

# LUX

THE BEST OF EVERYTHING 07.02.09

## CHILD'S PLAY

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# RALPH LAUREN



## LETTER FROM LUXX

If I, as I suspect is the case with many of our readers, had a penny for each time I've heard the phrase "the country is in recession" over the last three weeks then, ironically, I'd probably be a millionaire today – maybe even a millionaire twice over. As it happens I'm not but that really is no reason not to enjoy the finer things in life. In fact, in unstable economic times the opportunity to hold on to excellence which truly meets your exacting standards becomes all the more important. And, as so many of the people I've spoken to over the course of putting this special children's issue together have said, during any financial crisis the very last things to go within families are the precious little luxuries which make a huge and happy difference to the children's quality of life. So while we, as adults, deal with the consequences of a collapsing global market, children can blissfully continue to enjoy themselves and the many wonderful things the world has to offer them – from fantasy days skilfully brought to life to gorgeous clothing designed by the darlings of the fashion industry. Of course, as parents you will already know that seeing your child's face light up with pure joy is tremendously, uniquely special and that alone makes every penny you spend on delighting them worth it.

**Aasiyah Dana, editor**

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**Editor** Aasiyah Dana **Sub-editor** Aasiyah Dana **Picture editor** Aasiyah Dana **Executive editor** Aasiyah Dana

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# LUXX

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Fun, funky, fabulous



MARC JACOBS



Left: No Excuse for lateness with the MC Watch, £145, Marie Chantal ([www.mariechantal.com](http://www.mariechantal.com)). Below: Ahh the sound of music. Baby grand piano, £130, Nik Nak Toys ([www.niknaktoys.co.uk](http://www.niknaktoys.co.uk))



*Higher Purchase*

# LUXX HOT LIST...



Eradicate the words "I'm bored" from the children's vocabulary with the multi-play 20-in-1 game, £269, The Board Game Company ([www.boardgamecompany.co.uk](http://www.boardgamecompany.co.uk))



As soft as a baby's bottom...ahem. Cashmere crib throw, £220, Katherine Pooley ([www.katherinepooley.com](http://www.katherinepooley.com))

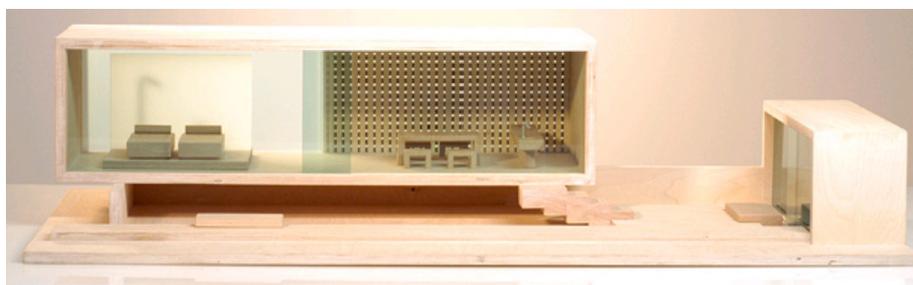
He'll be far too cool for school in these George Little Loafers, £50, Fins for Him ([www.finsforhim.com](http://www.finsforhim.com))



Specially created by Dylan's Candy Bar for sweet-teeth this side of the pond, the Sweet Treat Tower, £67, from Gift Library is packed full of classic American favourites like Oreos and Clodhoppers ([www.gift-library.com](http://www.gift-library.com))



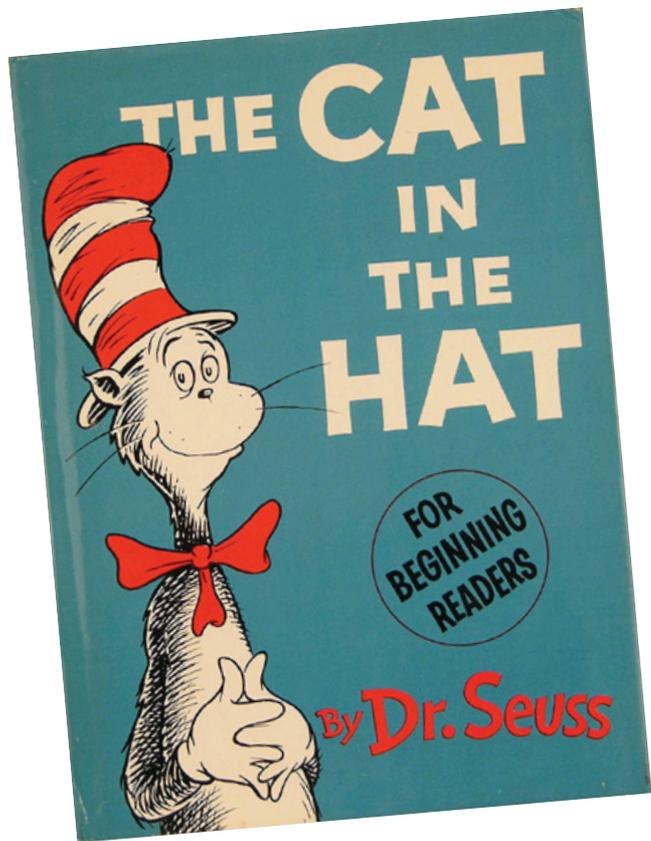
Left: Keep the kids' artwork forever with a bespoke pillow, £295, Monogrammed Linen Shop ([www.monogrammedlinen.com](http://www.monogrammedlinen.com)). Above: Soft and cuddly - need we say more? Faux suede hippo, £235, Coccolare ([www.coccolare.co.uk](http://www.coccolare.co.uk))



