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Red Wing Dinnerware & the Contemporary Line

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

Red Wing's Contemporary line was unusual for several reasons. It consisted of only two patterns, but one of them included 25 different pieces while the other had only 12. Most of the pieces had three short legs and a bulbous pot belly shape. The casseroles and salt & pepper shakers had hollow handles that stuck straight out from the sides. Though both patterns were short-lived, there were several variations of the names Red Wing used for them. The odd shapes and color schemes of Contemporary pieces leave no doubt they were made in the 1950s and greatly appeal to those who enjoy mid-century modern design.

White and Turquoise

Availability: 1 Interest: 1

Years: 1955-1956



Above: White & Turquoise munch jar
Below: Covered casserole



"Contemporary White", "White and Turquoise" and "White with Turquoise" were names used by Red Wing in its literature. The artwork was a vertical arrangement of turquoise ovals separated by thin black lines on a white background. The tops of the salt & pepper shakers and the tops of knobs on covers were black.

White and Turquoise was not a full dinnerware pattern, as only 12 serving pieces were made: salt & pepper, casseroles in two sizes, bean pots in two sizes, water pitcher, 12-inch salad bowl, marmite, munch jar and canisters in three sizes. It's a mystery as to why no plates, bowls or other tableware were made in White and Turquoise since the molds were made for sister pattern Spruce. But the July 1955 brochure that introduced the Contemporary line made it clear that those pieces were not available in the White and Turquoise design.

Though not stated in Red Wing's promotional literature, it seems likely that White and Turquoise was intended to be used with the Kermis party set, which featured the same colors and was made during the same two year period.



Left: White & Turquoise pitcher



Counter clockwise starting at left: White and Turquoise large bean pot, 12-inch salad bowl, salt & pepper shakers and three canisters.



Above: Spruce plates Below: Creamer & sugar



Left: Spruce salt & pepper shakers Below: 12-inch bowl Right: Large and small bean pots



Spruce Availability: 3 Interest: 1 Years: 1955-1957

"Contemporary Spruce" and "Spruce Green" were the names used by Red Wing for this pattern. The artwork for Spruce was similar to White and Turquoise but with different colors. Spruce had gray ovals separated with thin brown lines, with a turquoise swatch inside each oval. The background color was gray-green and a fleck green overglaze covered it all. Unlike White and Turquoise, the tops of the shakers and knobs were not colored differently than the background color.

The original 1955 Spruce lineup included all 12 pieces made in White and Turquoise plus the following: plates in three sizes, soup/salad/cereal bowl (with three legs), cup, saucer, creamer, sugar and 15-inch platter. In 1956, a nappy bowl was added. And while not shown in any Spruce brochure, the July 1957 dealer price list included three new Spruce items: beverage server with cover (at right), sauce/fruit bowl (no legs) and small platter. Because they were made very briefly, these three items are more difficult to find than other Spruce pieces. The Spruce beverage server had an elongated spout that resembled the stick handle found on the casseroles.



Above: Spruce cup & saucer

Below: Beverage server

