



INSIDE THE TEA PEA

Not all tepees are in the form of a round tent – and not all tepees are spelt 'tepee'

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Photography **Kirsty Gibson**

IT TAKES A brave person to launch a business in the midst of a recession; Meg McMillan is a brave person. It's been five years since the Wellington interior designer and stylist started tea.pea.co.nz – a site selling the kind of colourful, handmade products that she couldn't find anywhere else. The venture was so successful that Meg recently took another plunge, opening a four-walled Tea Pea in Wellington's Khandallah village.

Built in the 30s, the space had been a dress shop for longer than anyone could remember. "I'd had my eye on this space since starting the company, so when it came up we jumped at it," says Meg. She and husband Scott spent five weeks ripping up the carpet, knocking out the dressing rooms and dousing the floors and walls in white paint.

Meg's vision is to curate a range of covetables from all over the world, focusing on "small businesses doing great things".

"We know all our suppliers," says Meg, "and their size, ethics and philosophies align with ours."

These include cushions from New York-based Oeuf; Armadillo hemp and wool rugs from Melbourne; and Turkish organic cotton towels. Lamps from German company Heico snuggle up to Tea Pea's own range of colourful table napkins, pillowcases and baby gear, while a whole wall is devoted to party supplies such as confetti balloons and Japanese washi tape. There are also swoon-worthy 50s Cintique chairs and painted French ones.

A lover of all things vintage, Meg has raided her personal collection to fit out the shop, including the antique mail-sorting unit and an impressive wooden shop counter which began life in a haberdashery shop. And she's keen to pass on the creativity – classes for kids and adults are coming soon. ■

Tea Pea, 22 Ganges Road, Khandallah, Wellington. tea.pea.co.nz