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SHEILA BRIDGES

CELEBRITY INTERIOR DESIGNER/AUTHOR

The story of Sheila Bridges' rise to success in the interior design world is even better than good. It's amazing. The West Philly native and Friends Central graduate moved to Harlem ten years ago to launch her own interior design firm. These days, her clients include everyone from P. Diddy to Bill Clinton. She was chosen as "America's Best Interior Designer" in 2001 by CNN and *Time*, and was featured on *House Beautiful's* list of "America's Most Brilliant Decorators." Her book, *Furnishing Forward*, debuted in spring of 2002. Even with all of the raves, Sheila remains modest and committed to her technique.

Sheila makes it a point to work with her clients individually, and establishes understanding and trust before doing anything. She calls her warm, unobtrusive, collaborative technique "design by personality." "The spaces I design should represent who my clients are and who they aspire to be, not who I am or aspire to be. I bring a sense of scale, perspective and color, while educating them on what they ultimately decide to spend their money on."

Surprisingly, Sheila is never intimidated by her famous clients, and remains confident in the strength of her work, even when grappling with the biggest of egos. "Famous or not, none of my clients intimidate me because we need to have a good working relationship in order to make their personal vision of a home come to fruition. Decorating is a very personal and intuitive process that must be shared in such a way that it is enjoyable. Clients are not your friends, but there has to be a level of trust. Intimidation on either side does not fit into that equation."

Sheila is currently in production for her own TV show, working with Al Roker Productions and Scripps Networks, the creators of HGTV and the Food Network. The program is scheduled to air in late 2002 on the new cable network Fine Living. What's next - her own line of sleek home accessories? A guest designer gig for Target? We wouldn't be surprised, and we'd even say we told you so. But right now we're hoping she expands her offices back home to Philadelphia. In the meantime, keep your eye out for Sheila spending time with her family and friends at her fave Philly nightspots, Miss Tootsie's and Alma de Cuba. - Alex Richmond

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