

# sharyn storrier lyneham



## OWNER & CREATOR, EDIT



**MY CHRISTMAS MORNING** We host Christmas every second year so I'm either extremely busy getting ready for lunch or being very lazy and waiting until we head out to someone else's place.

### THE BEST THING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

I love everything about Christmas and am very intolerant of "Bah humbug" people. I'm lucky to have an extended family where everyone gets along. I think if you maintain a positive feeling, it's contagious and spreads to the people around you.

**THE WORST** There's no worst thing, but the hardest thing is finalising the guest list and knowing where to draw the line. What with exes and friends, suddenly everyone is coming. I usually try to keep it to 20-25 at the max, but in saying that we'll always welcome the lost souls.

**FAMILY TRADITIONS** We've maintained all of them, really. We've always got together, the recipes are the same from year to year ...

**GIFT-GIVING PHILOSOPHY** I like to give gifts that the recipient is unlikely to buy for themselves. I think and look and try to find something tailored to their tastes. I look year-round for my present cupboard. I also like buying pampering gifts or replenishing someone's supply of a favourite thing.

**SHOPPING** I go to all my favourite haunts. There are people in my family who are easy to shop for and over the years my gifts are

met with what I think is genuine joy and appreciation. I ask my sons what they want – it's silly to give adult children things they don't need or want. For my husband we tend to get something for ourselves. I don't need something in a box every time.

**BUDGET** What budget? I don't have one! Not for the gifts, the food, the decorations – anything. I want everything to be wonderful. I especially blow the budget with my nearest and dearest. I can't help myself.

**RECEIVING GIFTS** People say I'm very hard to buy for and I will admit I'm a much better giver than receiver. I hate the waste of money if you get something you don't like. I do give hints. My poor husband Robert worries himself silly.

**WRAPPING TIPS** I'm a big wrapper. If you've gone to trouble with wrapping, it makes even modest things look better. I also think it's important to write something thoughtful on the card, something more than just "Merry Christmas".

**ON THE 13TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME ...** I'm very lucky and don't wish for much but the health of the people I love. But if you want a material possession answer, an Elsa Peretti gold bangle from Tiffany & Co ([www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com))!

**DECORATIONS** I take a very traditional approach, a real wreath on the front door with the help of Grandiflora – call (02) 9357 7902 or visit [www.grandiflora.com.au](http://www.grandiflora.com.au) – a real Christmas tree, a beautifully set table, and vases filled with poinsettia and Christmas bush. I love Jo Malone 'Pine and Eucalyptus' candles or 'Living' cologne – call (02) 9362 5555 or visit [www.jomalone.com.au](http://www.jomalone.com.au) – the whole essence of Christmas seems to be captured in one fragrance. Jazzy Christmas music is always playing in the background.

**THEME** I stick with the traditional colours of red and green. Gold and silver are (just) acceptable as added extras, but I don't get the whole 'colours of the rainbow' approach.

**THE TREE** It's real – a tradition from my childhood in the country when we used to cut down our own trees. The ornaments are assorted baubles from when I was young, from when the boys were young. There's a sense of nostalgia in it all.

**THE MENU** We always have a late lunch and the menu is based around traditional dishes. We start with smoked salmon and Champagne. The ham, from Paddington Fresh Foods – call (02) 9360 6407 – is glazed using a time-honoured recipe from [former *Vogue* food director] Joan Campbell\*, my Christmas brains trust, and is presented with a tartan ribbon on a ham stand. Robert cooks the turkey (also from Paddington Fresh Foods) with traditional stuffing on the Weber barbecue. We have all the condiments, cranberry sauce and gravy made from scratch. There's Christmas pudding, mince pies, shortbread, nuts to crack and wonderful wines. The only break from tradition is salad, thanks to a trolley full from Fratelli Fresh – call 1300 552 119 or visit [www.fratellifresh.com.au](http://www.fratellifresh.com.au).

**WHAT WE DO** Everyone also offers to help, but usually Robert and I do it all. I like to be in control to ensure the timing is right. I can rest every other year.

**WHAT OTHERS DO** There's always a pudding-off. My husband's mum makes her delicious pudding and my sister makes a darker, richer pudding using my grandmother's recipe. They are both flamed and served with a traditional hard sauce and brandy butter. No one is ever game to declare which pudding they like best. Robert also does poached peaches as they're at their best at Christmas time.

**YOUR BEST TIMESAVER TIPS** Write lists and think about everything ahead of time. Do what you can in advance. Part-preparation saves a lot of time – starting from scratch can be stressful.

**THE 'WOW' FACTOR** To look unflustered and for my guests to think it's all been done without any effort!

**ON BOXING DAY I'LL BE ...** doing nothing. I love staying at home on Boxing Day – after all the excitement of the day before it feels like the biggest Sunday of all.

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*\* For Joan Campbell's Christmas Ham recipe, turn to page 175.*