



Red Wing Dinnerware & The Casual Line

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PART 1 OF 2

The information presented here has been gleaned from vintage Red Wing brochures, catalogs, price lists and internal documents as well as trade journals and magazines. In this discussion, a "pattern" is a dinnerware set in a particular shape with a unique handpainted design or color scheme. A "line" is a group of patterns that share the same shapes but have different handpainted designs or colors. Some of the introduction and exit dates presented have not been verified because of gaps in available documentation. When uncertain, an estimated date is provided. The end point of a pattern can be difficult to ascertain. In the 1940s and 1950s a discontinued pattern no longer appeared on price lists; in the 1960s patterns that were no longer in production remained on price lists as "limited stock" with only a few pieces listed. Here a pattern is considered to be discontinued when a full range of items was no longer available and orders were limited to remaining stock.

Each pattern has been assigned an Availability rating and a Collector Interest rating as described below. Availability represents an average for the pattern in question, however the scarcity of certain pieces within the pattern may differ. Collector Interest refers to the pattern in general, but there may be specific pieces in any pattern that are of greater interest to specialty collectors (teapots, pitchers, salt & peppers, etc). Please keep in mind these ratings are the authors' observations; your experience may vary.

Availability

- 1 - Rare
- 2 - Very scarce
- 3 - Hard to find
- 4 - Average
- 5 - Readily available

Collector Interest

- 1 - Highly sought, demand exceeds supply
- 2 - Primarily of interest to specialty collectors
- 3 - Above average
- 4 - Average
- 5 - Below average

The Casual line included some of Red Wing's most successful and popular patterns. The line featured metal stands to hold a pair of cruets and as the base for a Lazy Susan. Metal warming stands were available for casseroles (3 sizes), beverage server, teapot, butter warmer and gravy boat. A double-wide metal warming stand with ceramic handles to match the pattern was made to hold two 2 quart casseroles or a huge 20-inch platter. Initially these metal stands were black wrought iron. Copper stands were added in 1957, and by 1960 the wrought iron stands were dropped, leaving copper stands as the sole option.



Above: Smart Set dinner plate
Below: Cup & saucer



Smart Set Availability: 4 Interest: 3 Years: 1953-1957

The Smart Set pattern practically screams 1950s. The design featured green, gray and black intersecting geometric shapes of various sizes against a white background. The initial 1953 brochure did not include a number of important pieces. But within a year the rim soup, 13-inch platter, 112 oz. pitcher, cocktail tray, butter dish and butter warmer were added, probably at the same time as the introduction of Bob White. Covers and stoppers for the three casseroles, marmite, beverage server, teapot, cruets and butter warmer were available either in black or decorated with the pattern.

The original lineup for Smart Set included a peppermill. It was included in brochures dated 1953 and 1955, but was missing by 1957. The company that made the metal grinding mechanism was no longer able to supply them, so the peppermill was dropped. This piece is now very difficult to find and has considerable value. The January 1957 dealer price list included listings for a Smart Set coffee mug (Town & Country mug) and water cooler, but the listings are most likely an error as these pieces aren't known to exist.



Above: Smart Set group consisting of tea pot, coffee server, salt & pepper shakers and water pitcher
Right: rare pepper mill
Left: Teapot on stand



Above: Bob White plates (10½", 7½" & 6½") Right: Tumbler

Bob White Availability: 5 Interest: 3 Years: 1954-1967

Bob White was far and away Red Wing's best selling dinnerware pattern. It remains very popular with collectors today. Throughout the late 1950s and the 1960s, Red Wing rapidly put out new patterns in hopes that one would approach the appeal of Bob White, but it was not to be.

Bob White was the first Red Wing pattern to utilize beige fleck as the background color. The pattern featured a bob white (quail) mother hen and her chicks resting in grass and reeds. The number of birds present on a given piece depended on its size. Colors were beige, brown and turquoise. The peppermill described in the Smart Set section was briefly available in Bob White. It is probably the most difficult piece of Bob White to find today and the most valuable.





Above: Bob White Hors d'Oeuvres holder and salt & pepper shakers
Below: Lazy Susan



The popularity of Bob White led to the production of several pieces unique to this pattern. Besides the standard tall hourglass shaped salt & pepper shakers, a pair of small bird-shaped shakers were also available. An hors d'oeuvres holder in the shape of a larger bird had small holes along the back to hold tidbits skewered on toothpicks. Bob White was one of several patterns to have a trivet made in 1958 and 1959 (an offshoot of the 1958 Minnesota Centennial trivet). Tumblers (drinking glass) in two sizes (4 oz. and 10 oz.) were added in the early 1960s. Bob White was one of two dinnerware patterns to have the 5-section nut dish decorated in the pattern colors.

