

# H&G decorating



## ALL THAT GLITTERS

Christmas can't come fast enough for Melbourne stylist Brett Currell, who takes festive decorating to a whole new level.

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Ricki the Maltese terrier-shih tzu cross admires his owners' silver Christmas tree, which is trimmed with Hollywood-icon ornaments. Sofa, side table, lamp and mirror all from Town & Country Style. Lexington cushions in red from Adairs. Painting by Linda Zarb. For Where to Buy, see page 268.







**I**t's clear on approach to this Melbourne home that its occupants are seriously into Christmas. And once you've crossed the threshold into stylist Brett Currell's private domain, each room you enter only serves to heighten the festive atmosphere.

Brett's fascination with Christmas stems from when he was a young boy living in Perth and spent many hours at his godmother's house, which was two doors down.

"I was in awe of her Christmas tree," says Brett. "It was a silver tree, decorated with the most unusual ornaments and at the very top was my favourite: an angel dressed in white. I'd always ask her if I could have the angel and many years later, when I turned 21 and had forgotten about it, she gave it to me. Now the angel is always at the top of one of my trees."

Clearly, Christmas is still a special time for Brett. Every year he painstakingly transforms the home he shares with his partner, chef Joseph Perse, into a sparkling showcase for trees and trinkets, creating a magical place for entertaining the constant flow of friends who drop by during the holiday season.

There are three Christmas trees in the house this year, each one assembled and decorated by November. As the season progresses, fireplace mantles are adorned, halls decked, candy canes and festive wreaths hung throughout the house and, most importantly, as a welcome >

Brett sets the table for lunch in the open-plan kitchen/dining room where his white Christmas tree with vintage ornaments takes pride of place. Table and chairs from PFS Furniture Sales. For Where to Buy, see page 268.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Brett decorates the white Christmas tree with vintage ornaments. In the living room, even the mirror, from Town & Country Style, receives the festive treatment. Brightly coloured glass ornaments adorn the Christmas trees. Brett usually buys his wrapping paper when it is on sale just after Christmas. A lolly bar on a side table, from PFS Furniture Sales, is made up of glass storage jars filled with sweets as well as biscuits and cupcakes baked by Joseph. Each place setting is decorated with a single red anemone. In the bedroom, a white hydrangea wreath sits around the base of a white-twig Christmas tree, decorated with black and white baubles that were gifts from a friend. **OPPOSITE** There are four stockings hung from the fireplace in the living room, one each for Brett and Joseph and for their two dogs, Lucy and Ricki who see ripping the paper off their gifts as a wonderful canine game. For Where to Buy, see page 268. >



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< on the front door. Outside, festive lights are arranged around the eaves of the house and threaded through the front garden.

"We both love Christmas," says Brett. "During December we have all the people around who can't be with us on Christmas Day. We share all the cooking. And, it's become our ritual that on Christmas Eve we stay home and watch *Carols by Candlelight* on television while we wrap presents and prepare the food for the next day."

Brett's pleasure in decorating a festive house down to the smallest detail is an extension of his profession as an event stylist. He's an expert at setting the scene for celebrations and events, including weddings, birthdays, corporate functions and especially Christmas.

While his godmother's tree started the fascination, Brett's interest grew when he started travelling in his 20s, and saw that there were different ways to decorate for Christmas. He was impressed by the variety of decorative knick-knacks available in the US and the way everything was done on a grand scale - with houses decorated from top to bottom, inside and out, and with door-to-door carol singing. Dazzled by the selection of ornaments, he couldn't resist buying some and his collecting soon grew into an obsession. It's this style of decorating that he brings to his home and today, many of those original baubles make an annual appearance.

Joseph, who Brett met in 2006, is also a keen collector and when he saw Brett's Christmas ornaments his interest was piqued too. "Joseph's started collecting Hollywood ornaments three years ago," says Brett. "Now he has collected so many he has his own Christmas tree to display them!"

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### Christmas belles

"There are a lot of plastic decorations available and some of them are beautiful, but my real passion is for vintage handmade, hand-painted glass ornaments from the 1940s, '50s and '60s," says Brett. "I love Christopher Radko decorations and Polonaise baubles. They remind me of my childhood. I search for them on eBay, collect them when I'm travelling, and friends often bring them back from their overseas trips. During the year they are all stored along with my other styling props at my warehouse."

**ABOVE** Bifold glass doors open out to a courtyard garden where Brett and Ricki sit in a hanging Pod chair from Red Shandy Designs. **OPPOSITE** The table is set with a red-and-white theme, using Country Road dinnerware and red anemones bunched in tall slender vases down the centre of the table. For Where to Buy, see page 268.