

creative



christmas

Anya Brighthouse
Photography by Susanna Burton

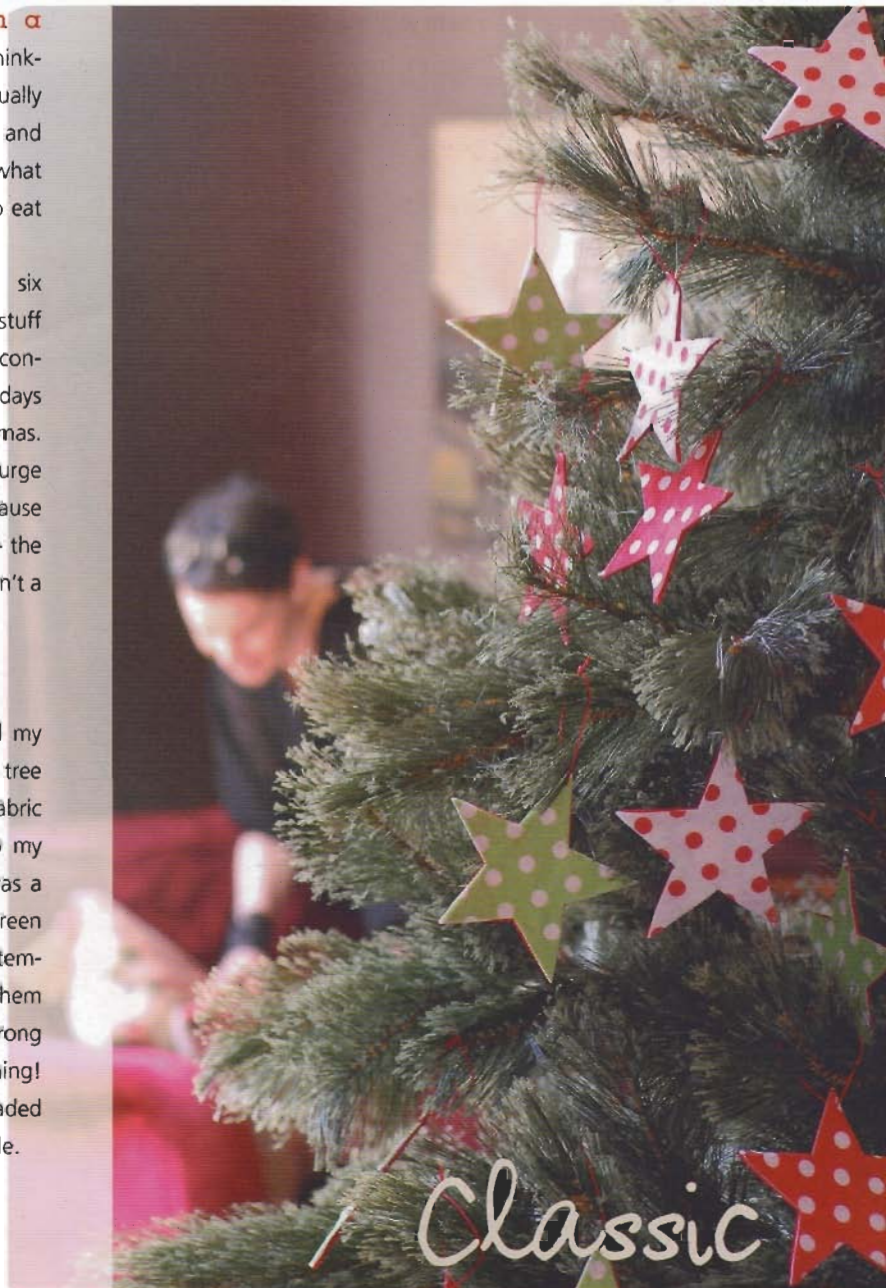
6 magical ways to decorate your tree this Christmas

It must be made clear that I am a complete Christmas fanatic! I start thinking about Christmas many months before (actually about June) ... planning what to give family and friends, how I am going to wrap the presents, what I am going to make and what we are going to eat (and when!).

So when I was asked to come up with six Christmas trees for this issue – it was really the stuff of fairytales for me! However, it was all rather confusing for my children when for a few short days in September our house turned into Christmas. Personally, I only just managed to resist the urge to start cooking a big Christmas dinner – because the rest of Christmas is pretty much organised - the presents are bought and/or planned so that wasn't a problem!

