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JOY OF DESIGN: Our Columnist Joy Moyler Speaks with Designer Sheila Bridges About Her Tableware Collection for Wedgwood

The limited-edition capsule collection is available now exclusively at Bloomingdale's.



BY JOY MOYLER MAR 3, 2022



Here at VERANDA, there's nothing we love more than when brilliant creative minds come together to create something more beautiful than each individual ever could have on her own. It's the most fun form of design math, when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. So imagine our delight to discover that New York designer Sheila Bridges has teamed up with historic English brand [Wedgwood](#) to create a limited edition capsule collection of tableware and teaware.

The bone china pieces feature a reimagining of Bridges' celebrated Harlem Toile du Juoy pattern, in which typical characters from pastoral scenes of 18th century French toiles have been replaced with Black persona at leisure. Although Bridges first developed her signature pattern as a wallpaper (which is now included in The Cooper Hewitt's permanent wallpaper collection), Harlem Toile de Juoy has appeared on all kinds of products from [silk scarves](#) to [smart speakers](#).



Designer Sheila Bridges

FRANK FRANCES STUDIO



Bridges' capsule collection of china for Wedgwood

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In her capsule collection for Wedgwood, Bridges' characters dance across dinner plates, bowls and teacups in saturated shades of yellow, orange, teal, and periwinkle—a vibrant update on the softer palette for which Wedgwood is known. The collection is available exclusively at Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship in New York City and on [bloomingdales.com](https://www.bloomingdales.com); it will be available globally on [wedgwood.com](https://www.wedgwood.com) beginning in July.

Our contributing design editor Joy Moyler recently sat down with Bridges to talk all things toile, what inspires her most about Wedgwood's founder, and the hit television show on which she'd like to see her new collection featured.

Joy Moyler: Wedgwood and Bloomingdale's is a full-circle career trajectory for you, Sheila!

Sheila Bridges: I am thrilled about the collaboration and excited that, for the first three months, the collection is exclusive to [Bloomingdales](https://www.bloomingdales.com). My first job in New York after graduating from college was at the Bloomingdales flagship on 59th Street. Wedgwood is an iconic British company, known for their Jasperware and fine bone china, and Bloomingdales is an iconic New York retailer. Collaborating with these two important brands is very exciting for me!



Sheila Bridges for Wedgwood accent plate (basketball), mug (dancing), and serving plate

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JM: It is not lost on me what a historical opportunity this is for you, collaborating with Wedgwood.

SB: Anybody who digs into the history of Wedgwood learns that Josiah Wedgwood had a history of collaborating with other artisans and artists. I also love that Josiah was involved the Anti-Slavery movement in Britain in the late 1700s. It is meaningful to collaborate with a partner and heritage brand that has that type of a history. I appreciate that Josiah Wedgwood used his talent, resources and privilege to do something that was meaningful—and also did not shy away from politics.

INSERT TEACUP AND SAUCER PRODUCT EMBED HERE

JM: Sheila, you've done many collaborations before. Why is this one extra special to you?

SB: My mom collected Wedgwood most of her life. She is the person who really introduced me to Wedgwood and told me about Josiah. We both collected Jasperware in different colors, often trading items. We both loved the hunt of collecting, whether it was for an ashtray, a bowl, or a teacup and saucer. This was something we did together, yet from afar, as she lived in Philadelphia, and I was in New York. I grew up with a glass cabinet in our sun porch dedicated to her collection of Jasperware. Those memories make all of this even more meaningful. I texted my brother yesterday with the Bloomingdales link, and he acknowledged how very excited our Mom would have been about this because she loved tabletop, but especially Wedgwood!

JM: I know she's smiling for sure!

INSERT [4-PIECE PLACESETTING PRODUCT](#) EMBED HERE

JM: Shondaland meets Harlem Toile... I hope this collection, along with with *Bridgerton*, introduces a younger generation of collectors to Wedgwood.

SB: That would be amazing! One of the things I love about creative product collaborations with my 'Harlem Toile' is that they help introduce a whole new generation to Toile. Particularly, Harlem Toile. I designed Harlem Toile De Jouy seventeen years ago for my own home and it's had 'very long legs' I guess you could say. Somehow it has stood the test of time and has had its own renaissance because of the events of 2020. I love the television series *Bridgerton* and watched season one, so I am excited about the launch of season two, but I have to admit that I am a bit bummed that Rege-Jean Page will not be part of the production.

JM: Or his rear end!

SB:But I will still be watching. When you think about the sets, the interior styling, the colors and the clothing that is showcased on *Bridgerton*, I think that my Wedgwood collection would complement everything! We should send them some pieces!

JM: Wedgwood should definitely send some pieces to the production team!

SB: I can imagine Lady Whistledown having her tea, gossiping and pouring from the teapot while writing her paper.



FRANK FRANCES STUDIO

JM: You've done so much in your career, from hosting your own television show, writing books, designing the Offices of President Clinton and having your 'Harlem Toile' exhibited in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cooper Hewitt, The National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Rhode Island School of Design museums, just to name a few. Now this esteemed collection with Wedgwood, I cannot wait to see what's next from you.

SB: One of the reasons I've always loved French toiles is because they are about storytelling. As a designer, I think of myself as a visual storyteller. My toile allows me to share stories that are from a different perspective- that of a Black woman who lives in Harlem. I think that we have to tell our own stories because otherwise they aren't represented in the mainstream. Toiles have been around for centuries, but they also continue to be modern at the same time. I think the reason people respond to toile is both the historical and storytelling aspect in the patterns. My 'Harlem Toile' is timeless and

classic in that way as well.

JM: What is your favorite piece?

SB: I don't have a true favorite piece, but I **love** the teapot. One of the things I really like about the collection is that I designed it as a whole. If you look inside the teapot or a bowl, there are designs inside. The story continues and is no longer static. It continues across the pieces, even on the backs. Most people just focus on the front but when you turn the pieces over the story and pattern continues.

INSERT TEAPOT PRODUCT EMBED HERE

JM: I love that continuing story.

SB: Wedgwood was so fun to collaborate with and a great collaborative partner. One of the reasons we did not use metallic but a black trim detail instead was so that everything would be dishwasher safe. Fine bone china is very sturdy and well made so I really hope people will use the pieces daily instead of just for special occasions. One thing I learned during the pandemic is use beautiful things daily, and not save them for later.

JM: The collection is absolutely gorgeous! A wonderful collaboration indeed! Congratulations Sheila!

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