The traditional doll house is given a contemporary twist for modern, Miami cool girls. Villa doll house complete with pool and garden, £314, Little Fashion Gallery ([www.littlefashiongallery.com](http://www.littlefashiongallery.com))

Above: The perfect toy for any little girl hoping to eventually graduate to the ubiquitous Mini. Pink princess metal pedal car, £230, Mum Said ([www.mumsaid.co.uk](http://www.mumsaid.co.uk)). Right: Pretty and practical, jacquard knitted scarf, £88, Eric Bompard ([www.eric-bompard.com](http://www.eric-bompard.com))





A First Edition, First Issue collectible of one of the all time children's favourites. Cat in the Hat, £8,500, Peter Harrington Books ([www.peterharringtonbooks.com](http://www.peterharringtonbooks.com))

# ...OR PERHAPS NOT LIST

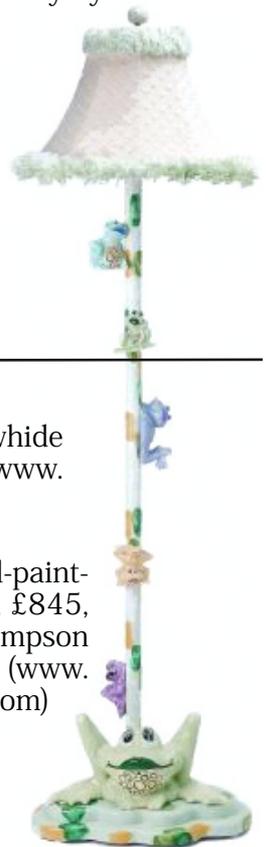
I say! How dapper. Reinhard Plank fedora, £125, Little Fashion Gallery ([www.littlefashiongallery.com](http://www.littlefashiongallery.com))



Drum Kit, £195, Conran Shop ([www.conranshop.co.uk](http://www.conranshop.co.uk))



"My Little boy" oil on canvas painting, £335, Urban Mummy ([www.urbanmummy.co.uk](http://www.urbanmummy.co.uk)). For a child, possibly by a child



Just moorvellous no? Mini cowhide chaise, £550, London Cows ([www.notonthehighstreet.com](http://www.notonthehighstreet.com))



Custom, hand-painted floor lamp, £845, Teresa Thompson at Mum Said ([www.mumsaid.com](http://www.mumsaid.com))



Classic rocking horse with an added splash of colour. Portaferry Polka, £1,850, Sugar Lump ([www.sugerlumphorses.com](http://www.sugerlumphorses.com))

"Over The Moon" sterling silver baby rattle, £190, The Silver Company ([www.thesilvercompany.com](http://www.thesilvercompany.com))



Funtastic! Jungle wool rug, £115, Hippins ([www.hippins.co.uk](http://www.hippins.co.uk))



Baby rocket ship bank, £1,350, Tiffany ([uk.tiffany.com](http://uk.tiffany.com)). Crafted in sterling silver baby's first bank account might just be worth more than the actual contents



Silver Cross Oberon doll's pram, £293, Harrods ([www.harrods.com](http://www.harrods.com))

