

Red Wing's Town & Country Line



By Terry Moe and Larry Roschen © Copyright 2010

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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

Town and Country

Availability: 5 Interest: 3 Years: 1947 - 1956

Town and Country dinnerware was created by celebrated designer Eva Zeisel, and it represented her only work for Red Wing. This pattern is famous for its tilted plates and bowls, for rounded shapes that easily fit in the hand and for its Shmoo salt & pepper shakers (top right photo). Town and Country was initially available in seven colors that could be mixed and matched by the consumer: White, Dusk Blue, Sand, Metallic Brown, Chartreuse, Peach and Rust. By 1950, White, Peach and Sand had been discontinued and replaced by Forest Green and Gray. Also by 1950, the salad spoons and soup tureen with ladle were discontinued, thus they are quite rare today. Town and Country pieces were not marked and for years were not recognized by most people as Red Wing. But interest in Eva Zeisel and her work escalated rapidly in the 1990s, as did interest in and values for Town and Country dinnerware. Though the Town and Country pattern was discontinued in 1956, the mug (the larger of the two coffee cup sizes) continued on, decorated in the colors of the Village Green, Bob White, Round Up and Tampico patterns.



Above: White Soup Tureen

Photo courtesy of RWCS
Member Ashley Wojtalewicz



Above: Coasters in seven colors



Above & below:
Dusk Blue and
Gray Plates



Above: Peach
Syrup Jug



At left:
Metallic
Brown
Marmite



At
left:
Teapot
in
Rust

Informal Supper Service

Availability: 2 Interest: 1 Years: 1951 - 1953 ??

For years, collectors sought an explanation for the presence of Town and Country pieces glazed in Concord colors. Recent research revealed the answer. Informal Supper Service was introduced in 1951, the same year as the Quartette pattern in the Concord shape. Informal Supper Service consisted of Town and Country pieces decorated in the four Quartette colors: Ming Green, Mulberry, Copper Glow and Chartreuse (Concord Chartreuse, not the lighter Town and Country Chartreuse). Available pieces included bowls, sugar, creamer, salt & pepper, teapot, baker, relish dish, casserole, marmite and Lazy Susan with seven relish dishes and condiment server (mustard jar). These pieces were intended to be used with the newly introduced Festive and Patio divided supper trays and cups. Festive trays were oblong and had a squarish cup; Patio trays were shaped like an artist's palette and had a cup borrowed from Town and Country. The Festive and Patio pieces are fairly common, but the Quartette-glazed Town and Country items are scarce.

Editor's Note: Eva Zeisel celebrated her 104th birthday in November. She resides in New York where she continues to design furniture as well as glass and ceramic objects. For more information on Town and Country, see the two-part series in the RWCS Newsletters from June and August of 2005.



Above: Festive Trays & Cups in the
four Quartette colors



Above: Patio Trays & Cups

At right:
Copper
Glow
Marmite



Above: Ming
Green Mustard Jar



Above: Cup in the
Concord version of
Chartreuse