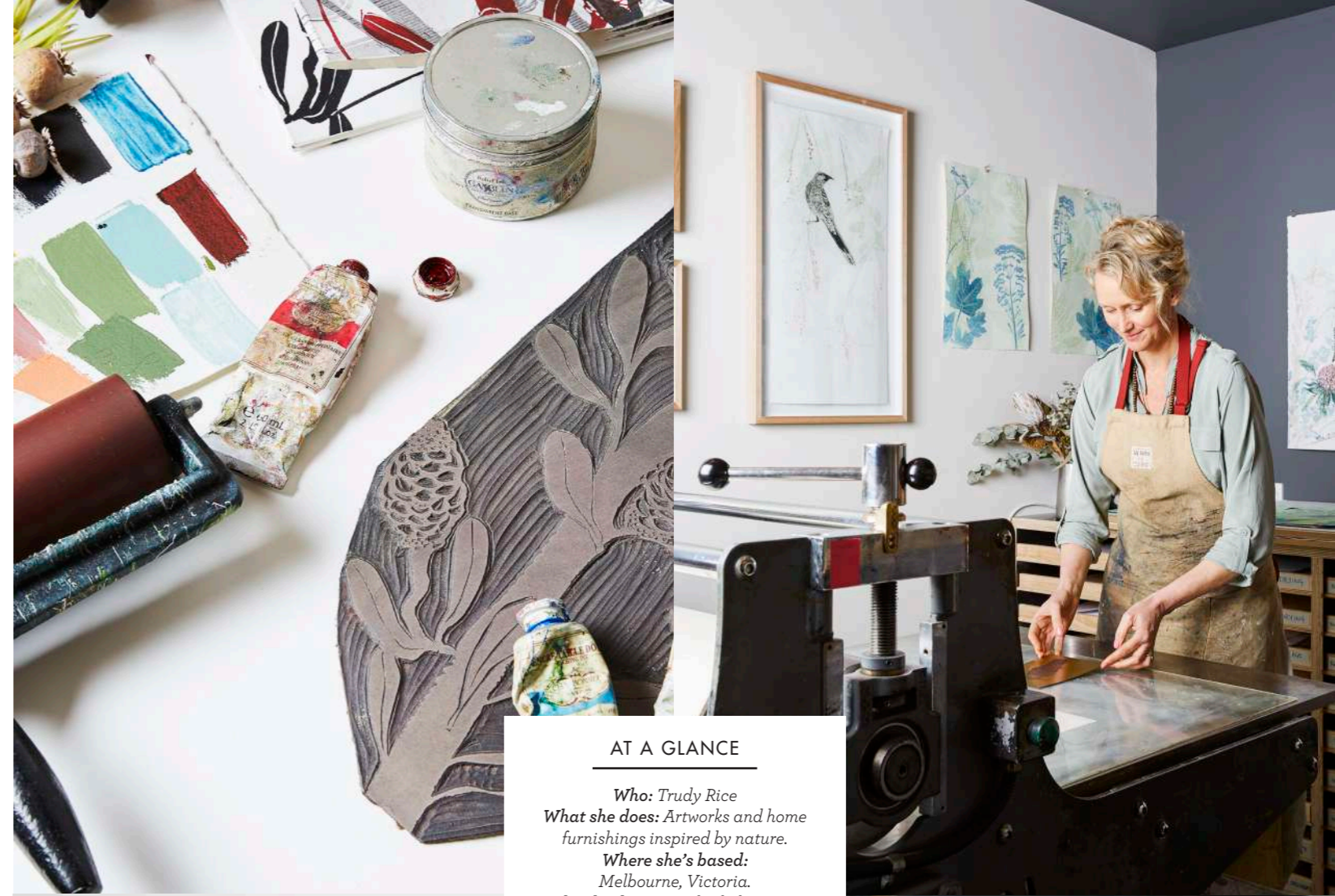




CREATIVE COLLECTION:  
**FORCE OF NATURE**  
 AFTER A LONG BREAK, TRUDY RICE HAS REDISCOVERED HER PASSION FOR ART AND IS CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS  
*Words JOANNE HAWKINS Photography ANNETTE O'BRIEN Styling ALANA LANGAN*



