

design



# Bedded bliss

Colourful Japanese fabrics teamed with the classic style of France is a beautiful mix

Words Karen Woods  
Photography Chris Groenhou

**O**ur homes are a reflection of our personalities, and—often—of our cultural background. Sophie Lui has taken the fabrics of the East and blended them with French class to create bedding any Australian will love to dress their rooms with.

Born in Vietnam to a Cambodian family who had fled the ruthless Cambodian dictator Pol Pot, Sophie spent her early childhood living with her mother and brother in Paris.

Migrating to Australia when she was nine years old, she was reunited with other family members.

As a child Sophie drew clothes and models as she watched her seamstress mum hard at work on her sewing machine.

"I'd always wanted to get into fashion but felt it was too competitive, so decided to turn my focus to the home and create fashion or art pieces for the bedroom," she says.

While working in fashion retail for 10 years, Sophie kept up her drawing as a hobby, and spent time looking at standard bedding ranges that were available, and considered how she could have an impact in this area.

It was on meeting Dale Crawford, who became her business and life partner, that she was encouraged to give up full-time work and pursue her passion.

She started a degree in textile design but decided after a year to defer studying. With the help of the government's National Industries Extension Service (NIIES), she made a business plan to follow her dream.

Dale introduced Sophie to Japanese art. She fell in love with the simplicity, functionality and aesthetics of the design, and knew it was what she wanted to reproduce in her range.

"The first thing I made was a quilt cover for Dale from a kimono I found," she says.

#### Colourful history

A simple bedspread is brought to life with the vibrancy of the design work (left)

#### Darling buds

Materials used are alive with exquisite detail (far right)



Sophie Lui



Artwork: Bedding Gift, by Blank Canvas Interiors



Sophie Lui

aesthetically beautiful and simple. I want the fabric to make the statement, not be overwhelmed by the designs."

As well as runner and cushion sets, Sophie makes Japanese floor cushions using light, fresh fabrics.

"Every fabric I use I have to fall in love with. They are artworks in themselves," she says.

Many of the fabrics used are Japanese, and most are vintage. Being a talented artist, Sophie would like to create a limited range of linen printed with her own floral designs.

"It's important to me to make something that is timeless and elegant," she says.

Sophie is available for commissions, or can design a complete interior, such as the one she did for the Japanese Mountain Retreat, in Montrose.

A range of Sophie's designs can be seen at [www.sophielui.com](http://www.sophielui.com), or phone 0405 318 330 for more details.

#### Early start

Sophie Lui was inspired as a girl watching her mother sew (top left)

#### Gorgeous addition

Japanese prints feature strongly in the runners and cushion covers (above left)

#### Double up

Sophie's runners can be laid across a bed's width or length (top)

Artwork: By Amy, by Blank Canvas Interiors