

CHRISTMAS BLISS

Whether Christmas is celebrated in the sweltering sun at the beach as it is in Australia, or with snowflakes gently drifting down outside whilst you are huddled around a blazing fire in the northern hemisphere, the Christmas spirit is still the same. A spirit of love, peace and thankfulness for our many blessings, family, friends, and those we love bring to our life all year through.

In a world where money and possessions play such a huge part in our lives, a TV commercial for a popular credit card seems to sum up such moments as those experienced at Christmas – 'the love and sheer bliss that friends and family bring to our hearts and homes at Christmas are priceless', for everything else there is a credit card.





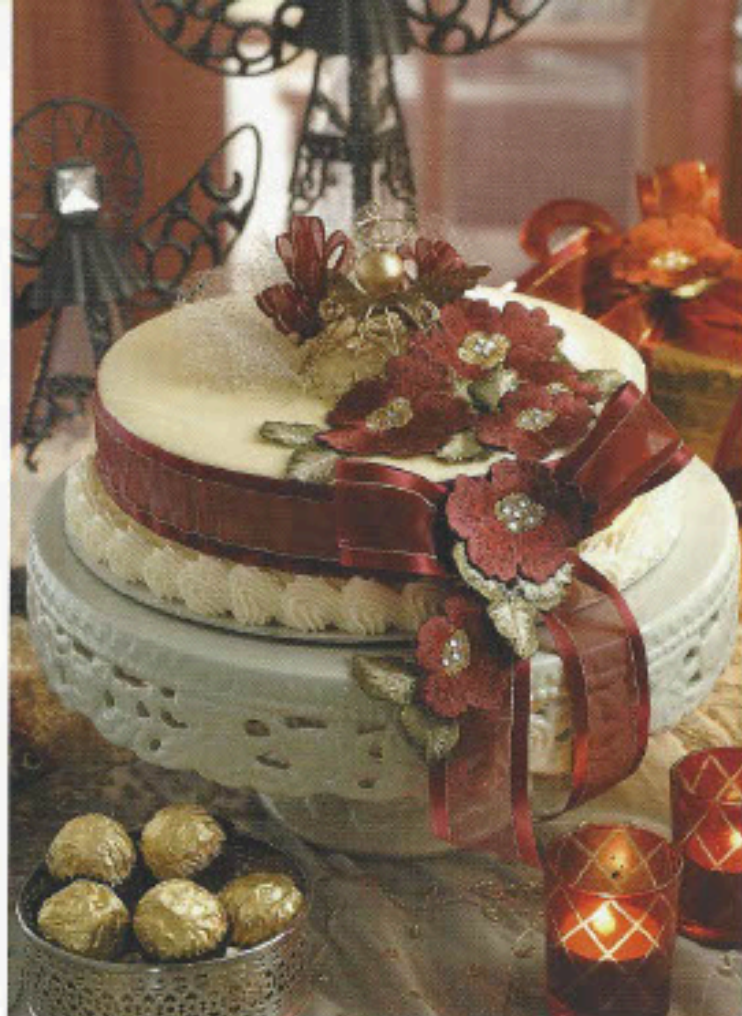
JENNY'S EMBROIDERED DECOUPAGE

12 GIFT IDEAS

When we make a gift for a friend or family member we are telling them that we love them and they are worth spending not only money but time on as well. However, time is the magic word and we know how scarce it is so the creative team at CE have come up with the solution; add embroidery to something purchased using an embroidery technique that is quick, easy and creative and will make your gifts sparkle.

Jenny's Embroidered Découpage technique is a quick, easy and delightful way to transform any gift idea. The embroidery designs used in the projects on pages 52-55 are from Jenny's Victorian Roses design CD, which has many single flowers, leaves, stems and buds that are perfect for this technique.

Simply sew a design using rayon thread on nylon organza over Dissolve Magic woven soluble stabiliser, roughly cut it out, wash away the stabiliser and then use either a stencil iron or small scissors to remove the organza from around the embroidery design. A stencil iron is fast, accurate and efficient and once you have tried it scissors will never be used for this technique again. (Remember not to use a stencil iron for this technique if you are sewing with polyester thread as it melts with heat). The resulting embroidery then can be applied to any number of gift ideas that are suitable for not only Christmas but the whole year through!