**AT A GLANCE**  
*Who:* Trudy Rice  
*What she does:* Artworks and home furnishings inspired by nature.  
*Where she's based:* Melbourne, Victoria.  
*Why she does it:* "I think this quote from [British advertising legend] Sir John Hegarty sums it up: 'Creativity is not an occupation, but a pre-occupation!'"  
*Visit:* [trudyricecollection.com](http://trudyricecollection.com).  
*Follow:* @trudy\_rice. >



THIS PAGE: Prints by Melbourne-based artist Trudy Rice adorn a collection of placemats and table runners. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT: Trudy has always loved using colour in her work. "At art school, they said they were going to have to tone me down a bit," she says. "By the end of it, I was a bit frustrated and determined to use colour again." OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP RIGHT: Trudy's 30-year-old printing press is electric. "It could have a wheel, which is traditional, however, working in a larger format means I will save my hands in years to come," she says. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT: A colourful corner of Trudy's Melbourne studio. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT: All her artworks start with a drawing in ink, pencil or fine liner.



**T**rudy Rice always wanted to make a career out of her art. At high school, she adored art lessons and always dreamt of opening her own gallery - until disaster struck. "At the end of Year 9, I broke my arm horse riding and had to take a couple of weeks off school," explains the Geelong-born artist. "That meant that I missed the designated day to pick up my coursework for the year and my art teacher threw it out. I was floored that it had ended up in the bin, so I decided on other creative pursuits."

Growing up in a musical family, Trudy played the guitar, cello and flute, and later formed a band with her brother. "We played some pub gigs and recorded a four-track album," she says. In her late teens, she was asked to model, which led to a 20-year career on catwalks and TV.

24. It was at art school that Trudy discovered her passion for printmaking.

She now works full-time as an artist out of a studio near her inner-Melbourne home. While everything starts out as a drawing, her colourful artworks are predominantly produced by a time-consuming technique called solar-plate etching, and are inspired by nature - particularly native flora and fauna, birds and wildlife.

"Andrew is an amazing gardener and I walk every morning and pick leaves off the trees," says Trudy. "Andrew's mum also has a place on the Great Ocean Road where you can walk up into the bush and the birdlife is really beautiful."

Trudy's delicate designs also adorn locally produced homewares, including cushions, tea towels, table runners and wallpaper. This is a key

**"WITH PRINTMAKING, I LIKE THAT THERE ARE A FEW PROCESSES YOU'VE GOT TO GO THROUGH TO GET TO THE END RESULT" ~ Trudy**

It wasn't until her late thirties that her passion for art was reignited when her husband, Andrew, found some of her high-school drawings. "He told me that I should really be doing it full-time," recalls Trudy. "And then he bought me an easel and some paints for my birthday."

She then enrolled in a part-time diploma course in visual arts, which she juggled with raising her family - as well as her and Andrew's son Liam, who is now 15, she also has son Oliver, 21, as well as stepson Matthew, 21, and stepdaughter Sally,

part of making her business viable. "They also give my artworks more kudos, in a way," Trudy says. "As your name gets out there, the original work gets more valuable." But ultimately, it's her passion for the environment that drives her work. "I've made artwork for The Overwintering Project ([theoverwinteringproject.com](http://theoverwinteringproject.com)), which is so important to the plight of our birdlife, and with many flora and fauna becoming extinct, this spurs me on to continue making," she says. "I'm just drawn to creating. I can't help it." **HB**

**TOP LEFT:** Trudy in her studio. **TOP RIGHT:** This collection of fauna will either be drawn for Trudy's solar-plate process or inked with a roller and hand-printed through her printing press, to create foliage in her artworks. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A collection of solar plates ready for inking up. Trudy was initially drawn to solar-plate etching because it uses sun (or a light box) and water. "Traditional etching is done with acid and a metal plate, but I wanted to use a non-toxic technique as I get eczema," she explains.