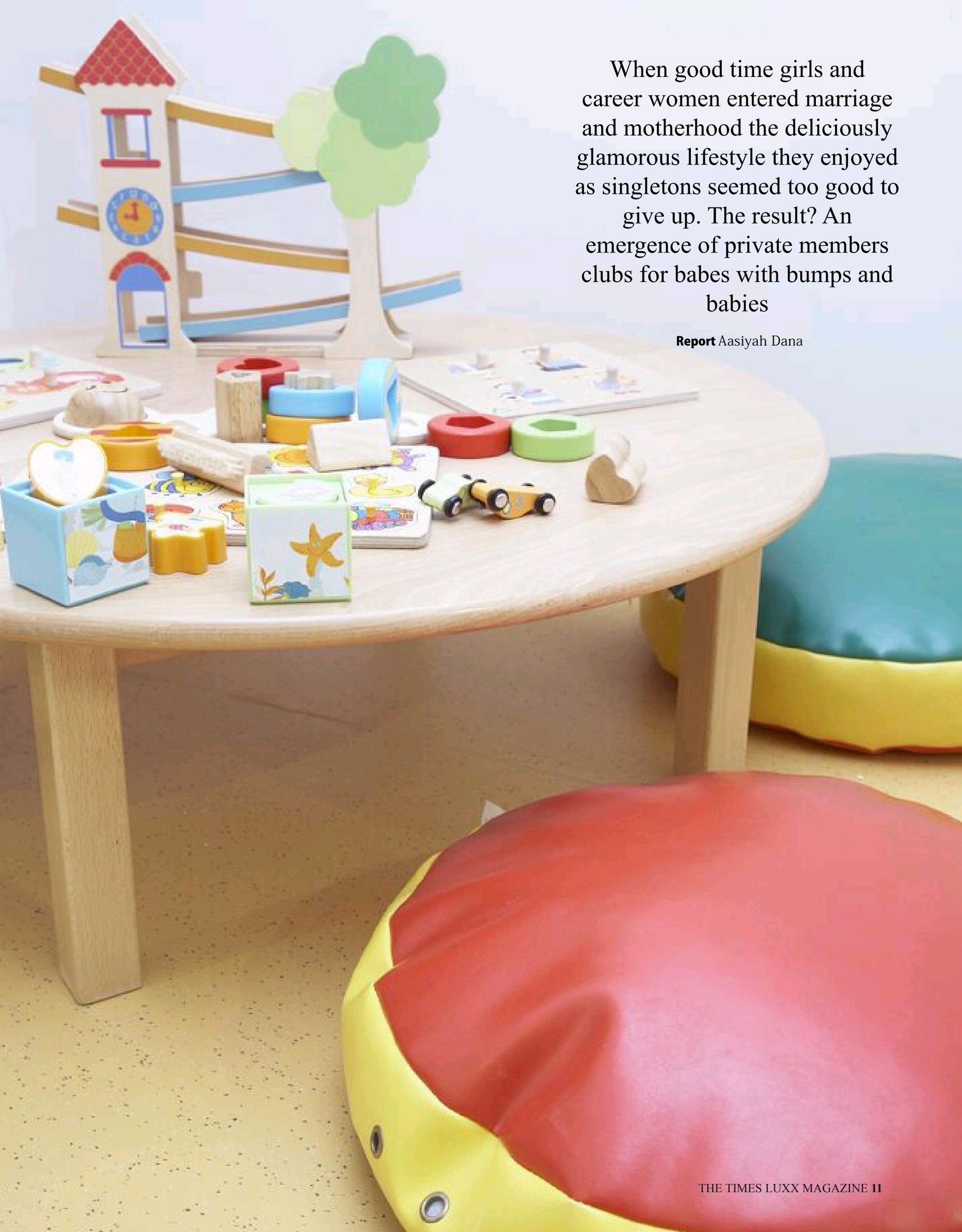


*Learning through play*

# FUN HOUSE



Let's play: The play area  
at Cupcake Mum for mini  
Cupcake members



When good time girls and career women entered marriage and motherhood the deliciously glamorous lifestyle they enjoyed as singletons seemed too good to give up. The result? An emergence of private members clubs for babes with bumps and babies

**Report** Aasiyah Dana

**Cool**, calm and collected is how mum (tucking into a scrumptious chocolate and almond croissant) and dad (busy perusing the Financial Times) appear while little Amelia runs happily, giddily between them. There's no clutter or chaos to speak of and the atmosphere is decidedly hushed. This is the fresh face of the modern family, one that has bought into the latest trend to hit the capital – private members' clubs for parents and children.

Described as witty, family-friendly junior versions of the eponymous Groucho Club, three private members' clubs have opened their doors in the heart of London's moneyed communities, effectively pioneering a style of parenting that seamlessly merges breastfeeding and toddler tantrums with baby massages and top-up tanning. Within months of one another Maggie & Rose, Cupcake Mum and Purple Dragon established plush havens for mother and child which took so-called yummy mummy living to a whole new luxury level.

"I had three kids and no where to go" says New Zealand émigré Maggie Bolger, one half of Maggie & Rose, speaking of the inspiration behind the club she set up with friend and business partner Rose Astor. Before they developed and launched Maggie & Rose, Bolger says she found she was attending classes where there was nothing aimed at toddlers and pre-school children accompanying their mothers.

For Sharai Meyers, founder of Purple Dragon, private members' clubs for children seemed like a natural addition to the evolving children's luxury market. "There's a generation of mothers now who have high expectations and the money to match" says Meyers, who believes that the popularity of the clubs will continue despite the current recession. "It's a challenging economy for any business but ultimately if you're able to deliver benefits then people are going to continue to join and to stay".

At Cupcake Mum, where the focus is on giving expectant and new mothers a "lovely experience" and "guilt free mummy time", managing director Karen Hastings, who hasn't seen a drop-off in membership, is also unruffled by the financial crisis. "When you're pregnant you're pregnant, we're confident people need Cupcake Mum" says Hastings who set up the club after she moved to England from the US in 2002 and realised that there was a distinct lack of emphasis on fitness based activities – "there's more of a 'let's go to the pub and have a beer' mentality here" – particularly for women with children.

Bolger is similarly upbeat and views the gloomy economic climate with optimism. "Recession is consistently followed by a baby boom" which, she says, means that places like Maggie & Rose, Purple Dragon and Cupcake Mum will always have a market they can target. "Plus" says Bolger "because families aren't going on holidays right now they have more of a need for this type of club which caters to children". The three also cite another reason for the continued success of their clubs. "It's challenging with children



in the city," says Meyers, "Purple Dragon gives members the opportunity to form a community which then becomes a great support network". Bolger suggests the same, "the members feel like they're part of a community here which is important because in urban environments like London it can be difficult for parents to meet others like themselves", while Hastings says the clubs are a place where "like-minded people" can become more socially connected.

In spite of the state of the economy it's clear that Hastings, Bolger and Meyers have big ideas. Maggie & Rose already has its own line of books and merchandise and Meyers and Hastings are hoping to produce something similar too; taking the brand further they say, "is in the pipeline". If the women triumph in their quest to redefine childhood and parenting for the twenty-first century, private members' clubs for families may just yet become the norm – a luxury not only for the super-rich but an affordable, wonderful necessity for the everyday family.

