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Red Wing Dinnerware

& the Party Set, Baby Set and Buffet Service Lines of the Late 1950s

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

Kermis (Party Line) Availability: 2 Interest: 1 Years: 1955-1956

Kermis was a party set, not a full dinnerware pattern. The focus on most Kermis pieces was a jester in various poses. The jester was dressed in turquoise and black, with flesh colored face and hands. Wavy light gray lines swirled around the jester with a confetti-like effect, adding to the party atmosphere. The background color was white. Items available in the Kermis pattern were a 14.5-inch sandwich tray (platter), cup, saucer, sugar, creamer, nut bowl (small bowl), 10-inch and 13-inch salad bowls, beverage server with cover, and 8.5-inch plates. The plates had an irregular shape, and each plate featured the jester in one of four different poses. Thus there were four different Kermis plates. On the back of most plates was a handwritten blue letter that indicated the pose shown on that plate.

Kermis was introduced in July 1955 at the same time as Spruce and White & Turquoise (both of which were featured in the December 2012 issue of the *RWCS Newsletter*). Because Kermis colors were the same as White & Turquoise, people sometimes mistakenly believe that White & Turquoise was part of the Kermis pattern. Some speculate that Kermis was intended to be used in combination with White & Turquoise, because Kermis could supply the place setting pieces that are missing from White & Turquoise, but were made for the Spruce pattern. This seems logical, but there was no suggestion to this effect in the Red Wing brochures or price lists.



Above: Kermis beverage server
 Below: Three of the four different Kermis dinner plates



Above: Kermis salad bowl and sandwich tray
 Above left: Cup & saucer
 Left: Creamer & sugar



Yet Another Red Wing Dinnerware Mystery...

Was the Kermis pattern intended to complement the White & Turquoise pattern? While the colors match and Kermis could supply the place setting pieces that are missing from White & Turquoise (at right), we've yet to find any official company documentation to prove this.



Harlequin Clown Baby Set
Availability: 1 Interest: 2
Years: 1958

This three piece set consisted of an 8-inch plate, 5-inch bowl and cup. The cup resembled a coffee cup with deep sides and a large, easy-to-grip handle. The design featured a close-up of a smiling clown's face; the face occupied the entire surface. The clown had a reddish-pink nose, lips and hair, a flesh-colored face, black mouth, eyes and eyebrows and a predominantly green multi-colored bowtie. The background color was beige fleck. Rather than amusing children, the close-up clown face was said to have frightened them. (Imagine getting to the bottom of your bowl of cereal and having those big eyes staring back up at you – you'd be scared, too!) This led to a quick demise for this set, which appeared in a July 1958 dealer price list. Very few pieces of the Harlequin Clown Baby Set are available today, and a single piece will sell for several hundred dollars.



Above, left to right: The Harlequin Clown set (bowl, mug and plate).

Continental Buffet
Buffet Royale

Availability: 2
Availability: 3

Interest: 3
Interest: 4

Years: 1957-1958
Years: 1960-1962



*Above: Continental Buffet matte white casserole with warming stand.
 Below: Matte blue divided vegetable server with stand.*



Continental Buffet was a buffet service set that consisted of four different warming dishes as well as a beverage server with warmer stand, salad bowl with metal fork & spoon, salt & pepper shakers, creamer and sugar bowl. The warmer stands and the handles on covers were nickel-plated metal. Continental Buffet was available in two solid colors, matte white and matte blue. This was a well-made, heavy, expensive set. The high production costs for Continental Buffet led to high consumer prices. Despite the quality of this set, the high prices led to poor sales.

Soon Red Wing looked to replace Continental Buffet with a similar, but less expensive buffet service. By 1960 Continental Buffet was discontinued and replaced by Buffet Royale, a redesigned buffet service lighter in weight and with walnut wood knobs and serving stands instead of nickel-plated metal. Buffet Royale shapes were not the same as Continental Buffet; all pieces were redesigned into new shapes. Also, the Buffet Royale set did not include a sauce boat with stand, but added a long bread tray. Color was another difference; Buffet Royale was made only in Matte White. A "New for 1960" advertising flyer aimed at retailers used the name "Buffet Chateau", but this name was soon changed.



*Above: Continental Buffet platter with dome cover
 Above right: Continental Buffet salt & pepper shakers
 Left (left to right): Sugar, beverage server, creamer and sauce boat with cover and warming stand*



*Above: Buffet Royale casserole & beverage Server with warming stand
 Below: Divided vegetable server with stand*



*Above: Buffet Royale sugar & creamer
 Below: Continental Buffet 12-inch salad bowl*

