



# A beautiful life

Interior designer Lloyd Hodgkinson on his career highs, industry heroes and the serious business of Christmas decorating

**LLOYD HODGKINSON, 33**  
Principal, Oliver Mark Interiors

## What drew you to interiors?

I have always been greatly affected by interiors. Looking back at my childhood, I was particularly interested in film set design. I would watch old films over and over again, then replicate the interiors on paper in exact detail. As I grew older, I came to understand how important interiors were for our wellbeing. I know some may not see the link between wellness and interiors, but I strongly believe the spaces I create provide comfort

and a sense of retreat which have a positive impact on the mental health of my clients.

## Describe your style ...

My personal style is quite classic – not to be confused with traditional! I have a strong love for antiques, however, I like to incorporate modern elements to this, through the use of bright patterned fabrics and modern art. The combination of disparate objects and furniture excites me, and helps interiors feel fresh and alive. My personal style is not always glaringly obvious when you look at my work, as

I believe as a designer it is important to adapt my style to suit my clients' needs, lifestyle, likes/dislikes and the architecture of the dwelling. I obsess over colour, pattern and detail so these common elements are always present in my work, whether it be a contemporary or classic interior.

## Career highlights?

I have been working on a very exciting project in Cairns for the past five years and I have been lucky enough to work with incredibly kind and generous clients who have full faith in my abilities. This project has been career defining for me as it has allowed me to grow my style while having full control over the entire project. I have worked on all aspects, from building design through to the decor.

## Where do you find inspiration?

I am an avid reader and get much of my inspiration from design books and magazines. I believe there is much to be

learnt from the great practitioners of design, so I am constantly dissecting rooms to establish why they work, or don't work, and how I can apply that and reinterpret it throughout my own work.

## Who are your design heroes?

I have many! I have been incredibly inspired by English architect/designer Ben Pentreath. His "lived in" interiors appear so effortless and speak to me personally about how I like to live in my own home. The late, great Mario Buatta is my number one. His use of colour, pattern and furniture placement is unmeasured. I also greatly admire up and coming New York designer Nick Olsen, whose look is completely his own and I love it.

## Where did you start your career?

I worked at John Croft Design (in Fortitude Valley) for just over 11 years. I was fortunate to be mentored by John, and gained all of my knowledge from him. I adored working there and am constantly



**IN THE DETAILS ...** (clockwise from main) Lloyd Hodgkinson of Oliver Mark Interiors; recent projects including a luxe powder room; enclosed verandah with custom wicker furniture; and a serene master bedroom.



### DECK THE HALLS Lloyd's top tips for festive perfection

A garland on the front door is a non-negotiable. We have a gigantic garland on our front door with decorations that change every few years. This doesn't need to be costly as last year we went to Spotlight and purchased a variety of red berries, tartan ribbon and sprigs of holly. We then spent the afternoon on the back deck decorating the garland with Mariah Carey's Christmas album on repeat and cold bubbles – pure bliss!

**I am all for artificial Christmas trees. A real tree would be beautiful I'm sure, but the practicality of this just doesn't suit us personally.**

I am a self-confessed sentimentalist, so I love surrounding myself with things that mean something to me. Like most mothers, mine still decorates the tree with ornaments that my brother and I made in preschool. Now David and I have many ornaments on our tree that our nieces and nephews made us, and we treasure them as much as any other ornament.

**I love far too many colours to stick to just two, so our Christmas tree and decorations are a riotous combination of colours. To me, this seems appropriate. If you see something you love – buy it and you'll end up with a gorgeous collection of ornaments.**

Make decorating the house into an occasion. This is a tradition I follow from my childhood. This simple formula must be followed: carols + cold champagne + liquor-filled chocolates = fun-filled night reminiscing about each decoration and Christmas fails from years gone by.

appreciative of the incredible projects and opportunities that I was given. I owe everything to John. He was an incredible mentor with a vast knowledge. Truly one of the greats!

### Is design in the genes - are your parents creative people?

My father has a scientific background and even though my career is very different from his, he likes to remind me that we are both inventors, just different types. I definitely get the "design" gene from my mother. She has always had a flair for interior design and encouraged me from a young age to pursue my passion.

### What trends are you loving right now - or are trends to be ignored?

A tricky question to answer. For me personally, trends should be avoided. However, let me follow that by saying that trends are, for some people, very important, and should not be discounted. I believe as an interior designer it is my job

to push my clients outside of their comfort zone, away from trends, to give them a much more customised and personalised look that isn't going to be passe in a few years time. What would be the point of my job if I gave my clients a look that everyone else has?

### Tell us about your own home ...

My husband and I have owned our home in Moorooka for almost four years, so it is certainly still a work in progress. You would think as an interior designer I would have started renovating the interior first, but the dilapidated back gardens were the first big renovation for us. A garden is never finished, but after three years establishing itself it is now a wonderful space for us to spend time with our chickens and in which to entertain friends. We both adore old houses so we instantly fell in love with our post-war home. The architectural detailing of the home is quite classic, as is much of the furniture we have added. We have slowly acquired a

combination of antique and new furniture and the process has taught me patience. We have enjoyed watching it evolve.

### How do you like to dress your home for Christmas?

My husband David and I take Christmas decorating very seriously. I think Christmas decorations look effective when displayed en masse or full and bursting at the seams. We group our collection of wooden nutcrackers on the sideboard in the dining room, overload the tree with ornaments, overfill large bowls with pine cones and group glass vessels in various shapes, colours and sizes with tea light candles. This year David and I are going to make a Christmas swag that hangs under an archway which separates our living and dining rooms. Instead of the traditional red, green and gold combination, we're going to decorate it with artificial lemons, limes and oranges.

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