*Maggie & Rose: 020-7371 2200, [www.maggielandrose.com](http://www.maggielandrose.com). Cupcake Mum: 020-8875 1065, [www.cupcakemum.com](http://www.cupcakemum.com). Purple Dragon: 020-7801 8688, [www.purpledragonplay.com](http://www.purpledragonplay.com).*

MAGGIE & ROSE IS THE SORT OF PLACE KIDS DREAM ABOUT - TOYS GALORE, BIRTHDAY PARTIES, DELICIOUS TREATS, A CINEMA - THE CLUB MIGHT EVEN BE THE SORT OF PLACE PARENTS DREAM ABOUT



Clockwise from opposite page: The spa at Cupcake Mum where members can enjoy some pamper time while the children play in the crèche; kids get stuck in during cookery classes at Maggie & Rose; Mimi's Cafe at Cupcake Mum sells homemade organic food; things get messy at Maggie & Rose during art lessons; the Maggie & Rose snug where children can chill out and watch the latest animation film; Cupcake Mum's reception area; Maggie & Rose members make the most of the soft play room

## Purple Dragon

**Established:** November 2008 for 0-12 year olds

**Members:** 50

**Cost:** £2,750 per year

**Location:** Battersea Park

With its distinctive Manga style cartoons, a key part of the branding, and its bright, airy rooms Purple Dragon, the largest and funkiest of the three clubs, instantly strikes the right note. "Purple Dragon is about fun, about having a great time; it's a place which appeals to kids and their parents" says Meyers who describes the club's philosophy as "fostering creativity". "It's children's job to play" Meyers says; "here they're learning through play with the help of great tools".

The "tools" include a science lab, cookery and music studios, an arts and crafts room where kids with a creative streak can go artistically wild, a miniature golf course, a wet-play zone, a herb garden and a games room complete with Wii and Playstation. The list of classes is similarly exhaustive so it's no surprise that the young members can't stop raving about it.

Rosie Nichol, 8, was amongst the first people to join the club. "I always come after school because when I'm here I never feel bored," says Nichol, whose favourite part of the club is the art room "because painting on the walls is fun". For Thomas Armstrong, 11, a Purple Dragon member for two months, it's the opportunity the club has given him to learn how to play new instruments that makes it "cool" and "the best".

Meyers says that the secret of Purple Dragon's

success is "having fun" whether in the form of Scotland Day when members celebrated with all things tartan or in the shape of a hassle-free family lunch in the club's vibrant 100 seat restaurant. With plans to bring Meyers' club to other parts of London – "we're thinking Hampstead or St. John's Wood" – it won't be long before the streets of London are alive with the sound of happy children.

## Cupcake Mum

**Established:** April 2008, primarily for mums and mums-to-be and children up to 5

**Members:** 240

**Cost:** £125 per month + additional fees for spa and crèche

**Location:** Putney

At Cupcake Mum it's all about the mothers. With its pale and pretty colour scheme, organic café, specially designed spas appropriate for mums-to-be and new mums, yoga and Pilate classes and the sleep pod (where mothers can shut the world out for fifteen minutes while they enjoy a light massage) the club creates the perfect ambience for a pamper session or two.

Katherine Taylor who recently returned to work having taken six months maternity leave after the birth of her first child, James, says Cupcake is ideal for unwinding and bonding with her son. "I come every weekend. I can relax because I know James is being looked after. The fact that I get to enjoy some 'me-time' makes such a difference when I play with him, I'm not tired or flustered; it's wonderful".

## Maggie & Rose

**Established:** September 2007 for 0-7 year olds

**Members:** 200

**Cost:** £500 per year + additional fees for classes

**Location:** Kensington

Maggie & Rose is the sort of place kids dream about – colourful toys galore, birthday parties aplenty, delicious treats, a cinema screening animations all day long – the club might even be the sort of place parents dream about.

Bolger describes Maggie & Rose as "a home away from home where kids are trained to focus and be creative while having fun". The club's foundation "was built on education" she says; "we're teaching children but we're not pushing them; there isn't that oppressive private school attitude where kids are pressurised. Maggie & Rose isn't an institution, the environment is very much like home".

Alice Watts' five year old daughter Jessica visits the club four times a week and is so attached to the place she couldn't wait to return from a family holiday in the south of France. "I actually sent Maggie an email because Jessica kept saying she wanted to come back to London," says Watts.

Bolger puts the club's success down to the staff; "we're always told that our popularity is because of us, the environment we've created". Given the interest Maggie & Rose has received from places as far away as India and Dubai, it seems Bolger and Astor are most definitely doing something right. **LX**

# Flight of Fancy

A day escape into the fantasy world of children is sure to enchant them and you

**Report** Aasiyah Dana

The days when jelly and pass the parcel or a trip to the local park were enough to put a smile on your child's face have long since disappeared. Now parties and school holidays provide further opportunities to create and deliver a memorable, magical experience for kids – from live animal shows for children brave enough to get up close and personal with snakes and spiders and weird and wonderful science-themed

birthday bashes to grown-up pamper parties for little princesses and access to recording studios for mini Britneys and Justins. Yes, it costs more than a Thomas the Tank Engine birthday cake from the supermarket or a visit to nana's in the summer but the children will love you for making their dreams come to life (if only for a couple of hours) and that, surely, is priceless.

