

Learning to make bears myself had a huge influence on my collecting. All of a sudden, some of my collection was not so appealing to me anymore; some of the bears I had loved so much in the past were slowly being pushed to the back of the display cabinet, their faces did not offer the character and personality of the artists bears taking their places. I find that artist bears appeal to me on an emotional level the faces have loads more expression and I love the often weighty solid feel of some bears. Many of the bears I buy do not look like mine but will have many of the same features, quality fur, undressed, detailed faces and time and effort spent on creating a face that will appeal and talk to you. While the bear must be well made I do not have to have it perfect, I like floppy arms on some bears and other features that I know some artists consider technically wrong doesn't always bother me. I now must fall head over heels in love with a bear before I take it home for my collection.

Since my own Russell Bears have taken over my life, I have had to downsize my hug before I can add new ones to it. I have Steiffs, Hermann, Robin Rive, Merrythought and the list goes on, all looking for new homes to make way for new additions.

I don't tend to bypass bears that I think I can make myself because if you want a particular artist's bear for your collection, it's really hard to capture someone else's artistic ability and energies and then replicate it in the bear you are making for yourself, I find your own flair comes out instead.

I have found that my collecting has really slowed down since all my energies have been concentrated on my own bears, and the lack of room doesn't help either, so I tend to go for the smaller bears ( you can fit more in and they are easier to hide from your other half). My latest addition to my collection was a Linda Benson bear that I made with a lot of Linda's help in a workshop last year. He is a tiny panda and is absolutely gorgeous.

I do like to keep my award winning bears as part of my collection, although I have let a few go to new homes in the past, in total I have 20 at the moment. I honestly have no idea how many bears in total I have in my whole collection, I've never sat down and worked it out, all I know is that there is too many!!!

I prefer to buy bears "hands on" rather than from a photo, because of this I try really hard to represent my own Russell Bears in their photos as "true to life", and offer a return policy if the bear is not what the collector expected it to be. I believe you need to connect with a bear, like picking up a puppy or a kitten, if you can't put it down, you know it's going home with you, no matter what!!!!

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*Early Sonneberg Museum Bear Collection*



*Gilbert, Tinker, Hamilton (Barton Creek), Lex (Bears by Netta), Linda Benson Panda*



*Hyland Bears, Sugar Shack Surprise, Cottage Collectables, Coltswold and Dilly Dally Bears*



*Limited Edition Steiff Bears*