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## Walmart's newest collection of outdoor tableware is inspired by Independence Hall, the Ben Franklin Bridge, and West Philly cookouts

Designer Sheila Bridges has drawn on her Black American Wynnefield childhood to create "the Philadelphia Collection," the 14-piece collection of kitchen and serving ware.



Interior designer Sheila Bridges poses for a portrait near Independence Mall in Philadelphia on Monday. Bridges, a West Philadelphia native known for her iconic Harlem Toile de Jouy print, ... [Read more](#)  
Jose F. Moreno / Staff Photographer

by Elizabeth Wellington  
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A rectangular serving tray in [Sheila Bridges'](#) latest assortment of tableware features a swanky Black couple shaking their groove things in front of Independence Hall.

Dressed in flowing, red, white, and blue regalia, Bridges' dancers appear happy and at ease next to one of Philly's most historic buildings, where 250 years ago, the Founding Fathers adopted the Declaration of Independence.

The Americans on this platter have kicked off their shoes, thrown their hands in the air, and reared back their heads in a joyous two-step as a boom box rattles in the background to the imaginary beat.



Images of dancers from Sheila Bridges' popular Harlem Toile De Juoy collection. For her Philadelphia Collection, the Arc de Triomphe has been replaced with Independence Hall and instead of ... [Read more](#)  
Walmart

“They are in front of Independence Hall for a few reasons,” said Bridges, who grew up in [Wynnefield](#) and found fame as head of her eponymous interior design firm working with the likes of Bill Clinton, Tom Clancy, and late hip-hop mogul Andre Harrell. Sheila Bridges Design decorated [Kamala Harris'](#) official vice presidential residence.

“We [Black people] may not have been at the 1776 signing. In fact, we weren’t even mentioned in it. Still, we’ve always been among the most patriotic. We have a right to celebrate that, especially at Independence Hall, one of America’s most iconic symbols of freedom and democracy,” Bridges said.

Bridges’ Independence Hall dancers are one of six vignettes, adopted from her renowned Harlem Toile de Jouy wallpaper and featured in a festive group of outdoor tableware she has designed for Walmart, called The Philadelphia Collection.



Top: Betsy Ross and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Bottom: Ben Franklin and the Ben Franklin Bridge, and Independence Hall.  
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The Philadelphia Collection dropped Monday exclusively on [Walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com). Prices for the limited-edition collection range from \$12.76 for a pitcher to \$19.76 for a set of four melamine dinner plates. The 76 cents in the pricing was intentional.

Each item in the 14-piece limited edition collection, which includes plates, bowls, a cake stand, an ice bucket, oven mitts, place mats, and tumblers, is very Philly: The [Philadelphia Museum of Art](https://www.philadelphia-museumofart.org/) appears on the plates; the oven mitts are emblazoned with an image of a soft pretzel. (Bridges insisted the salty snack be made into a No. 8, representing the shape preferred by locals.)

On a set of four plates, the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence is written in 18th-century calligraphy. Most have a gingham backdrop in hues of grassy green, cotton candy pink, or candied apple. Think picnic on the Belmont Plateau.

“These are for your favorite summer celebration,” Bridges said. “From graduations, to Juneteenth, July 4, and birthdays.”



A Founding Father's hand holds a soft pretzel on an oven mitt. It's part of Philadelphia-born artist Sheila Bridges' The Philadelphia Collection outdoor tableware available at Walmart.

Harlem Toile collectors will be beside themselves with the pieces reimagining Bridges' idyllic Harlem prints with a Philly touch.

Toile de Jouy, a printed length of cotton, was made popular in the 18th century by French aristocrats who fancied images of bucolic scenes and mythical stories on curtains, linen, wallpaper, clothing, and upholstery.

The first toile was fashioned in Jouy, a small town outside of Paris.

A lifelong fan of toile — and the Eagles (Go Birds!) — Bridges was searching for a toile print for her Harlem abode in the early 2000s. When she couldn't find one that suited her, she made one.

Harlem Toile burst onto the American design world in 2006 with images of Black folks quietly enjoying everyday life, such as jumping rope and picnicking in the park. In one scene, a Wilt Chamberlain-like figure dunks a basketball to a hoop tied to a tree.

The dancers, presented in gray-scale with their clothing popping in muted pastels, are doing what Bridges likes to call the “Harlem Toile jig” in front of Independence Hall. Originally, they cha-cha-chaing in front of the Washington Square Arch in New York’s Greenwich Village.



Sheila Bridges' original Harlem Toile de Jouy print that is part of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's permanent collection. It was purchased with the Collab Acquisition Fund for BIPOC Desigj ... [Read more](#)  
The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Harlem Toile was an immediate hit. During the next two decades, Bridges would collaborate with William Sonoma, Le Creuset, Wedgwood, Converse, and Sonos speakers.

Today, Harlem Toile pieces are collectors' items. The Harlem Toile wallpaper sells on [Bridges' website](#) for \$350 per roll.

"I have the sheets, the trays, the Wedgwood, I even have the shades," said [Dyana Williams](#), entertainment industry consultant, renowned local deejay, and founder of [African American Music Month](#). "I even have her [puzzle](#)."

The Harlem Toile wallpaper is in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, New York's Cooper Hewitt, the Smithsonian Design Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art acquired several pieces of the wallpaper in 2023.

"[Bridges'] work embodies storytelling, cultural identity, race, and the African American experience," said Tiffany Lambert, the Lisa Roberts and David Seltzer Curator of Modern and Contemporary Design at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



Sheila Bridges and her full Philadelphia Collection, tableware sold at Walmart in honor of America's 250th birthday.  
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"It speaks to the complicated American narrative of Black American history. I see it as poetic, critical, and accessible. It is as serious and interrogating as it is fun and joyful."

# Summer, summer, summertime

Bridges grew up in Wynnefield in the 1960s and 1970s, a racially mixed solidly middle- and working-class neighborhood. Many of the families living there had been in the military, and they were patriotic.

Her father, Sidney R. Bridges, was in the Air Force during the 1950s. Her grandfather, Sidney Bridges, served in a segregated regiment of the Army during World War I.

Her mom, Joyce, was a kindergarten teacher.

Every summer, the Bridges family had a big Fourth of July cookout in their backyard. It started small in the 1960s and grew over the decades. The guests wore red, white, and blue.

“My birthday was in July, my parents anniversary was in July, my brother’s birthday was in July,” Bridges said. “July was a big month for my family. It was my favorite month of the year: the fireworks at night; the lightning bugs...”

Bridges, who was born the same year the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, grew up in a family that challenged America’s inequality toward African Americans.



Four images from Philadelphia-born artist Sheila Bridges' Harlem Toile de Juoy print on four plates from Walmart's 250th tableware collection. Bridges replaced the characters' original pale pastel clothing with red, white, and blue apparel in honor of America's birthday.

Walmart

“Just because we push back against certain policies doesn’t mean we aren’t patriotic,” she said.

To show Black Americans’ patriotism, Bridges switched out the muted pastels her characters wore in the original Harlem Toile, and decked them in stars and stripes.

“Everybody has the right to the same quality of life and benefits,” Bridges said. “And we want not just to survive but to thrive and celebrate.”

*Sheila Bridges’ Philadelphia Collection is available on [Walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com).*



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