## Cook up a storm

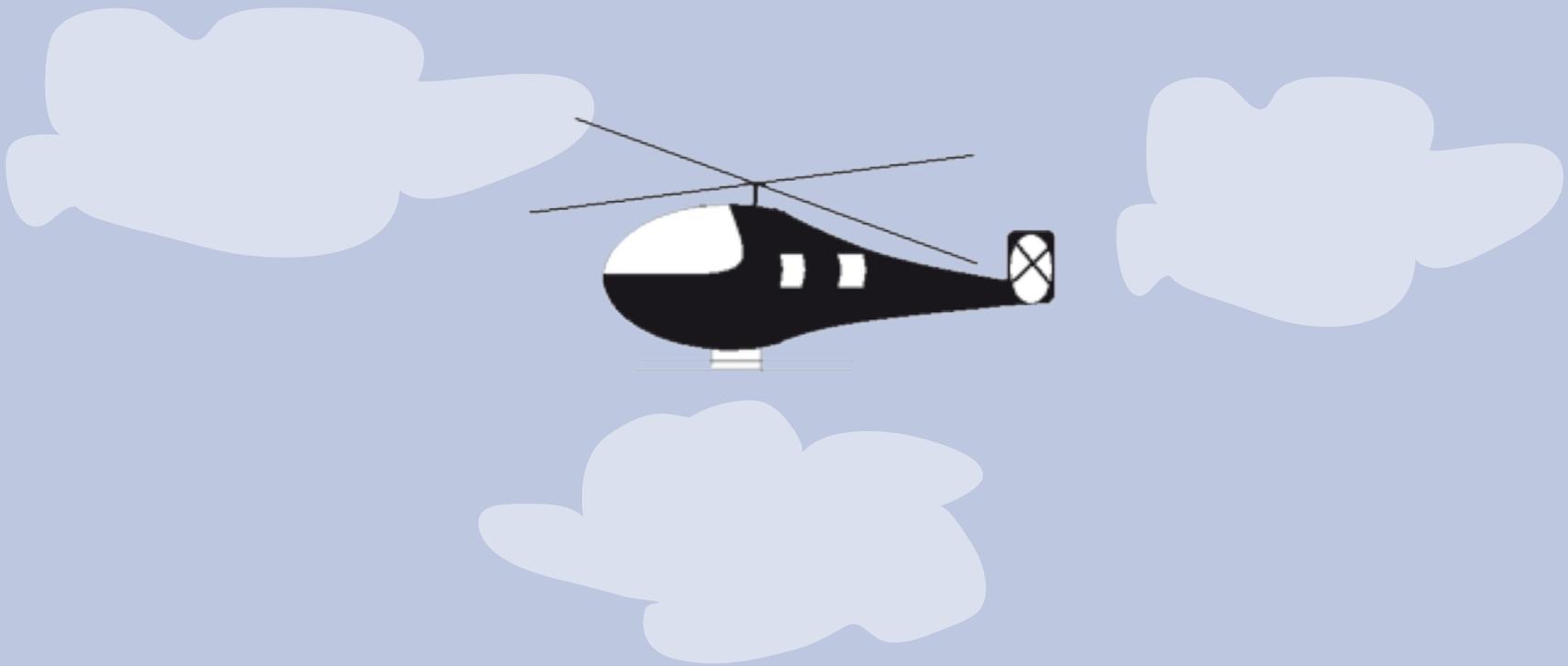
Plenty of little chefs aspire to become master chefs and what better way to get the ball rolling than to take a specially designed children's cookery class at Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons, Raymond Blanc's legendary hotel and two Michelin starred restaurant in Great Milton, Oxfordshire. Children are taught some of the techniques used by Blanc to create his distinctive, delightful food before getting the chance to explore the kitchen garden and cook up a feast for lunch. Things get sweeter in the afternoon as kids attempt to create the perfect soufflé and indulge in chocolate tasting before a tea party to round the day off. Children's cookery courses, £225 for one child or £495 for the family ([www.manoir.com](http://www.manoir.com)).



## Art Attack

There's nothing children love more than getting their hands dirty, which means that arts and crafts inspired parties and holiday workshops are just the thing to keep them in high spirits. In London Arty Party employs working artists and art students to help kids produce paper maché, wood or clay masterpieces while at Smarty Paints children can paint ceramics, pottery and even t-shirts. Art 4 Fun, also based in the capital, has a great variety of activities with painting, drawing, printing, tie-dyeing, kite, stamp and frame making, sculpturing and marbling on offer. Arty Party: Prices start at £230 for twenty children ([www.artyparty.co.uk](http://www.artyparty.co.uk)). Smarty Paints: From around £180 for twenty children ([www.smartypaints.co.uk](http://www.smartypaints.co.uk)). Art 4 Fun: From around £219 for twenty children ([www.art4fun.co.uk](http://www.art4fun.co.uk)).





### Let's Fly

Tailor made experience days for children are not only the perfect answer to half term holidays they can also give kids the chance to experience something truly special. "I've always wanted to be a pilot; I love the idea of being able to look down and seeing the world from high up in the sky" says Ryan, 14 who dreams of the day he'll get to sit in the captain's seat. Helicopter flying lessons from £342 for one hour ([www.thanksdarling.com](http://www.thanksdarling.com)).

### The Alternative

**Microsoft Flight Simulator X Gold Edition**, £36 ([www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)). **Helicopter photographic print**, £155 ([www.allposters.co.uk](http://www.allposters.co.uk)). **London Helicopter Tours**, £135 for 30 minutes ([www.blueskycharter.co.uk](http://www.blueskycharter.co.uk)).



### Singing Sensation

*Top of the Pops* might have bitten the dust but thanks to *The X Factor* there are still thousands of children across the country singing into their hairbrushes, fantasising about their big moment on stage. Anna Sophie, 13, (currently in love with Chris Brown) can always be heard belting out a tune – at school, at home – even in the shower. “I’ve wanted to be a singer since forever; music is my passion.” Happily for Anna Sophie and others like her, Red Letter Days can arrange a studio session to give budding divas a chance to see what goes on behind the scenes and experience a day in the life of a musician. As many as ten friends can join in, either for a group sing-a-long or to record separate tracks. Staff members are also on hand to help with editing the music so that everyone leaves with a pitch perfect album. Kids recording studio experience, £205 for three hours ([www.redletterdays.co.uk](http://www.redletterdays.co.uk)).

