

# Award Winning Bear Artists Do Collect!

*Kim Russell of Russell Bears reveals her Bear Collection.*



*Award Winner*



*Clemens, Robin Rive and Maray Bears*

**E**ven as a child, I adored animals and had a collection of soft toys that included dogs, bears and a rabbit. The first bear I can remember is the one my mum gave me, which was her childhood bear. It was already well loved when I got it and it didn't take long before it's time was up. I still remember being angry and upset when my baby sister managed somehow to detach my bear's arm and he was then thrown away never to be seen again.

I started collecting bears about 8 years ago, when I discovered the shopping channel. There was a show devoted entirely to bear collecting which was on twice a week, I was intrigued and learnt about Steiff, Hermann and many other manufactured bears. They were my starting point for collecting until I discovered artist bears, also featured on the bear shows.

The first artist bears I purchased was a Highland Bear (actually a rabbit) and a Maray Bear, by Margaret Bubner. From there my collection grew, adding Robin Rive, Russ, Merrythought, World of Miniature Bears and Cotswolds, I have to say my favourites to this day are three Barton's Creek bears by Johni Jacobsen.

I actually stumbled onto Australian Bear Creations magazine, found the patterns and decided to give making a bear a go. Around the same time I also attended our local craft fair, where local artists had their bears and patterns on display. I fell in love with one of Jennie Boylan's bears and wanted to take him home to add to my growing collection. I was disappointed to learn that he was not for sale, but a sample for a "bear kit". This was all new to me, if I wanted to own "Alec", I had to make him myself, considering the fact I was already contemplating making a bear, I booked a class and have never looked back.