1 DECORATE A CHRISTMAS CAKE

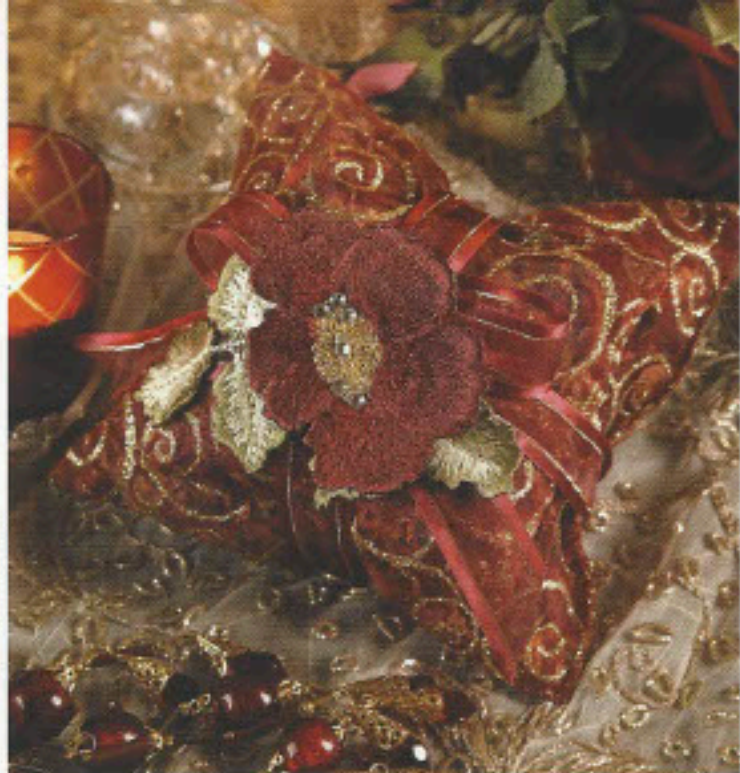
You may choose to either purchase a cake that has sugar frosting on it or make your own. Whichever way, using beautiful embroidered roses makes decorating a cake really easy. Robbie decorated ours and added a Christmas angel, ribbon and gold mesh to augment her glorious embroidery découpage. You could also make small cakes and place just one or two roses and leaves on the top and give to friends and family who perhaps would not use a large cake.

The single flowers, leaves, or whatever your embroidery selection, can be grouped (say, six flowers or six leaves in one hooping) in the software and colour sorted, and then sewn out at one time to eliminate constantly re-hooping and changing threads. Once the stabiliser has been removed and the embroidery designs stenciled around, they are then arranged on the fabric. The individual designs or a cluster of designs can either be glued in place (using a craft glue) for items that do not require washing or fused to the fabric with Appli-kay Wonder double sided fusible web, then the designs free-hand stitched around by machine using a transparent thread to hold them to the background fabric.

Either way, Embroidered Découpage embellished with heat-activated crystals is quick and easy with 'minimum effort for maximum results'; you will love it.

2 ADD TO A COASTER

Large petals of a flower, such as a daisy, can have an embroidered rose adhered to their centre, making a decorative coaster. A set of these is very inexpensive and a great gift idea for teachers at Christmas – practical and decorative, and saying 'thank-you' in a special way.



4 EMBELLISH THE TOP OF A CLUSTER OF PETITE POTPOURRI PILLOWS

Believe it or not these two little pillows cost just \$2 from a discount store, one set filled with potpourri and the other set infused with a seasonal perfume. A beaded braid is adhered to the edge of the plain pillows with embroidered roses and leaves adhered to each corner. Both sets of pillows are then bundled together (small on top of large) and held together with organza ribbon, which is further enhanced with an embroidered rose and leaves. How luscious are they?



