



Janet Wilson, of Handmade Treasures, captures the spirit of Father Christmas and his whimsical, wondrous ways.

would drive through Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif., to see the white Christmas lights strung in the trees. That year she received a nurse's kit (she eventually became an RN), roller skates that she and her brother fought over, an ironing board and iron, plus a child-size card table and chairs. "My brother ate the candy pills out of my nurse's kit!" she recalls.

Diana Lee Palomba, Timeless Bears, and her two sisters desperately wanted sleds for Christmas when she was 10 years old. And their wishes came true. "What a surprise when we ran to the tree on Christmas morning to find three red sleds with huge bows waiting for us. Tied to them were red hats, mittens and scarves that Grandma had made for us," she recalls. It had snowed a little on Christmas Eve, so the sisters were able to try out their new toys right away.

"My mom still recalls how striking we were—three little girls dressed alike sledding down the hill at the same time," Palomba says.

### Caroling, Caroling! Christmas Bells Are Ringing

The childhood Christmases of Terrie Kalaputas, Terrie's Bears, are memorable because they resonate with the sound of music. Her grandmother was a singing instructor and always had 30 to 40 young students. The highlight of every Christmas was the recital she held. "We started learning the new Christmas music in September and spent the next few months practicing and rehearsing for the big night. I love Christmas music and the memories that I relive whenever I hear it," Kalaputas says.

### A "Beary" Special Place in Their Hearts

The Christmas memory that made a lasting impact on bear artist Pascale Nowicki, of Reves D'Ours (Dreams of Bears), happened when she was 4 years old. That year she received her first teddy bear, which she adored. But she forgot him outside, and someone stole him. She missed the bear immensely, but

eventually she began creating them. "Now I'm very glad to have many teddy bears," Nowicki says. "The house is full."

Although as a child, bear artist Sue Pendleton, of Bluebeary Treasures, and her family were based in North Africa because of her military father, her folks saw to it that the magic of an old-fashioned American Christmas still visited in the distant land. When Pendleton and her siblings awoke on Christmas morning, they were greeted with a fairyland of toys, candy canes and fruit. "My attention focused immediately upon the teddy bear, and the rest of the world faded as I knelt and picked him up. He had a white tummy and face, with blue legs, arms and ears. Even in my child's mind, I was aware that my parents had to have sacrificed to get us kids such a nice Christmas," Pendleton recalls. Throughout the following years, the bear served as a reminder to her of her folks' selflessness. And although the bear is long gone,



Melissa Zemeski's 24-inch "Nicholaus" was designed for a 2005 Christmas tea.



The day when Pascale Nowicki's first, lone teddy bear was stolen on Christmas is long gone. Now she makes them, and her house is packed with her hug.