Bob White and Round Up were the only two latter day patterns to have a cookie jar, and they were the only two Casual patterns to have a water cooler. Most stands found with water coolers in these two patterns, as well as Tampico, are Village Green-shape warmer stands decorated with the appropriate pattern. But a promotional spot in the August 1957 issue of "China, Glass and Tablewares" trade journal announces the introduction of 2 gallon water coolers in the Bob White and Tampico patterns. Shown in the accompanying photo is a Tampico cooler setting on a cooler stand in the shape of an overturned straight sided bowl. This style of stand was available only for Bob White and Tampico, and is quite uncommon. This piece looks unusual because it appears to be a bowl with the decoration painted upside down, but knowledgeable collectors know it is a cooler stand – not a bowl.



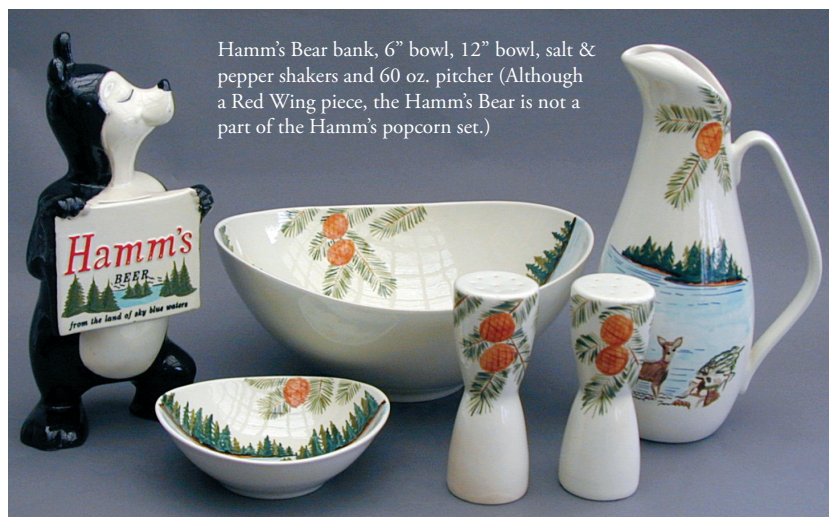
Above: Water cooler and stand
Left: Cookie jar
Bottom: 20" platter on double warming stand



Hamm's Availability: 2 Interest: 1 Years: Late 1950s

Hamm's was not a true dinnerware pattern, as it consisted of only a limited number of pieces in the Casual shape. It was a "popcorn set" that included a 60 oz. pitcher, a 12-inch salad bowl, four 6-inch bowls and a pair of salt & pepper shakers. These sets were made exclusively for the Hamm's Brewing Company and were not available for sale to the public. Hamm's used these sets as holiday gifts for business partners and other friends of the brewery. The artwork featured a blue lake, green pine trees, pine cones and a deer on a white background. The pattern was very much in tune with Hamm's "From the land of sky blue waters" advertising slogan. Hamm's pieces are scarce, and the pretty outdoors scene makes them extremely popular with both Red Wing and Hamm's beer collectors. ■

The remaining patterns in Red Wing's Casual Line will be featured in the April issue of the *RWCS Newsletter*.



Hamm's Bear bank, 6" bowl, 12" bowl, salt & pepper shakers and 60 oz. pitcher (Although a Red Wing piece, the Hamm's Bear is not a part of the Hamm's popcorn set.)

WHAT IS IT? *An Update on a Mysterious Ball Jug*

In the December issue of the *RWCS Newsletter*, RWCS Member Paul Wichert submitted photos of his curious yellow ball jug, which has a compartment in the bottom that he believes was made for holding a music box. Fellow member Larry Roschen recently sent in photos of a similar jug that he found in the archives of an Indianapolis auction company's website. The company claimed the jug was a Muncie Pottery music box ball pitcher in shape #U27. It sold for \$140 in 2005. (Larry was unable to verify whether the auction company was correct in stating that Muncie Pottery made the piece.) He added that he recalls seeing a similar pitcher years ago on eBay, complete with the music box workings in

place in the bottom of the pitcher.

While similar, Paul pointed out some differences between the two pieces. The bottom of the Muncie jug appears smaller than his and lacks the two grooves cut in the bottom. Plus, the handle of the Muncie jug is in a different position and the bottom appears to have a more rounded shape, similar to the inside of a beater jar.

As Larry said, "Who would have thought that two different potteries made the same odd item?" While the Muncie piece neither confirms nor rules out that Paul's piece was made by Red Wing, it does indicate that he's probably right about it being a music box. If only he could find the insert!



*Do you have an odd piece that has you scratching your head, wondering what it was intended to be used for? Send in your photos and story and it might run in a future issue of the *RWCS Newsletter*.*