

KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

Design by SHEILA BRIDGES

New York, New York

Her kitchen may be on the small side, but designer Sheila Bridges didn't let that cramp her style.

Interview by
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Photographs by
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The glint of silver in the Torino Damask wallpaper by Sheila Bridges works well with stainless steel: a Fisher & Paykel refrigerator, a Bosch dishwasher, a Bertazzoni range, and a GE microwave. Globe lantern by Alison Spear for Stephanie Odegard. Paint is Benjamin Moore's Hemlock on cabinets and Farrow & Ball's All White on floor. >>

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CHRISTINE PITTEL: *What's that elegant silvery-blue wallpaper doing in a kitchen?*

SHEILA BRIDGES: It's always a challenge to come up with something that's going to be exciting in a small space, and that wallpaper is unexpected. It's one of my own designs, inspired by a painted ceiling I saw in Italy. I love that kind of exotic, almost Middle Eastern pattern. There's nothing over the top about my kitchen, and the metallic wallpaper adds a little glamour.

But what about practicality?

As long as you have a backsplash, I don't see the issue. Like the other surfaces, it can be wiped clean with a damp sponge.

The blue paint reminds me of a perfect summer day.

It's such an uplifting color. It puts me in a good mood. My living room is blue, and I thought, Why not carry it into the kitchen?

It's another bold choice.

A bold color can work if you tie it into something else. It's the same blue that's in the wallpaper, and you see it again in the striped shade and the fabric on the chairs, which reiterate the basic palette—blue, beige, and white. Nothing matches perfectly, but that doesn't matter.

And you have the white tile and countertops for relief.

Those were very economical. I found the white marble subway tile online at homedepot.com and bought the Carrara marble for the countertops in the store.

Carrara at Home Depot?

Yes. They have all different types of countertop options, and marble is one of them. It's polished, because honed meant a charge I didn't want to pay. Another way I saved money was by painting the floor, as opposed to buy-

ing tile or cork, or refinishing it. I think wood floors are great in kitchens because they're comfortable underfoot.

No built-in refrigerator?

Cost again. But that Fisher & Paykel is counter-depth, so it feels as if it's built-in. And no panels to hide it. I feel the same way about appliances as I do about stereos and TVs: They are what they are. Show them.

You picked a good-looking range.

That's by Bertazzoni. I went to design school in Italy, and I have this love affair with Italian design. Some of the burners are dual-valve, which means they have an inner and an outer ring, and you can set them to different temperatures for controlled cooking. It's very versatile.

What happened to the hood?

A vent system is incorporated into the GE microwave. That's a real space-saver: two appliances in one. I didn't want a microwave that sits on the counter.

Why choose a farmhouse sink?

I think the apron front kind of softens all the hard edges. I also like the depth. I used to have a sink that couldn't hold a large pot. Never again.

Anything would fit under that gooseneck faucet. Why the cutout in the cabinet just above it?

To make that area more spacious, so you don't feel closed in when you're washing the dishes.

A round lantern is not the usual light fixture. What's the story?

I bought it years ago at a sample sale because I loved it, and pulled it out of a box to hang here. It makes me think of Morocco. I like the way the fligreed metal plays off the pattern in the wallpaper. Sometimes an unplanned moment ends up being your favorite thing in a room. >>



TOP RIGHT: An antique pot rack frees up cupboard space. Friends can sit on the antique Swedish chairs and talk with the cook. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Kohler's farmhouse sink is paired with a Kingston Brass Heritage Collection faucet. **FAR RIGHT:** Grecian White polished-marble subway tile complements the Carrara marble countertops, both from Home Depot; the range is Bertazzoni.



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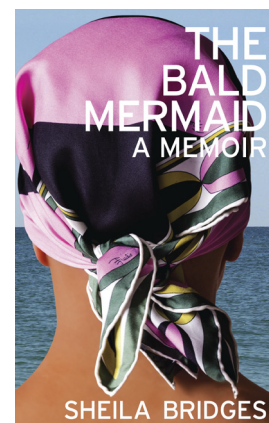
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A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

"There's a lot about decorating and design in my new book, because that's part of my DNA," Sheila Bridges says. "But when I lost my hair as a result of alopecia, that presented a whole new set of challenges for me, both personally and professionally. I got through it, but I wanted to write about issues of self-esteem. I hope the book will help people to feel more comfortable in their own skin."

THE BALD MERMAID
BY SHEILA BRIDGES.
POINTED LEAF PRESS; \$35.
POINTEDLEAFPRESS.COM.

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1. Lugarno pulls in polished nickel by Restoration Hardware add a silvery note to the cabinetry (bird not included). 2. A pattern of interlocking cubes—Osborne & Little's Balyan, from the Maharani collection—makes antique chairs look more contemporary and picks up the color palette. 3. Bridges's Torino Damask wallpaper in Blue Metallic has a reflective quality that catches the light. It shimmers in the daytime and adds a glow at night. 4. "I never met a stripe I didn't like," says Bridges, who chose Osborne & Little's Killarney, embroidered with white ovals, for the Roman shade. ●