### The Alternative

**Kids Karaoke Machine**, £130, ([www.emkararoake.co.uk](http://www.emkararoake.co.uk)). **Wii Boogie Superstar**, £30, ([www.play.com](http://www.play.com)). **Concert tickets to see Girls Aloud at The O2, London**, £34.50, ([www.ticketline.co.uk](http://www.ticketline.co.uk)).



### Animal Magic

Oliver, 11, spent two years in South Africa and ever since he's been fascinated with animals. "At Kruger [National Park] we could get really close to the animals; I loved watching them because they're so interesting and clever". Animal Man breed their own animals (invertebrates, mammals, reptiles and amphibians) for corporate events, school visits, birthday parties and fundraisers. Fearless kids can assist the entertainer with the animals during the presentation. Private parties from £220 for one hour ([www.animalman.co.uk](http://www.animalman.co.uk)).

### The Alternative

**Woburn Safari**, £13.50 per child ([www.woburnsafari.co.uk](http://www.woburnsafari.co.uk)). **Life size plush tiger**, £395 ([www.hansatoysatlawleys.co.uk](http://www.hansatoysatlawleys.co.uk)). **Wild Safari 3D: A South African Adventure at the BFI Imax, London**, £8.50 ([www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)).





*Sweet Dreams*

## SLEEPING BEAUTIES

Whether they're classic or contemporary, beautifully crafted cots can help set the tone for the nursery, says Aasiyah Dana

When you're decorating the nursery in preparation for that all important arrival there's one piece of furniture in particular which is sure to merit long hours of debate, discussion and deliberation. The cot of course is unlikely to be the pride and joy of the family or the home – that honour will go to the newborn safely cocooned inside it – but underestimate its importance at your own peril.

The history of the cot can probably be traced back to the advent of Christianity and the recounting of the moment when baby Jesus, swaddled and sleeping soundly in "the manger" as it was then described, was first seen by the good people of Bethlehem. Naturally the cot has since undergone something of a transformation and many of the twenty-first century reincarnations of the once humble manger delight with clever, technologically advanced tricks that are a treat to behold.

As interior designers will tell you the cot not only sits at the very heart of the

**Cots, from left: Nurseryworks Studio Cot**, £2,100. Contemporary cot which converts in to a toddler bed or desk ([www.nurseryworks.net](http://www.nurseryworks.net)). **Art For Kids Jack and Jill Cot**, £3,020.

Hand-painted seashore motif cot from Art For Kids at Mum Said ([www.mumsaid.com](http://www.mumsaid.com)). **Bratt Decor Chelsea Sleigh Cot**, £1,452.

Victorian inspired sleigh cot from Bratt Decor at Mum Said ([www.mumsaid.com](http://www.mumsaid.com)). **Viva Baby Amore Rocking Cot**, £545. Traditional Tuscan cot perfect for rocking baby to sleep ([www.vivababy.com](http://www.vivababy.com)). **Smallable Convertible Cot**, £628. Chic French design cot which opens into a bed ([www.smallable.com](http://www.smallable.com)).

nursery it is in fact the heart which means choosing the right one is crucial to achieving the desired look and feel. What's more, like so many other baby items, sturdy, striking cots are perfect for handing down through the family making them genuine investment buys.

Traditional rooms call for luxuriously ornate cots, lovingly hand crafted in rich wood by Italian craftsmen famed for their skill, while sleek, cutting edge designs created closer to home are a must for modern nurseries. For practical parents experimental designers across the pond have taken the cot further so that children can literally grow up in (and with) the bed they first slept in.

Whether they're inventive or conventional, what's certain is that there's no shortage of stunning cots to choose from, even for the most particular of people. Bringing up kids might not be any easier then it used to be but having a baby – well that's never looked so good before. **LX**

# BURBERRY



*The Measure*

# Rising Star



A collapsing world economy, as kids are proving, is no excuse not to look good, so while the banks go bust designer childrenswear is booming

**Report** Aasiyah Dana  
**Photograph** Karel Balas

In times when it's difficult, impossible even, to find a nugget of good financial news one lucky sector of the luxury market is enjoying a surprising growth. If the increase in designer childrenswear is anything to go by then the answer to banishing those economic blues lies apparently in making sure your children at least look their very chic best.

"When there's a recession often parents will cut back on spending on themselves but they'll continue to spend on the children; it's important to them that firstly, they maintain their standard of living as best as they can and secondly, that they don't give the kids a cut-price version of the lifestyle they've become accustomed to enjoying" says Sara Watkins, owner of Frère Jacques, a boutique specialising in designer childrenswear in north London.

Watkins, whose shop stocks labels like Ralph Lauren, Armani Junior and Chloé Kids, has in fact seen an increase in profits in the last six months. "Traditionally August and September are good months for business because parents are investing in back to school pieces but we've enjoyed steady profits throughout winter and expect the spring-summer collections to do equally well".

Frère Jacques is not alone in enjoying high sales in the current unstable climate. Others like Trotters and Igloo Kids, both of which are based on the Kings Road in Chelsea (where French favourite Petit Bateau recently launched its first London concept store for babies and teens), have observed a similar rise in high-end children's retail.

