

# LITTLE SALON • WEST & NORTH WALLS

The Little Salon combines the lightness of the 18th century with the dense layering characteristic of Gardner's own time. The painted and gilded wooden panels that once decorated the interior of a Venetian palace show the delicate, curving floral patterns and pastel colors typical of late 18th century art. Tapestries showing couples strolling in front of imaginary country houses continue the garden theme. In the center, a table set for tea suggests the hospitality for which the museum's founder was justly famous.



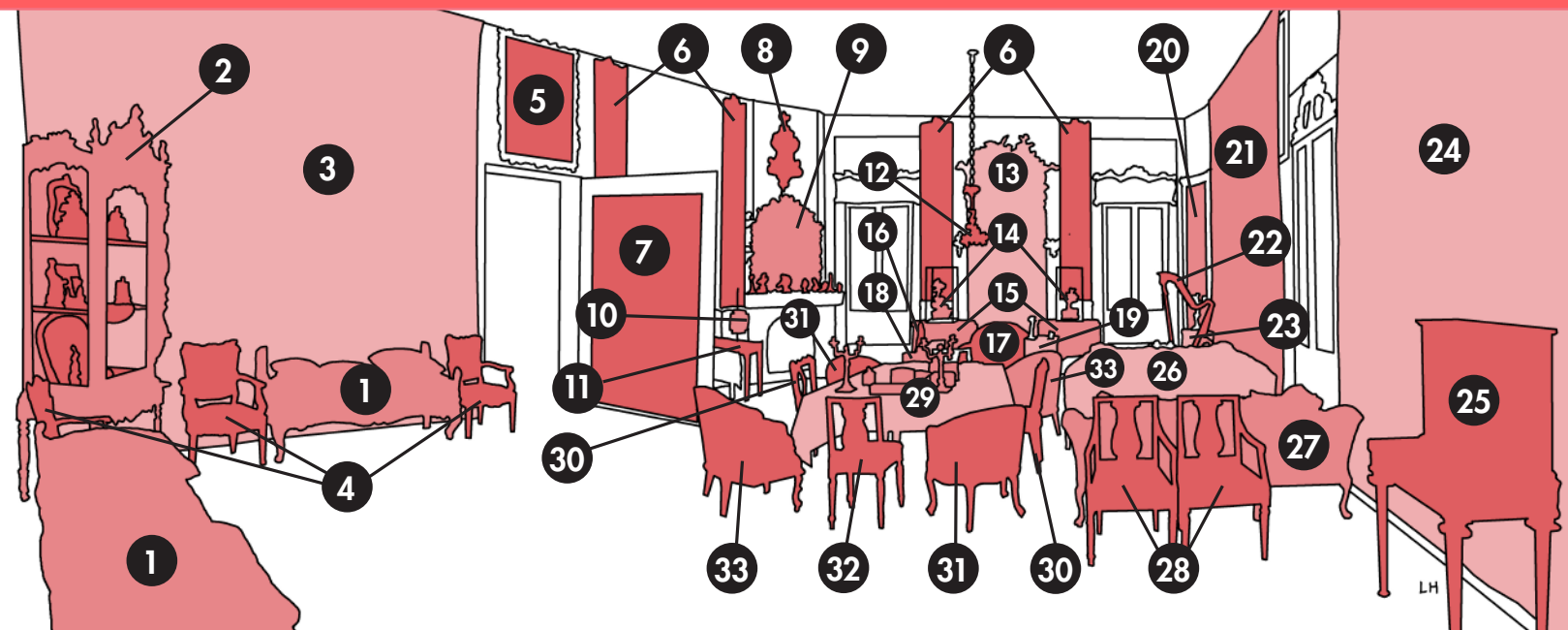
**Sofa and Chairs** (11 pieces total)  
Italian (Venice), about 1780  
Painted wood

Now covered in blue moiré satin strip fabric, this set of delicately carved and painted furniture was purchased by Isabella Gardner in Venice in 1906. In keeping with her eclectic design sense, instead of displaying this group of furniture as a set she playfully placed them throughout the room.

The set includes a sofa, four armchairs, two well chairs, and four side chairs—look for them all as you explore the room.

The photograph above was taken when the Little Salon was temporarily rearranged in 2005 as part of the special exhibition *Chairs*. Artist-in-residence Dayanita Singh worked with Italian furniture scholar Fausto Calderai to reunite the set, positioning it for an imaginary gathering. In both the temporary exhibition and Gardner's own arrangements, chairs take on their own strong personalities.

