

# INSIDERS

INSPIRING HOMES WITH HEART

## Christmas chic

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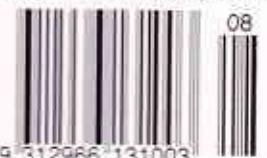
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# COMFORT & JOY

This seaside family home has a Christmas-ready entertaining space at its core, suited to both festive occasions and casual gatherings. Here, we offer up decorating and craft ideas for the special day **WORDS CLARE PATIENCE** **STYLING JULIA GREEN** **PHOTOGRAPHY ARMELLE HABIB**





**L**ocal rumour has it that back in the 1900s, Mark and Emma Travers' home was the servants' stay for Australian soprano Dame Nellie Melba, who would sojourn in the stately home next door. "It's really just talk," emphasises Mark. "But it's fun to speculate about who stayed here and what it was like." Dame Nellie Melba's holiday house was a grand affair, featuring fretwork, leadlights and pressed metal. "This place was a simple one-bedroom weatherboard," says Mark, "but that's exactly what we loved about it."

Set on Victoria's famous Sorrento coast on the Mornington Peninsula, the Travers' home is just an amble from the beach and the shops, and close to the family's loved ones. "There's a sense of being able to watch the kids grow up here," says Emma of the couple's three children Poppy, Rose and Jimmy. "They're going to be able to walk to the beach and catch the bus to school when they're older; there's room to grow into the location."

The Travers have evolved the house to fit around their absolute love of entertaining. This passion extends to their family-owned and run gourmet supermarket, which stocks seasonal cheeses from the Adelaide Hills, flowers and gourmet delights that Emma expertly sources. →

"THIS PLACE WAS A SIMPLE ONE-BEDROOM WEATHERBOARD, BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE LOVED ABOUT IT"

### home truths

**Who lives here:** Emma and Mark Travers, their three children, Poppy, 8; Rose, 6; Jimmy, 3; and dog Harry.

**Style of home:** Originally a circa-1900s cottage, this light-filled home - with four bedrooms, three bathrooms and a pool - has an open, laidback style perfectly suited to the owners' penchant for entertaining.



**DINING AREA** The generous space sets the stage for entertaining.



It's a wrap! Use plain calico or craft paper with twine and a twig of rosemary for a traditional, textural gift wrapping option that's both simple and elegant.



Come Christmas Day, the couple indulge their passion completely. "It's all about my mum's incredible pudding," says Emma. "It's a secret recipe, which I can never reveal! We have prawns and seafood, and follow that up with turkey. Mark's speciality is duck-far potatoes."

If the generously sized, invitingly bright and open living area seems perfectly crafted for such occasions, that's simply because it was. Emma and Mark created the space with friends and family in mind. In fact, the custom-designed room is just a small part of the couple's recently completed extensive renovation, which added three bedrooms, a rumpus room, two bathrooms and a pool to the home's originally petite footprint.

Before the couple got their hands on the place, it was a basic, tiny little cottage on a sloping block. "When we moved all our stuff in we couldn't fit, and I thought, 'What have we done?'" says Emma, "So we had to quickly relocate to Mark's parents' house four days later!"

Despite the tight squeeze at the beginning, Emma and Mark were quietly confident about achieving their dream layout. →

**DINING AREA (above left)** "I can't help myself!" says Emma. "I always give 110 per cent. I love to decorate." With a background in floristry, Emma's decorations are a chance to get creative with wreaths (left) and wrapping (above right). Son Jimmy (opposite) opens a gift, post the fireplace.



### ★ Cookie cutter garland

1. Choose patterned paper for your garland - we've used double-sided patterned paper for a multi-faceted look. For a range of patterned paper, try Spotlight ([spotlight.com.au](http://spotlight.com.au)).
2. Place a star-shaped cookie cutter (or the bonus cookie cutter from this issue) onto a sheet of paper. You'll need 100 stars for the garland we've created, so repeat this process on more patterned paper. If you want a longer or shorter garland, you can cut more or less stars. Once you have your number of stars, carefully cut out each one.
3. Join 2 stars together, one on top of the other, to make 50 3D stars.
4. Using a sewing machine, sew a straight line, right down the middle of the stacked stars. Repeat this process for the rest of your pairs of stacked stars, using the same length of cotton. Once all your stars have been sewn, fold the edges of each star back to create a 3D effect. Attach a loop of cotton at each end and your garland is ready to hang.

