

HOME FURNISHINGS

Kohler revives six vintage shades for celebratory 'Heritage Colors' effort

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Voters will decide which two of six archival colors will be made available for purchase beginning summer 2023, as part of a limited-edition release. Image courtesy of Kohler

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

Wisconsin-based homewares giant Kohler celebrates 150 years in business with its year-long "Heritage Colors" campaign, a series of in-person and online events which will culminate in the launch of an exclusive new collection.

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To commemorate the milestone, the brand has revived and updated six of the most memorable colors from its extensive archives. Voters will decide which two of these Heritage Colors will decorate the upcoming collection.

"Kohler Co. began its entry into the world of interior design by transforming a simple water trough into its first bathtub," said Robin Richter, associate manager of Decorative and Lighting Public Relations at Kohler Co.

"From this humble beginning, the company began its trajectory into a global leader. Kohler's inspired introduction of color forever changed the face of bathroom design by transforming spaces void of color, into a vibrant expressive lifestyle."

"Pushing the envelope in design within the home creates endless possibilities and Kohler provides a range of products and experiences so people can create the spaces that exceed their expectations."

Shades of the past

It is easy to imagine that a brand with a name so close in sound to the word "color" set out to change the palette of the American home. Yet, Kohler began as a plumbing and small engines company, named for the Wisconsin town in which it was founded in 1873.

In 1908, it launched a series of groundbreaking innovations, including the first line of coordinated bathroom suites called the Windsor, followed by the first built-in bathtub in 1911, and the first all-brass faucet handles in 1927.

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A post shared by Kohler (@kohler)

In 1929, at an industrial design show at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Kohler released a series of kitchen and bathroom fixtures in a number of vibrant, popping colors—which were a revelation for the time. Homeowners quickly embraced the series, having grown weary of the plain, purely utilitarian aesthetic which dominated those rooms of the early 20th-century house.

With Kohler's designs, they were able to give their most personal spaces warm, individualized touches, transforming house into home. In return, Kohler established itself as a leader of home design.

To honor the whole of its 150-year history, the brand is releasing an exclusive collection of bathroom fixtures, including a two-piece concealed toilet by Memoirs, a Memoirs 24 Pedestal Lavatory or Console table, and a Vox rectangular vessel with Deck. This collection will be designed in two of the six colors which the brand hand-selected for its "Heritage Collection."

The six Heritage Colors—including Spring Green, (1927-1944), Peachblow (1934-1973), and Sunrise (1953-1969)—are subtle updates on original classics. Kohler devotees will have the chance to decide which of these will decorate the exclusive collection, thus honoring the brand's past while influencing its future.

To join the festivities, followers can visit Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or **Kohler's** own website to cast their votes while enjoying an evolving series of visual fare.

Ahead of the reveal, a special two-day pop-up event will take place in New York City, centered around a "Heritage Colors" truck. Members of the public are welcome to partake of the exclusive Kohler's chocolates decorated in Heritage colors, espresso drinks topped with Kohler logo flourishes, and special edition logo T-shirts among other giveaways.

The first night of the event will take place on Thursday, Jan. 26 from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm at the Kohler Experience Center on 6 West 22nd Street. It will be held the following day on Jan. 27 during the same hours, this time at Union Square on West 22nd Street between 5th and 6th Avenue.



Sink in Heritage Color Spring Green (1927-1944). Image courtesy of Kohler

Coloring in the future

The voters' choice will be revealed on Feb. 1 at the Kohler booth of the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in 2023 in Las Vegas. Assisting in the proceedings will be award-winning designers Jonathan Adler and artist and interior designer Justina Blakeney.

Mr. Adler has chosen his fair share of design winners. A noted potter and interior decorator, whose early-career collections were featured in Barney's New York, he served as a judge on the first two seasons of Bravo's "Top Design."

Ms. Blakeney is an artist and decorator known for her bright, bohemian colors, which are the subject of several bestselling books including, "The New Bohemians Handbook: Come Home to Good Vibes."

Having established its history as an American mainstay, part of Kohler's future strategy is to venture farther afield.

In December of last year, the brand named Samie Barr, formerly the senior vice president of marketing at Crate and Barrel Holdings, as its chief brand officer.

Ms. Barr will lead Kohler's global creative, media, and digital capabilities, as well as those international teams devoted to brand experience ([see story](#)).

Forward-thinking innovation has brought Kohler to this milestone, and will carry it forward as it looks toward the next 150 years.

"Products change, people's expectations change, and how people interact with products change," Ms. Richter said. "So we continue to evolve and discover new technologies and solutions."

"Kohler is where it is today, and possesses the appetite for what tomorrow can offer, because of our teams of passionate innovators. Every associate at Kohler offers contributions to the company's growth through their skills, experiences, and ingenuity. The organization remains true to its values as progressive thinkers and innovators, eager to discover and develop new, better solutions."

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