"Regular customers will buy something on a weekly basis; price isn't an issue because in return what they are getting is exceptional quality and exclusive labels and that's exactly what these parents are looking for" says Sophie Mirman, who, having spotted a gap in the market, opened Trotters in 1989, long before the vogue for trendy children's boutiques even began.

At Igloo Kids owner Karen Bailey says the surge in designer childrenswear lines and sales is in part a consequence of the celebrity culture. "With the intense media focus on the Beckham family and Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes' daughter Suri parents are hyper aware of how important it's become to dress kids in not just the latest trends but in stylish clothing which exudes a sense of elegance. There's definitely the belief now that only the best will do when it comes to children."

For Watkins there are other reasons too which explain why so many designers have been able to triumphantly enter the childrenswear market. "It's the way parents think these days; they'll buy a Ralph Lauren jacket for themselves and then decide to get one for their children too."

While it might be difficult to pinpoint a single reason for the rise in expensive childrenswear – other suggestions include the fact that there are at present fewer children's brands compared to adult brands leaving plenty of space to fill – the effect it has had on an industry which many expected to see suffer considerable losses during the world-wide recession is clear.

Many of the world's leading fashion com-

WITH INDUSTRY INSIDERS REPORTING THAT DESIGNER CHILDRENSWEAR IS OUTSELLING WOMENSWEAR, WHICH IN ITSELF IS OUTSELLING MENSWEAR, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END TO THE GOOD NEWS



No growing pains: Kent's Childrensalon (top) has customers from around the world and Caramel (above) has branches in Japan and Italy

panies have reported year-on-year growth; similarly, esteemed establishments such as Caramel Baby and Childrensalon, rather than experiencing a plunge in sales have in actual fact found that globally their businesses are flourishing, and the number of online boutiques offering parents luxury for their little ones has exploded in the past twelve months.

Italian powerhouse Dolce & Gabbana announced that their childrenswear sales rose by thirty percent in 2008 in the very midst of the economic meltdown while British label Burberry has seen the revenue from their children's line increase by an impressive fifty percent since 2007.

At Mohammed Al-Fayd's Harrods babywear performed just as well as childrenswear with sales up by 35% in 2008 and online fashion destination Bibaloo too noted a 35% increase in the number of customers visiting the website during the financial turmoil.

It comes as no surprise then that über hip cutting edge designers like Jean Paul Gaultier are following in the footsteps of Marc Jacobs, John Galiano and Philip Lim – all currently best sellers in the kids department at Barneys in New York – by creating a childrenswear collection. And with industry insiders reporting that within the luxury market designer childrenswear is rather effortlessly outselling womenswear, which in itself is outselling menswear, there seems to be no end to the good news.

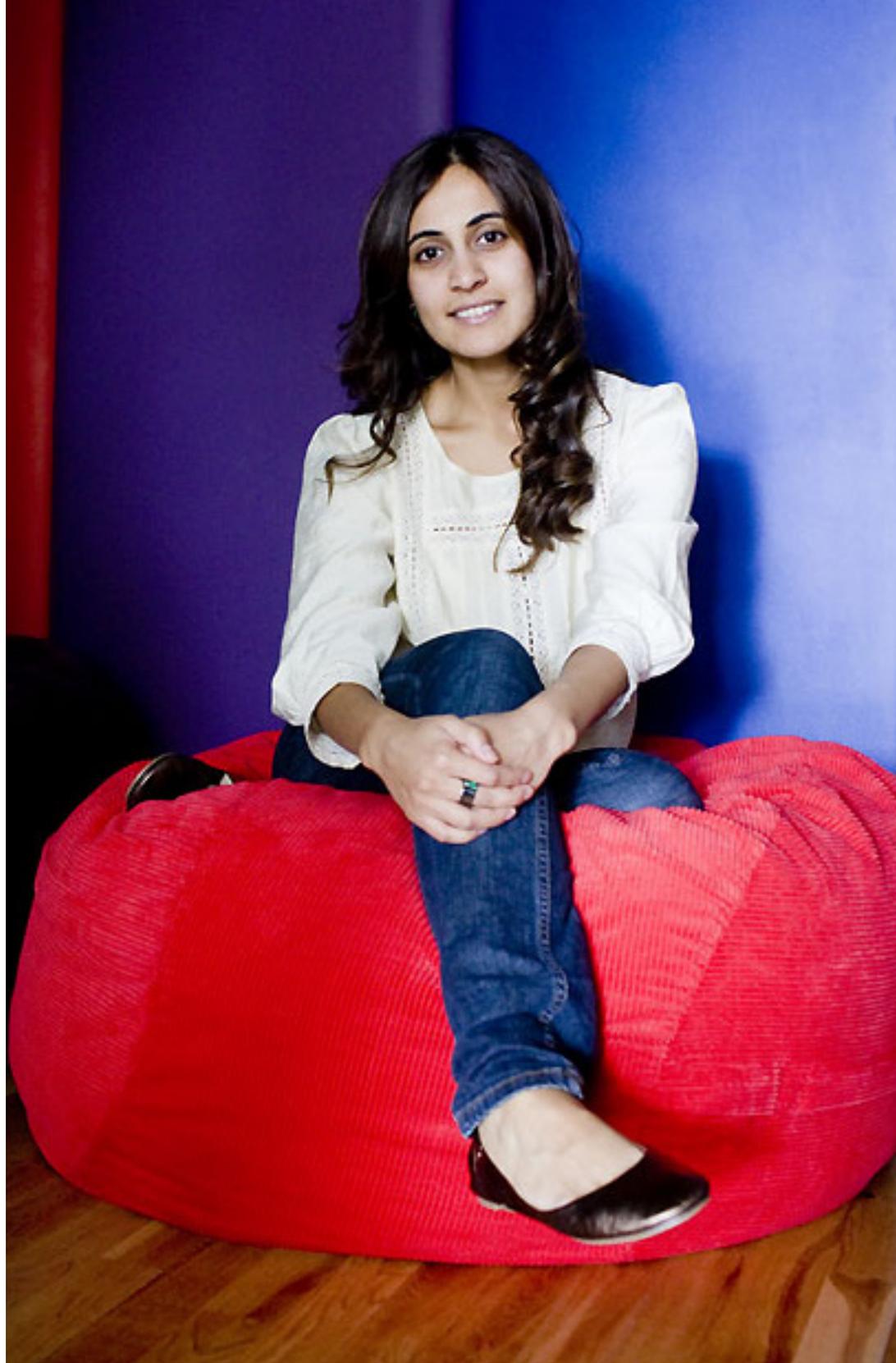
Mirman, who has plans to open a second branch of Trotters in London's Turham Green next month, says that she expects the present upsurge in sales as well as the decision made by designers to expand their brands into the childrenswear sector to be sustained. "Because high street stores can't offer the same products that high-end children's boutiques can customers who aren't willing to compromise on quality are not going to alter their shopping habits.

