



Sheila Bridges with her dog Loki in the screened-in porch of her home in upstate New York. The sofa and side table are from Stair Galleries, the chairs are vintage Janus et Cie, and the painting is by Earl Swanigan.

THIS CORNER OF THE WORLD

Every house has that one spot that becomes its center of gravity, doesn't it? This month, designer Sheila Bridges shares the space that helps her enjoy the great outdoors, indoors.

By CAMILLE OKHIO Photographs by FRANK FRANCES Styled by DORCIA KELLEY



Hydrangeas bloom in the back yard, with the porch in full view. The home's exterior is painted in Benjamin Moore's Black Tar.

No matter how big or small a house, there always seems to be a room that becomes the center of it all. Maybe the light is brighter there, the air circulation fresher, the vibes inexplicably better. Maybe it's all three.

For *Elle Decor* A-List interior designer Sheila Bridges, that room is the large enclosed porch at the back of her Hudson Valley home, featured on the cover of our September 2020 issue. Or perhaps we should say the front of the home, as Bridges prefers that guests walk through her yard and garden before entering the house.

This enclosed porch wears more hats than one might expect. Aside from

being Bridges's alternate foyer, it's also a dining room, a workspace (when she needs a break from her in-house studio), and a place for rest, for reading, and all-around relaxation. "I really use it for everything," Bridges says. "It's where I love to entertain. I have people over for cocktails in the evening. It accommodates up to eight for dinner. I sit, read, or work on my laptop in the living area. It is flexible and very functional."

Even her dog, a Mudi named Loki, has free rein: A dog door allows him the run of the property, inside and out. But aside from the freedom and variety the space offers, its access to the natural world is what Bridges finds most appealing. This preference has ▶



A collection of antique engravings Bridges has owned for 20 years hang above an antique mahogany table. The pillow, in Bridges's Harlem Toile, is from Williams-Sonoma Home. The tiered stool is by Chris Lehrecke.



An ottoman from Stair Galleries sits in front of a vintage Janus et Cie chair. The ceiling fan is by Visual Comfort.



Maison Gatti chairs surround a vintage marble Saarinen Tulip table from Regan & Smith. The lantern is by Urban Electric. The antique painted chest is from Parma, Italy. The tableware is a mix of vintage Wedgwood from the collections of André Leon Talley and Angela Cummings, plus Bridges's own collaboration with the brand.



The umbrella stand, in the shape of a dog, is a find from Parma, Italy. The skateboard is a design by Bridges for Union LA, and the sisal rug is by Williams-Sonoma Home.

defined the designer since her childhood, which was filled with tennis, horses, and skiing with her family. “I love the outdoors. I wouldn’t have a house in upstate New York if I didn’t,” Bridges says. “A screened-in porch combines the best of both worlds: an interior space and an exterior space.”

The three-season room (Bridges avoids it in winter) extends the full width of the house—unusual for a porch—with screens instead of windows on three sides. In the morning the breeze pours into the room. Ceiling fans turn in the hottest months, when the porch offers fresh air without the annoyance of insects and other critters. “The love affair mosquitoes have with me is incredible,” Bridges says. At dusk shadows creep poetically through the space. “The room gets amazing natural light, but because it faces west, I also get the sunset,” she says.

Since the room is not insulated,

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Bridges uses furniture suitable for the outdoors. Guests gather around a Saarinen Tulip table, with custom rattan chairs in black, brown, and blue (the palette of the room), and eat off Wedgwood china of Bridges’s design and cutlery she inherited from her parents. The lush green of the surrounding maple, oak, and white birch trees acts as a cocoon, with a green sofa and lanterns bringing the hue inside.

In those dreamy hours between day and night, Bridges might take a nap here, play jazz from her concealed speakers, or simply sit, look, and listen to the rich, layered world around her. ■