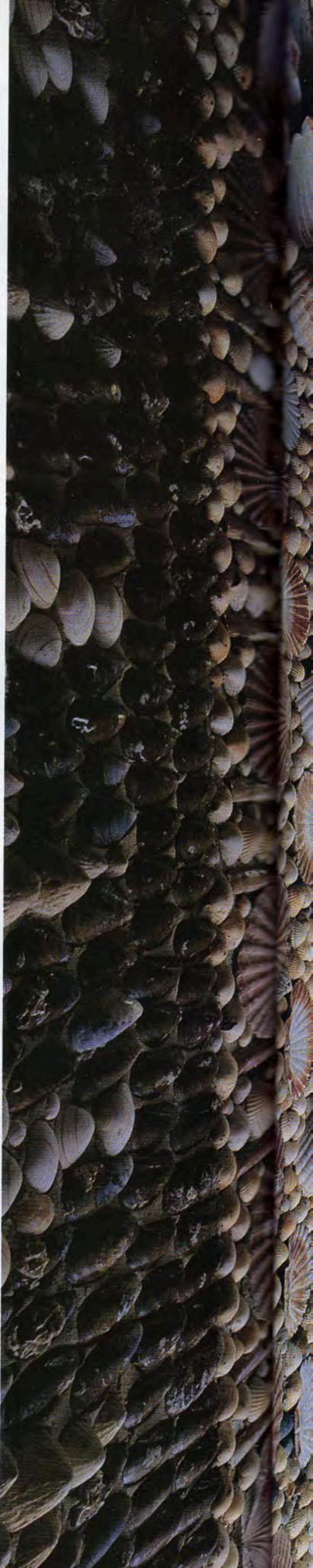


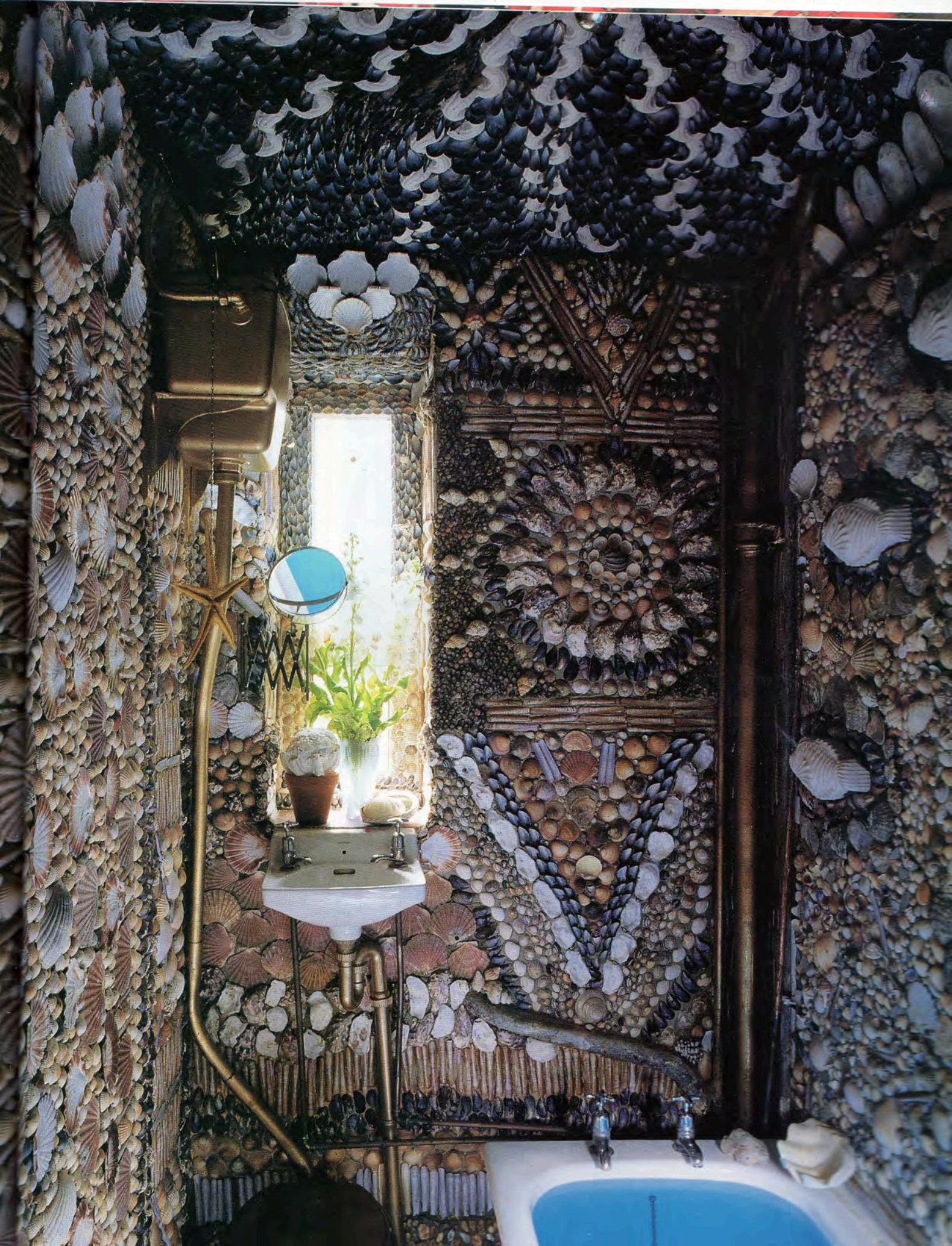
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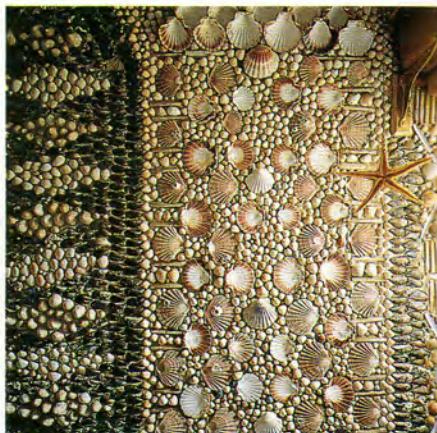
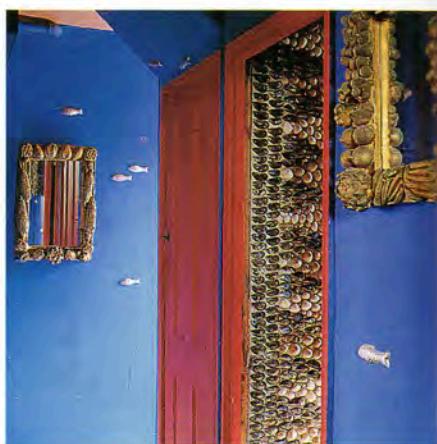
