

LINDA NICCOL, AUTHOR, FILMMAKER AND COLLECTOR OF MOSAIC PLATES

Secret lives

I'M A collector from way back, especially of '70s objects. At last count, I had around 20 sunburst and retro clocks and probably the same number of salt pigs. I like repetition of objects and think collections look good in numbers – like my walls of clocks.

I go through phases and once I've filled a space with one type of collectible, I move onto the next. I started collecting mosaic plates a few years ago and now I've got about 18.

These plates aren't made with tiles that you smash up and then stick together, they were created in the '70s from custom-made tiles. There are two types – either Japanese-made ones or those created by New Zealander John Crichton, and it's pretty hard to tell the difference.

I had my collection just sitting on top of one another but the production designer on *Second-Hand Wedding* [Linda co-wrote the script and it was filmed in her Kapiti home] set them out on stands, so that's how I've kept them. There's a nice shot of them in the film.

What I love about the plates is the colours and the symmetry of the patterns. And I adore small tiles – my two bathrooms are done out in small tiles which must driven the tiler mad!

The back of the plates are also pretty special – they're spun copper and as far as I can make out, no two are the same. Some are bowls and some are platters – they're all very stylish.

You used to be able to pick one up for about \$20 but now they're becoming trendy – I saw one on *Trade Me* the other day for \$1900. You can still find the odd bargain at junk shops around the country.

The psychology of collecting fascinates me. People collect objects for all sorts of reasons, but there are also those who hang onto stuff because they can't let go, like the main character in *Second-Hand Wedding*. I make an effort to have a cleanse every now and again and put objects back out into the world, so someone else can enjoy them.

My second collection of short stories, *The Temperature of Water*, is about to be released soon, so I'll be busy with that. The collecting might have to take a backseat for a while. Mind you, if I see a junk shop on my travels, there's no telling what can happen.

Interview: Sharon Stephenson

Photo: Maarten Holl

