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# The House of Neptune and Amphitrite at Herculaneum

The house of Neptune and Amphitrite was hit along with the rest of the ancient city of Herculaneum by the tremendous eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD.

However, Herculaneum unlike Pompeii, was not hit by the rain of ash and lapilli. But only by a very powerful pyroclastic flow and mudslide that completely covered Herculaneum with more than 20 meters of volcanic material.

Only in 1738, during the excavation of a well by a farmer, was the first remains of the ancient city accidentally found.

## The structure of the house of Neptune and Amphitrite

The House of Neptune and Amphitrite of [Herculaneum](#) is located in insula V. Exactly opposite the entrance to the female section of the Stabian baths, in the formerly busiest street in Herculaneum.

Not a particularly large dwelling, in fact, it is only 200 square metres in size and was structured on two levels.

The house of Neptune and Amphitrite of Herculaneum most probably belonged to a wealthy merchant. In fact, on the lower floor of the house with direct access to the street there was a shop. Inside which a counter used for making food and drink, a small kitchen and a perfectly preserved wooden mezzanine floor, still visible today, were found, which served to reach the upper floor and in which there was a shelf that was probably used to store amphorae containing wine.



Next to the entrance to the workshop was also the entrance to the house. Characterised by a narrow corridor that led to the atrium of the dwelling where the impluvium, was located in the centre. All around the atrium were a series of rooms that were used as bedrooms.

## triclinium of the house of Neptune and Amphitrite

The most important and spectacular part of the whole house was the summer triclinium, used by the owners of the house as a garden. Most probably the place where they spent their moments of relaxation, enjoying the coolness of the evening.

In the centre of the summer triclinium was a marble basin with a fountain from which water spurted in ancient times. On the central wall was created a marvellous mosaic, from which the entire house takes its name, depicting Neptune and Amphitrite. The mosaic, adorned all around with a frame of sea shells, was made of glass paste in brilliant colours, depicting Neptune and Amphitrite.

The rest of the triclinium was frescoed with scenes depicting a garden with plants, birds and fountains, to give those inside the triclinium the feeling of being in an outdoor garden.

In the centre of the summer triclinic of the house of Neptune and Amphitrite the fountain was supplied with water from a tank on the north side of the triclinic.

The tank was concealed by a structure with three niches, where in the central niche there was a small statue. The entire structure was covered with a glass paste mosaic depicting hunting scenes in the upper part and a garden with plants and birds in the lower part.