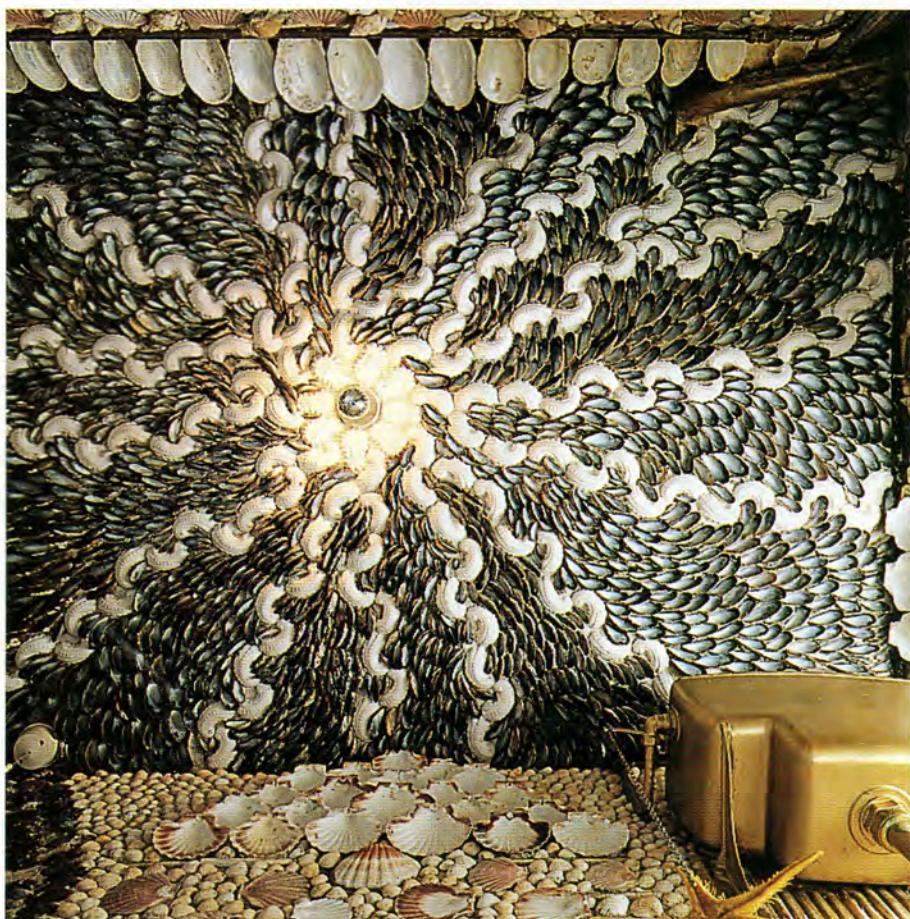
First prize to Blot Kerr-Wilson for her deep-sea and deeply wonderful bathroom – the winner of *The World of Interiors'* and KLC Design School's competition. Peter Reid is shell struck.

