

trendsetter

Playing a new role

..... From films to homewares, Catherine Martin has added a new string to her bow

TWO-TIME OSCAR winner Catherine Martin hit a blank wall while refurbishing the inner-Sydney Victorian mansion she shares with her husband, Australian producer-director Baz Luhrmann.

When the options in furnishings and paints available in the marketplace failed to fire her imagination, the woman who has won plaudits from her peers for art direction and costume design in films decided to create her own graphic designs and prints.

"I've always been interested in trying to furnish things for myself and my friends that you can't find," says Martin.

It has led to her first foray into the commercial world of homewares — a partnership with Australian brands Porter's Paints and Designer Rugs. Last month Martin introduced the first part of her striking, print-based range.

The Catherine Martin range includes eight rugs from Designer Rugs and eight Porter's Paints wallpapers, along with related prints.

"Tapping into my various design experiences, I wanted to express an eclectic bohemian look that draws from all kinds of influences," she says.

"I aimed to design patterns that don't take themselves too seriously ... (but) have a sense of luxury."

Inevitably, her ideas were also influenced by her production design research for Baz



Luhrmann's latest film *Australia* (to be released next month). The result is a celebration of Australiana, with several of her designs embracing bird motifs and native flora.

The patterning is dramatic and the colours are vivid. "Colour is something that is multi-faceted. You need all of the colours of the spectrum to help solve design problems," she says.

Her range includes the *Australia Suite* — *Acacia* and *Eucalyptus*, *Lyrebird* and *Feathers*; the *Chinoise Suite* — *Peony*, *Pheasant*, *Sparrow*; two children's patterns — *Circus Silhouettes* and *Alphabet City*; and *Lace*.

Gary LaPersonne

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Catherine Martin; the *Eucalyptus* rug; *Circus & Stripes* wallpaper for children; the *Lyrebird* and *Feathers* rug.

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