

# NEW YORK SPACES

THE HOME DESIGN MAGAZINE OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK

## Bridging the gap

From Harlem churches to chewing-gum wrappers, designer Sheila Bridges sees inspiration all around

**With television shows like *Sheila Bridges: Designer Living* demystifying home design, how has the relationship between client and designer changed?**

Design is now accessible to virtually everyone, so clients are more educated and more aware of what's available in the marketplace. But that wealth of information doesn't teach people how to edit all of the options or where to properly place products. They still need designers for guidance.

**Where is the most unlikely place you find inspiration?**

The color of the sidewalk, a brown paper bag, an insect, a chewing-gum wrapper—anything can spark creativity. When it comes to inspiration, nothing is unlikely.

**What was your most recent purchase for your own home?**

A cuckoo clock that I bought online. I've been collecting them for years and am obsessed with all the different shapes, colors and styles they come in.

**What is the most outrageous thing a client has ever asked?**

A New York-based client once called while he was on a business trip in Los Angeles. He had seen an upholstered chair that piqued his interest but insisted I see it in person. A photo or a visit to a sister showroom in Manhattan wouldn't do! So I literally hopped on a plane



that same day, looked at the chair, then flew right back to New York. Clients sometimes forget how integral patience is to a successful design process.

**What space in New York would you like to redesign and why?**

New York City subway cars. Their interiors are overdue for a makeover.

**How does your connection to Harlem—where you have a home and office—affect your designs?**

The architecture and cultural richness of Harlem are astounding—I maintain that some of the most beautiful buildings in Manhattan are there. From an interesting

façade of a landmark church to a few girls jumping double Dutch in the street, its power to inspire is boundless.

**What current trend do you hope stays around, and which old trend were you happy to see go?**

I'm thrilled to see so many new outdoor furniture and fabric options! Outdoor living is now an important part of most people's lifestyles, and until very recently, there simply wasn't much to choose from. I'm happy to say good-bye to those uninspired all-white interiors—how completely boring and unoriginal!

**Given a tight budget, what's the one thing you splurge on?**

No matter if the budget is big or small, I always go all out on great bedding—luxurious sheets, coverlets and duvets. They feel great against the skin and are worth every penny.

**What are some of your favorite New York City resources?**

I usually don't reveal my resources, but I'll give you one: Sentimento on East 61st Street. They have wonderful pieces from France, from small accessories to major furniture. [See shopping guide.]

**What's the one thing in your home you can't live without?**

Dolby, my Jack Russell terrier. □