3 TITIVATE A HAIRCLIP

A \$2 hairclip purchased from a discount store is transformed into a designer accessory by adding ribbons, embroidery and heat-activated crystals, not only to the centre of the rose but down the clip as well. Be careful when applying the crystals to the clip, as it is plastic and will melt with too much heat – so do not press the wand to the plastic too hard or for too long.



5 DECK THE HALLS ... TOPIARY TREE

Topiary trees are so decorative all year round and are easy and fun to make. Robyn's Christmas topiary tree used a small sturdy basket filled with a florist oasis (for dried flowers) cut to fit the inside basket shape, which has a tree branch pushed into the centre. The other end of the branch has a 1.5cm (6in) round polystyrene ball mounted on top. Christmas 'picks' (artificial Christmas decorations on the end of straight piece of wire covered with plastic which has a sharp end) and looped up ribbons wired together at the base (remember to leave an extended piece of wire at the end that can be pushed into the polystyrene ball), along with 30cm (12in) tinsel pipe cleaners (twisted around a pencil to form tendrils), are used to cover the polystyrene ball. Embroidered Découpage roses are then adhered to the Christmas 'picks' with looped ribbons, a rose and leaves are clustered together at the base of the tree to complete this festive little topiary tree, just perfect for the entranceway of your home.





6 PRETTY UP A TASSEL

One of Jenny's favourite stores in the US is *Tuesday Mornings* (a surplus store that is a cross between the *Reject Shop* and *Spotlight* in Australia). This indulgent tassel came from *Tuesday Mornings*, however any tassel can be dressed up using beaded fringe, pearls, organza ribbon and, you guessed it, *Embroidered Découpage* roses and leaves transforming an ordinary tassel into a truly Victorian Christmas decoration to hang on the handle of your front door or tree.



8 ENHANCE PURCHASED INEXPENSIVE PLACEMATS AND NAPKINS

Purchased placemats, from such stores as *Spotlight* in Australia and *JoAnn's* or *Hobby Lobby* in the US, are inexpensive and functional. By adding *Embroidered Découpage* (using the double-sided fusible web technique and freehand stitch) and extending the embroidery over the edge of the placemat and in one corner of a napkin, instantly transforms these basic placemat settings into decorator seasonal napery – perfect to enhance your Christmas table.



7 ADD TO RIBBON ENDS

To make your gifts really special, add embroidered roses to the ends of the ribbons that adorn your Christmas boxes.



9 EMBELLISH A LAMP SHADE

This luscious little lampshade is taken from Jenny's now out-of-print book, *Victorian Roses*. A very inexpensive lampshade and base (try *Hobby Lobby*, US or *Homemart*, AU) is transformed with antique lace, drop beading and *Embroidered Découpage* roses and leaves, further extended with penciled on twigs and leaves. How easy to transform basic into flair with embroidery!



10 GARNISH A BUNDLE OF CINNAMON STICKS

Cinnamon sticks always pervade a room with a warm and inviting aroma and bundled together with organza ribbon and Embroidered *Découpage* roses, leaves and 'tendrils' tinsel pipe cleaners are decorative as well, a perfect way to say Christmas in your home.



12 TRIM A PURSE

Either use a recycled or vintage purse, or a really inexpensive purchased one and then add that designer touch with organza ribbon, Embroidered *Découpage* roses and leaves, finishing off with a beaded fringe tassel. Cost of purse and embellishments all for under \$20.



11 CREATE A BELL PULL OR WALL HANGING

A great way to use your embroidery 'test sew-outs' is to use the Embroidered *Découpage* technique, then the embroidery designs can be applied to anything. The design used in this bellpull is from Jenny and Simon's latest book *Summer Wine* and it is on the design CD that comes with the book.

*Now we have you started, let your imagination run riot with shoes and matching handbags, clothing and home decor items. Visualise how Embroidered *Découpage* takes the stress out of machine-embroidered quilts by taking the 'fear factor' out of placement and the possibility of a mistake in the last block of a quilt – a whole new machine-embroidery world lies in wait for you.*

*For more ideas see Jenny's latest book *Summer Wine* and the wonderful designer outfits in CE No 16.*