Photography: Fritz von der Schulenburg

Above: Blot Kerr-Wilson takes a well-earned soak in her tiny grotto-like bathroom watched over by her extraordinary collection of shells gathered from beaches round the country. There is so little room that the basin had to be set high to clear the lavatory seat







Above left: The ceiling only took one day to do, starting from the central light fitting and working outwards. Blot stuck the shells on their edges to catch the light, whereas on the walls, above right, they are laid flat. She also painted the cistern and pipes gold and attached a plastic starfish as a chain pull. Outside the room, top right, the sea-blue walls are aswim with fish-shaped moulds and plastercasts

An SE15 council flat just off the Old Kent Road may seem an unlikely spot to find the winner of our 'Design-a-Room' competition. It's the sort of neighbourhood where you can kiss your hubcaps goodbye. But 30-year-old Charlotte Kerr-Wilson, like her bathroom, qualifies for that most British of compliments – she's a character. She must be. She drives a Reliant Robin and she prefers to be called 'Blot'.

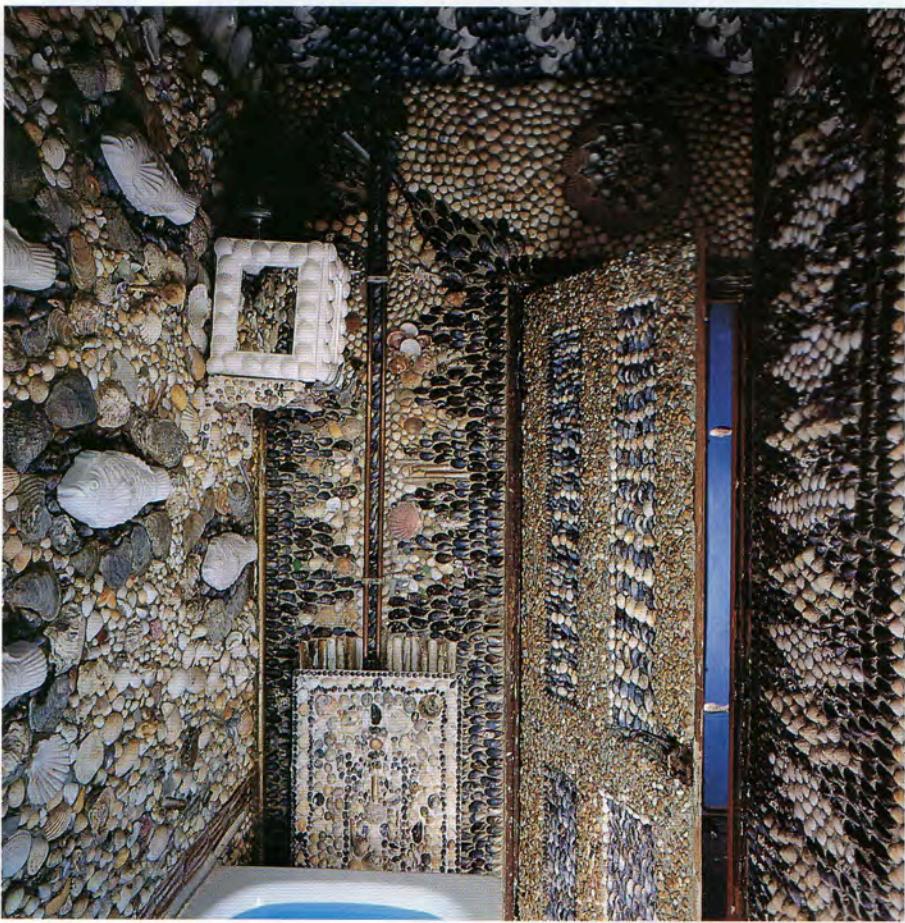
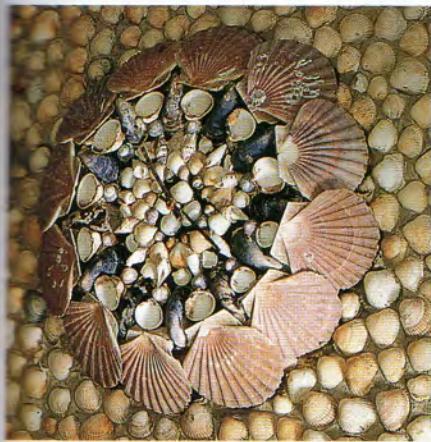
The location of Blot's flat – her home for eight years – isn't its only surprise. Sitting for the first time on one of her Astroturf-

