



AT HOME WITH DAVID HARTNELL

The gossip guru loves decor that's dramatic and exotic

David Hartnell is a celebrity in his own right thanks to 40 years of gossip writing, but he's never happier than when he's at home with his long-term partner Somboon Khansuk in their eclectic Auckland house.

"The house has a Thai flavour," David says, glancing around. "People say it's like a dramatic museum. We don't think so because we live in it."

Their favourite room is the deck they've

made into an enclosed terrace. "We have some wonderful dinner parties out there," David says. "Somboon is an excellent cook and I'm an excellent washer-upper."

Nearly every room is decorated with photographs of famous friends.

"We recently moved a lot of the signed Hollywood pictures, memorabilia and my awards into the toilet. It's become quite a talking point," David laughs.

One of the most dramatic things in the house is a beautiful Chinese poster in a huge golden frame, and in another flamboyant decorating touch, pictures of Somboon and David have been transferred onto canvas, creating artwork with an Andy Warhol-style pop-art flavour.

"Everything has to be over the top, otherwise feature pieces just look like a pea on a drum," says David.

One of David's most prized possessions is an oil painting by his comedian friend of 40 years, Phyllis Diller.

The couple also treasure a special Buddha statue that sits in their pretty back garden.

David admits their kind of decor isn't for everybody but he and Somboon are happy and confident in their surroundings.

"I absolutely adore our home," David enthuses. "I can't imagine living anywhere else. It's a perfect haven for Somboon, me and our Australian terrier Miss Cele."

Rebecca Milne

DAVID: 'THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVOURITE THINGS'



David's flamboyant style is reflected in the home he shares with his partner Somboon

This doll of Auckland identity Freda Stark was made by Hamilton doll-maker Marshal Watt – her outfit was made from one of Freda's dresses



David and Somboon love this painting by their dear friend Phyllis Diller

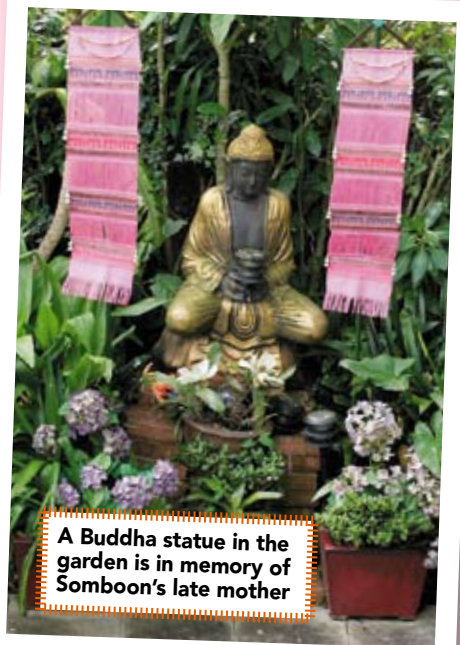


Above: David was thrilled to find this poster at a Chinese emporium in Auckland

Below: This antique bakelite Mickey Mouse toy was a gift. "I love it because the mouse never turned into a rat," David laughs. "He's a Hollywood survivor!"



Somboon's Thailand-based sister Sudarat spends hours rolling, folding and linking *New Zealand Woman's Weekly* pages into beautiful origami-like swans



A Buddha statue in the garden is in memory of Somboon's late mother

