



Lindsay Lewis sold her first home to finance her venture into the bed-linen market, now she is reaping the rewards.

## Doing it their way

Meet four women who had the courage to start their own business. By Josephine Brouard

### LINDSAY LEWIS, bed-linen manufacturer

When Lindsay Lewis was getting married, she and her husband-to-be, Wayne Moore, went searching for some damask bed linen to mark the occasion. But to their surprise there was no Australian-made linen to be found. The discovery led the pair to launch their own linen manufacturing business within months of marrying and resigning from their respective jobs. It's a move that still stuns the couple seven years later.

Financially, it meant Lindsay had to give up her home in order to afford the 10,000 metres of damask fabric she needed to make up her own designs. She needed money fast and the only interest-free way she could think of getting her hands on it was to sell her house. Lindsay laughs at the memory. "My poor husband was horrified, of course. He asked me if I knew what I was doing, and I said, yes, of course I did. It was only when I was flying over Canberra the following week and a pilot announced that we were flying at 10,000 metres and I looked down and thought, aaargh, what have I done? It suddenly hit home just how much fabric

I had bought. I had to ask myself if, based purely on my designs, I really believed I'd be able to sell them all.

"I just loved what we had created," she says now of her first bed-linen design – an Australian wildflower motif with wattle, waratah, kangaroo-paw, blue-gum nut, orchids and desert peas woven into the finest damask. "It's a beautiful product," Lindsay says simply.

Launching her bed-linen range in August 1993, Lindsay was fortunate to have David Jones stock it for Christmas that year and her stock sold out within weeks. Needless to say, the Australian Heritage Linen collection was back in David Jones the following year, this time in gold and pale hydrangea blue as well as Lindsay's original classical white. Since then, Lindsay has created bed-linen designs exclusively for both retail clients and ranges for stores.

Today she employs 24 people, travels the world to import the finest fabrics and works with worldwide suppliers to create up to 35 different, exquisite bed-linen designs. "We got tired of working hard for other people, we felt it was time to put our energies 100 per cent into something for ourselves. I ►