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**1. Bench.** American, about 1914, using mid-18th century Italian elements

**2. Vitrine.** Italian (Sicily), 18th century. Gilded wood  
*Inside:* 18th and 19th century ceramics and other decorative objects

**3. Strolling and Seated Lovers Tapestry.** Flemish (Brussels), 1585-1600. Wool and silk

**4. Armchairs** (set of 11 pieces of furniture). Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**5. Cupids at Work.** Italian or French, 1700-1750. Oil on canvas

**6. Paneling from the Palazzo Morosini.** Italian (Venice), 1760-1780. Painted wood

**7. Door and Frame from the Palazzo Morosini.** Italian (Venice), 1760-1780. Painted wood

**8. Clock.** Italian, 19th century. Painted wood with bronze mounts

**9. Mirror.** Italian (Venice), 18th century. Painted wood

*On the mantle:* four porcelain **Birds** (German, around 1800) and other decorative objects

**10. Firescreen.** English, late 18th century. Japanned wood

**11. Vitrine** with personal mementoes and travel souvenirs

**12. Hanging Flower Basket.** French(?), 18th century. Gilt bronze basket with porcelain flowers

**13. Mirror with Coat of Arms of the Morosini Family.** Italian (Venice), 18th century and modern elements. Painted and gilded wood

**14. Miniature Gardens.** Chinese, late 18th century. Ceramic, enamel, jade, and other stones

**15. Cupboards.** Italian, 19th century with 18th century painted panels. Painted wood

**16. Dummy Board.** English or the Dutch, 19th century. Painted wood

**17. Daybed.** Italian, 1750-1760. Walnut

**18. Well Chairs** (part of a suite of 11 pieces of furniture). Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**19. Writing Table.** English, 18th century. Wood

**20. Concave Door from the Palazzo Morosini.** Italian (Venice), 1760-1780. Painted wood

**21. Boating and Hunting Parties Tapestry.** French (Paris), 1625-50. Wool and silk

**22. Pedal Harp.** French, about 1800-25

*Behind the harp:* **Dummy Board.** English or Dutch, about 1700. Painted wood

**23. Nightstand** (two). Italian (Venice), about 1780  
*On top:* **Candelabrum.** Provenance unknown. Gilt bronze

**24. The Surprise Tapestry.** French (Paris), 1625-50. Wool and silk

**25. Vitrine.** Italian, early 19th century. Gilded wood  
*Inside:* Gifts from Gardner's friends and mementos from her travels

**26. Sofa** (set of 11 pieces of furniture). Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**27. Sofa.** Italian (Venice), mid-18th century. Painted wood

**28. Lyreback Armchairs.** Italian (Venice), 1790-1800. Painted wood

**29. Table.** Provenance unknown. Wood

*On top:* **Porcelain**, Chinese and Italian; purple glass **Plate**, Chinese 19th century; brass **Box**, probably Russian; elliptical painted wood **Box**, English, 18th century

**30. Side Chair** (set of 11 pieces of furniture). Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**31. Well Chair.** Italian (Venice), mid-18th century. Painted wood

**32. Lyreback Side Chair.** Italian (Venice), 1790-1800. Painted wood

**33. Well Chair.** Italian (Venice), mid-18th century. Gilded wood



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The Little Salon combines the lightness of the 18th century with the dense layering characteristic of Gardner's own time. The painted and gilded wooden panels that once decorated the interior of a Venetian palace show the delicate, curving floral patterns and pastel colors typical of late 18th century art. Tapestries showing couples strolling in front of imaginary country houses continue the garden theme. In the center, a table set for tea suggests the hospitality for which the museum's founder was justly famous.