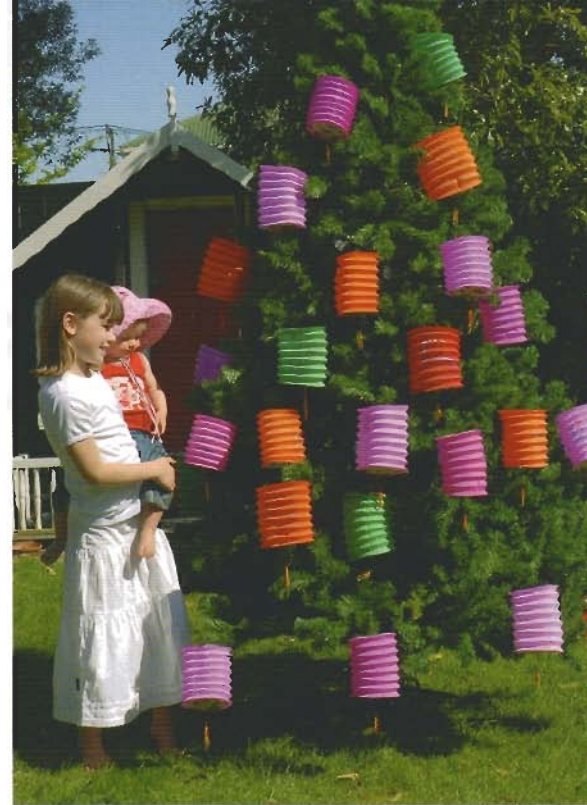
STARS AND...SPOTS

For the first tree we decorated, I guess I had my own house in mind. I just love a happy, fun tree and the stars made out of polka dot felt fabric (from SPOTLIGHT \$1.70 a sheet) was just up my alley. Red is my favourite colour – so that was a given – but it was lovely to mix in the limey green to add some dynamic. I cut the stars using a template I found on the internet and then glued them together and trimmed them. You need a good strong glue - so try a glue gun - my new favourite thing! (Available from SPOTLIGHT for \$7.) I just threaded them with an embroidery thread using a needle.



PACIFIC FLAIR

Many of us go away after Christmas and it often means we leave a tree behind or can't be bothered to even do one. The idea below is an easy way to have your tree and take it with you too! You can simply unwind the leis when you leave. They can be easily used on an outside tree (in the garden) as well. I just bought some flower leis from my local \$2 shop (or the like) and joined them all together. For this large tree I used 13. I found the little flax kites at SIMPLY TWO (3 for \$2) shop and added bright coloured tissue paper. Maybe you could hang 24 of them and add a little treat inside for each day instead of an advent calendar. Or even make a voucher to go in each one to give to family members, eg - This voucher entitles you to one evening with dad on your own, or one bike riding lesson, or a weekend with your grandparents...



OUTDOOR EASE

This is my lazy tree – all Chinese lanterns from your local Asian market. These lanterns were from the famous WAH LEE'S on Nelson Street in Auckland City @\$1.00 each (bought in a pack of 12 only). This idea can also be a great beach Christmas tree and can be easily packed down for use next year!



Elegant

MINI TREE

This tree created out of a topiary (available at KINGS PLANT BARN) is another good idea if you are going away – or if you live somewhere small. You never have to throw it away, fold it up or store it until next year! I got the children to write on the old postal labels (bought from WHITCOULLS) things that they were grateful for, or that made them happy – a room of their own, their grandparents, whatever. The labels are just attached with bright, happy ribbon – and the three reindeer from SPOTLIGHT cost \$3.95 each. I just added the ribbon... I thought it would be nice to donate the money that you would normally spend on the tree to one of the many city missions that help provide Christmas day food to those that need it. Try the Auckland City Mission, which annually gives out 20,000 Christmas presents and feeds 1500 people on Christmas day. You are never too young to learn about giving. ■

ELEGANT OPTION

Definitely my daughter's favourite, this decoration will continue to live in her room for a long time! I used tortured willow from a florist or a vege/fruit/flower shop. All the ribbon came from SPOTLIGHT. The decorations are from KMART and start at only @ \$1.30.



BUTTONS AND BOWS

Go a bit mad with colour if you want! Minimalism is officially finished (at least for the present) – so go for it! I put bright pink and orange together! Try red and orange, red and pink, and pink and green! The buttons are from ...wait for it ...SPOTLIGHT... and come in packets of similar colours for @\$3. I painted (actually my daughter Maddie did) the decorations from SPOTLIGHT orange (RESENE balloon), and the pink decorations are made from felt available by the metre (@\$7) from SPOTLIGHT. The wire trees are available in all sorts of sizes and variations from most garden stores. They are usually used for training plants into shapes. This one came from KINGS PLANT BARN and cost \$17.



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