

valuable inheritance

CRAFTS PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS ARE EXPERIENCING A RESURGENCE IN POPULARITY.

WORDS AND STYLING PIA JANE BIJKERK PHOTOGRAPHY CRAIG WALL



WHEN I WAS eight, my grandmother gave me a flower press for Christmas. I don't think I was ever as excited and inspired by a gift before or for a long time

after. The careful unwrapping of the parcel and then the discovery of what was inside remains one of the clearest memories of my childhood.

I treasured that wooden press and spent many hours picking different blooms and foliage, gently unscrewing the wing nuts, removing the timber top and strategically placing each stem between layers of tissue paper and cardboard. I was impatient to use my pressed flowers, checking them too regularly to see if they'd reached their optimal flattened state. I mostly used them to adorn handmade cards or artwork, or I'd slip the prettiest blooms between pages of my favourite books.

I expect each of us can recall similar memories of our first crafting experience — perhaps with our parents or grandparents — whether it be the initial encounter with needle and thread for a simple cross-stitch, or the joy that comes with that last row of knitting.

It filled my heart with hope and enthusiasm to observe that, at the turn of the millennium, these crafts of old returned with incredible vitality. Knitting, crochet, cross-stitching, embroidery and quilting are just some of the techniques that have come back into fashion, albeit

with a fresh twist with motifs such as feathers, constellations, triangle clusters and clouds. Exposed stitching, raw edging and neon thread are occasionally featured in modern stitch work, and any flat, pliable material can be embroidered, including hessian, bark and paper. Knitting clubs and cafés are popping up in all corners of the globe, and craft communities are plentiful in many neighbourhoods.

Perhaps it's the yearning for a simpler, less hurried way of life, where the journey becomes the most important feature of the end result. Many of us spend much of our time half-heartedly doing task after task at work, but when we incorporate handcraft into everyday life, these become the mindful moments that cannot be rushed, helping us slow down and savour the serenity.

These crafting moments are made all the more special as the skills are often passed from parent to child through the ages. The handiwork, and all that we create by hand, become tangible pieces of storytelling. *

PIA'S LINK LOVE

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- 1 www.petalplum.blogspot.com.au
- 2 www.houseofhumble.com
- 3 www.hugoandelsa.blogspot.com.au
- 4 www.the-tassie-twigs.blogspot.com.au

Pia is Country Style's resident blogger at blogs.homelife.com.au/countrystyle

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