covered chairs can be a startling (although not altogether unpleasant) experience. But pay a visit to her bathroom and you come out shell-shocked.

Blot originally trained as a cook before studying at Goldsmith's College. It shows. Although she didn't actually serve up any of the original occupants of her bathroom's shells (she accepts responsibility only for eating half-a-dozen of the oysters), she currently makes a living casting plaster of Paris mirror frames decorated with plaster vegetables. 'Everything I do,' she says, 'is a bit like cooking, except it's not edible. All the

mixing up of cement and plaster is just like, you know, making cakes.' As if to prove the point, she pops out from time to time to check on four lamp bases (which she makes with sculptor Mark Croxford) baking in the oven.

Her shell collection started with the hurricane in 1987. 'I knew there'd be lots of shells washed up, so I went to Southend and came back with bagfuls. The mussels came from a restaurant at Elephant & Castle; they put them out for the bin men once a week, so I helped myself. All the pebbles came from Dungeness which I visited



Above right: Blot even covered the radiator, the gas meter box (above left) and the clock (top left) with shells. The door is decorated with a mixture of gravel and shells and melts smoothly into the wall when closed. Keeping the shells company are plastercast fish which Blot made using aluminium jelly moulds and surrounded with oyster shells, and mussels which she found in a dustbin outside a restaurant in Elephant & Castle

to see Derek Jarman's garden, and other shells came from Alderney and a nudist beach in the South of France. The scallops are from a beach on a tiny island just off Oban in Scotland. You're supposed to pay 15 pence for every one you take home, so I stuffed hundreds down my tights and in my coat pockets. On the boat trip back I had to be very careful not to clink.'

Before using her shells, Blot cleaned them by boiling them for two hours ('You wouldn't believe the smell...'), then left them outside for two months. That done, she rendered the walls in cement and, while

it was still wet, applied the shells. For variety, she also used plaster petits fours moulds and fish-shaped jelly moulds.

Blot reckons she could have finished the bathroom in a month if she hadn't been doing other things. It actually took three years. As for the design, she says, 'it evolved as it progressed. For example, this bit behind the taps I did in separate sections. It was all done by eye, although I tried to make the shapes in each one have some connection. But I didn't start with a grand plan laid out on the floor or anything.'

Now it's finished, does she like it? 'I love

it. When I have a bath the steam darkens the cement and intensifies the colours of the shells. And I'm very proud I've done it. I find it extraordinary I had it in me. It took lots of concentration and discipline, and I'm an amazingly undisciplined person.'

While Blot's bathroom may be reward enough, it also won her a year's free tuition at London's KLC School of Interior Design. It looks like she'll soon be going places - Reliant Robin permitting ■
Blot's mirror frames and lamp bases are at The Conran Shop, Tel: 071-589 7401, or commission her on 071-639 2277