## **The Surprise Tapestry**

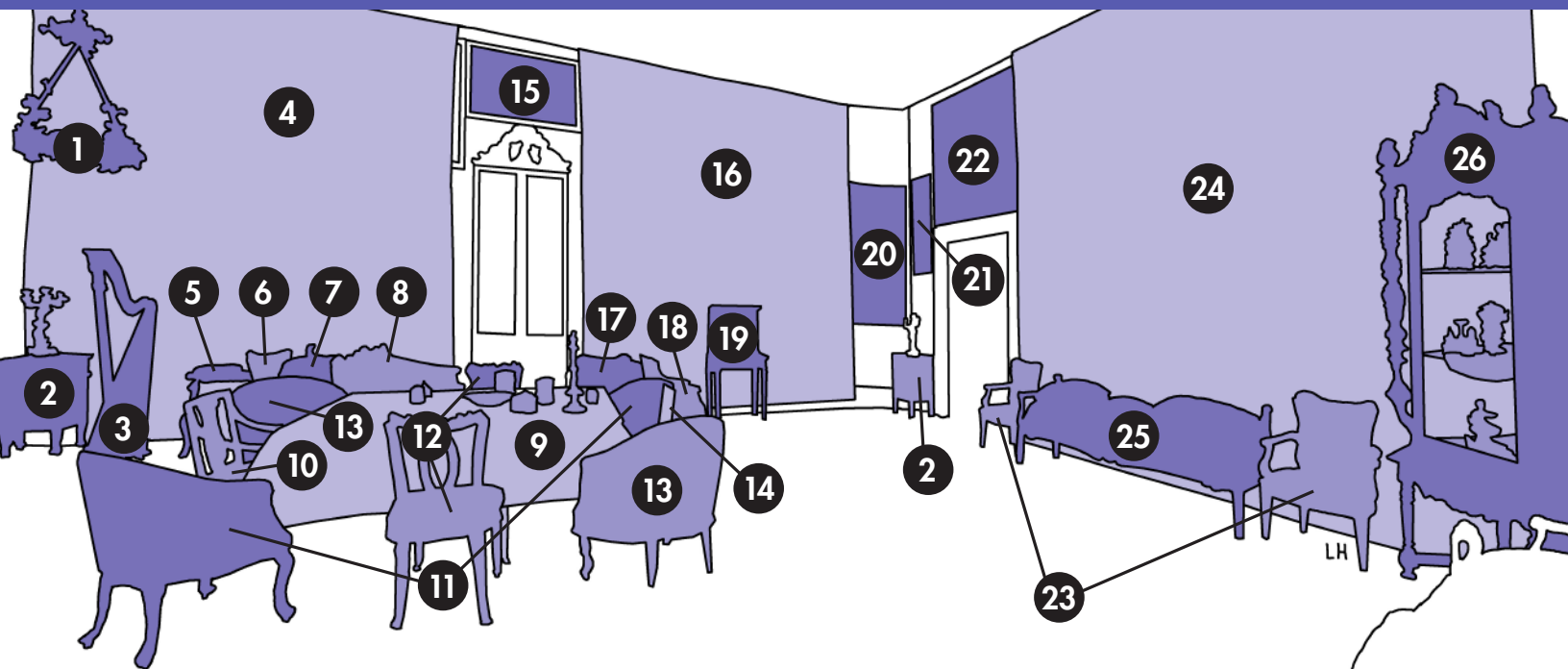
French (Paris), 1625–50

Wool and silk

This tapestry depicts a humorous feature of Italian seventeenth century gardens: hidden levers—in this case set off by the figure in the left foreground—that produce jets of water to surprise unsuspecting strollers, like the woman at right with her hand raised in surprise.

**The Surprise** is one of a set of four garden tapestries bought by Isabella Gardner in 1903. This set was once part of the Barberini collection, one of the great Roman collections of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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**1. Hanging Flower Basket.** French (?), 18th century. Gilt bronze basket with porcelain flowers

**2. Nightstand (two).** Italian (Venice), 1780s. Painted wood

*On top:* **Candelabrum.** Provenance unknown. Gilt bronze

**3. Pedal Harp.** French, 1800–25. Painted and gilded wood

**4. Boating and Hunting Parties Tapestry.** French (Paris), 1625–50. Wool and silk

**5. Monocorde à Clavier (keyed monochorde),** 1886–1891. Marie Joseph Nicolas Pousset (French, 1861–1891). Wood

**6. Side Chair (set of 11 pieces of furniture).** Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**7. Spinnet.** English, about 1680. Wood

**8. Sofa (set of 11 pieces of furniture).** Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**9. Table.** Provenance unknown. Wood  
*On top:* **Porcelain,** Chinese and Italian; purple glass **Plate,** Chinese 19th century; brass **Box,** probably Russian; elliptical painted wood **Box,** English, 18th century

**10. Lyreback Armchair.** Italian (Venice), 1790–1800. Painted wood

**11. Well Chairs.** Italian (Venice), mid-18th century. Painted wood

**12. Side Chairs (set of 11 pieces of furniture).** Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**13. Well Chair.** Italian (Venice), mid-18th century. Gilded wood

**14. Lyreback Side Chair.** Italian (Venice), 1790–1800. Painted wood

**15. Valance.** Italian or French, mid-18th century. Silk with silver yarns

**16. The Surprise Tapestry.** French (Paris), 1625–50. Wool and silk

**17. Sofa.** Italian (Venice), mid-18th century. Painted wood

**18. Lyreback Armchairs (two).** Italian (Venice), 1790–1800. Painted wood

**19. Vitrine.** Italian, early 19th century. Gilded wood  
*Inside:* many small objects, mostly gifts from friends

**20. Concave Door from the Palazzo Morosini.** Italian (Venice), 1760–1780. Painted and gilded wood

**21. Fragment from the Side Border of a Tapestry.** Flemish, 1550–1600. Wool and silk

**22. Overdoor Panel with Painted Landscape.** Italian (Venice), 18th century. Painted and gilded wood

**23. Armchairs (set of 11 pieces of furniture).** Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood

**24. A Musical Party Tapestry.** Flemish, 1585–1600. Wool and silk

**25. Bench.** American, about 1914, using mid-18th century Italian elements

**26. Vitrine.** Italian (Sicily), 18th century. Gilded wood

*Inside:* 18th and 19th century ceramics and other decorative objects