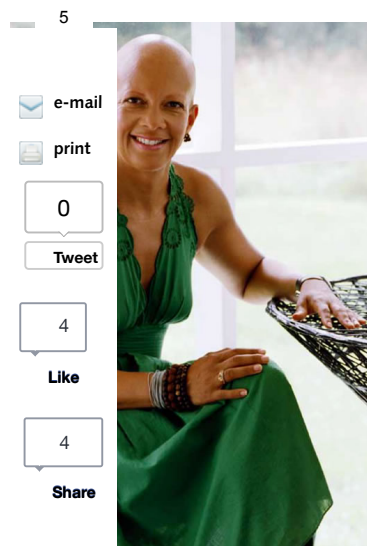


## Sheila Bridges: Designing Dreams and Dining with Style

by V. Sheree Williams on October 31, 2013



In the world of interior design, Sheila Bridges' name is synonymous with thought-provoking, high-end, comfortable and visually interesting. The entrepreneur and author's sense of style and signature designs have attracted prominent clients and projects around New York and beyond.

Her passion for interiors inspired [Sheila Bridges Home, Inc.](#), her furniture and home furnishings company with collections sold through mail order catalogues and at such notable national retailers as Anthropologie and Bed, Bath & Beyond. Her [Harlem Toile De Jouy](#) wallpaper is currently available through design showrooms in The United States, Canada and Europe and represented in the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's permanent wallpaper collection.

"A lot of people will call my style eclectic for a lack of a better word. I do like mixing very classic pieces along with more modern elements. It's about mixing some very interesting things together," says Bridges who was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pa. Armed with an Ivy League degree from Brown University, Bridges moved to New York in the late 80s and began working at Bloomingdale's prior to eventually getting on the path to design. She went to work as an administrative assistant at an architectural firm where she "become a sponge, soaking up every drop of knowledge and information about design and architecture" that she could. At night and on weekends, she attended the Parson School of Design and later launched her own design firm, Sheila Bridges Design, Inc.

At the age of 38, Bridges was diagnosed with Alopecia, an autoimmune disease where the body is actually attacking itself or in this case the hair follicles. What started as two small bald spots in the back of her head would eventually lead to her decision to go bald. Bridges talks about her diagnosis, her journey to acceptance and finding the courage and peace to keep moving forward in her latest book, "The Bald Mermaid: A Memoir."

"I wanted to tackle a lot of kind of tough topics, but they are topics that I think, particularly as women, that we all struggle with whether it has to do with our families, relationships, careers, our beauty, health. All of those things as women we are always struggling with. I felt it was important as an African-American woman to share my story because I don't think that enough of our stories are told and if they are told, they are told through the lens of the media."

Today, she spends time between Harlem and upstate New York where she can retreat by turning off urban city life, giving way to her domestic side. "I garden and I also like to

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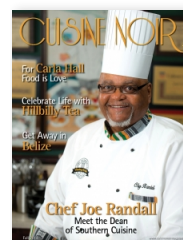
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cook. I have a vegetable garden and an herb garden that I utilize all the time. In general, I love to use fresh herbs whether it is sage, dill and cilantro, basil and oregano when I cook."

Bridges is no stranger to entertaining and knows the importance of designing a host location before dining. "I tend to have a lot of cocktails parties. I am not big on sit-down dinners. I like to do things that are fairly casual. I always like to come up with a signature cocktail and I always just do a lot of finger foods, one bites. Things that are easy to make that don't take a lot of time. I think there is nothing worse than entertaining and being stuck in the kitchen while you have company and not being able to join in the festivities."

Her entertaining advice is easy. "Keep it simple. You have to be organized. I am really into prep. Whether that means food and preparing ahead of time as well as getting organized and preparing the décor ahead of time."

In addition, her advice for inspiring designers is to know that everything that glitters isn't always gold. One has to be willing to look past the glamour that is often misconceived about the profession and put in the work. "It is maybe 20% glamour and 80% regular hard work. If it is really something you dream of doing, you have to be willing to commit to it and stay the course."

"The Bald Mermaid: A Memoir," published by Pointed Leaf Press, is available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). To review Bridges' portfolio, wallpaper and home furnishings collections, visit [www.sheilabridges.com](http://www.sheilabridges.com).

For your next social gathering, be sure to serve The Bald Mermaid Margarita that was inspired by her latest book. Check out the recipe in the [Chef's Corner](#).

Enjoy the full interview with Bridges in Cuisine Noir's [Fall/Winter 2013 print issue](#).

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