



## TAKING SHAPE

DESIGNER GREG NATALE'S  
THOUGHT PATTERN IS  
TAKING OVER THE WORLD

**I**wonder how national treasures are created. Are they self-appointed or does Canberra decide? Or do they metamorphose slowly, earning our respect and affection through their hard work and contribution to the Australian story? If the latter is the case - as I suspect it is - then interior designer Greg Natale might be adding the letters NT to his name quite soon.

Sydney-based Natale is one of our most recognisable design names. His trademark blend of patterns and geometrics, retro and contemporary, was showcased in his book *The Tailored Interior* (Hardie Grant, \$70), which has so far sold more than 11,000 copies worldwide. There are his rug designs for Australian outlet Designer Rugs; recent collaborations with retailer DOMO and French furniture manufacturer Grange; Natale cushions, towels and bedding at Myer, David Jones and Domayne; tiles for Teranova and a range of wallpaper for Porter's Paints.

I tell Natale "prolific" is the word that springs to mind. That makes the 43-year-old designer laugh. "Even in my Year 8 art class the teachers would always tell me to stop. They said I was producing too much!" he says. The son of Italian immigrants (who remembers being obsessed with Alexis Carrington aka Joan Collins's apartment on '80s TV series *Dynasty*) has obviously always been an overachiever. Chatting at the glamorous Surry Hills HQ in Sydney (Joan would approve) where he employs 20 staff, Natale admits that he likes getting older. This is a good time to be doing his thing. The market, he says, is



**NATIONAL TREASURE** (clockwise from top) designer Greg Natale; his mosaic tile as part of the Bisazza collection; one of Natale's creations for Designer Rugs; a geometric rug by the designer.



starting to react against the longstanding dominance of minimalism. "My clients are getting adventurous. They want bronze and brass in the kitchen and organics alongside geometrics. They want *layers*."

Minimalism was never his schtick. "Pattern is in my DNA," he says. "It's an Italian thing." Life came full circle for Natale this year at Milan Design Week, when he launched a collection of mosaic tile designs for Italian manufacturer Bisazza. And 2018 will see the publication of another book - this time for global publisher Rizzoli - and a collaboration with a major European brand. There are plans for a furniture, lighting and accessories range, and an e-commerce site ([gregnatale.com](http://gregnatale.com)).

Natale might be playing on the world stage now, but his heart is still in Australia. He's as excited by a current project in Victoria's Geelong as he is by recent work in New York. And also by the imminent launch of a candle range in David Jones. "I've always wanted to be a brand," he says with a laugh. ★ *Neale Whitaker is editor-at-large of Vogue Living.*



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### Neale's objects of desire

#### GRAPHIC ART

- 1. HAY** throw, \$297, [amara.com](http://amara.com)
- 2. GREG NATALE** cushion, \$139.95, [thevignetteroom.com.au](http://thevignetteroom.com.au)
- 3. WEST ELM** console, \$799, [westelm.com.au](http://westelm.com.au)



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