"For our customer the whole point is that they'll buy something expensive once instead of going on an impulse spending spree or buying lower priced throw away pieces. This is encouraging for designers who don't yet produce childrenswear so we're likely to see more big names enter the market in the coming months."

Bailey and Watkins share Mirman's views. "Even with a troubled economy it's unlikely that families who usually buy upmarket clothing are going to settle for anything less" says Bailey while Watkins suggests that as a result of parents dressing their children in similar styles and brands to themselves the luxury market has seen the emergence of a "savvy 'mini-me generation which is attached to designer labels".

So while governments try frantically, desperately to bail out companies facing a grim 2009, the luxury childrenswear market is unexpectedly, gleefully rejoicing because, as it happens, when the going gets tough, the (well-heeled) tough go shopping. And in the land of big name labels it's the little individuals who now hold sway. Kidswear is officially the new king. **LX**





*Smiles all round*

## QUEEN OF KINGS

**A**t Tantrum on Chelsea's Kings Road it is distinctively quiet. No tears and certainly no tantrums. Granted it is early in the morning, and many of the salon's young clients have yet to arrive but, one suspects, the noise that they eventually, inevitably generate (for kids – even exceptionally well-dressed, privileged ones – will always be kids) is of the good variety – excited squeals followed by wide-eyed delight that such a place exists in the grown up, real world and not solely in childish imaginations.

Set up in December 2007 by Latasha Malik and Neil Ambler – “he was in investment banking and bored; I wanted to take on a challenge” says Malik – Tantrum translates the desires of weary parents and headstrong

At her west London salon Latasha Malik turns potential nightmares into a fantastic, fun-filled experience

**INTERVIEW** Aasiyah Dana  
**PORTRAIT** Claudia Janke

children hoping to stumble across that magical place where getting a simple hair cut is just that – simple. “When we developed the concept with the design team we had four core principles: the salon had to be cool, it had to be fun, it had to be good for children and, most importantly, it had to be a place especially for them, a place where they came and thought ‘wow’” Malik says.

Taking in the details of the salon, from the games room where kids can play on the latest console and the bold bathroom designed to keep children entertained even during those moments to the lively mural and vast assortment of toys (including a large train track, “we had to have the train track; we couldn't find one anywhere >>



<< in England so we had it specially made in the US”), Tantrum is undoubtedly a space created to thrill hard-to-impress children.

Achieving the goal though, admits Malik, was no easy feat. “Setting up a children’s salon is easy enough, really all you need is a barber’s chair and you can label yourself a children’s salon but to do it well, to have good people on your team and to show that you really are different – that is much harder” she says.

Before setting up Tantrum with Ambler, Malik worked in marketing and the knowledge and experience she gained there helped ensure the success of the salon; “at Tantrum branding is the essence of the salon, it’s what we’re about”. The salon’s unique name, the distinguishing curl of the last letter which represents, says Malik, “a lock of hair” is a case in point and an indication of the attention to detail and the thought process behind Tantrum.

“We wanted to cater to two age groups, to have a space in London which would work for two year olds just as well as it worked for ten year olds”. The space they did eventually acquire, at the top end of Kings Road, located rather fortuitously alongside other salons, was quite a find.

“The building was rotting, it had damp on the walls; no one was willing to buy it, the whole place was in an awful state” says Malik, well aware that the appalling condition they found the building in acted in the end in their favour. “We had to be here, on the Kings Road for Tantrum to work. If we had been in Enfield no one would have cared about us, we wouldn’t have received the attention we have”. Not that, as Malik notes, all the interest is necessarily a good thing.

While journalists from Japan, Sweden and India have approached Malik, overwhelmed and eager to feature her salon in their publications because nothing like it exists in their countries – or indeed in Britain – Tantrum has had its fair share of stereotypical branding at home; “people think rich, Chelsea, snob because of who we are and where we are” says Malik who is adamant that the establishment isn’t even luxury.

“Children need haircuts so although we’re retail we are, in one sense, part of the service industry. The word luxury never entered our minds when we were brainstorming. What we wanted was to create a nice space, we could’ve easily been high-end



Out of this world: Tantrum’s ‘Moon Space’ (top) for younger clients and ‘Vogue’ (above) for glamorous girls

‘WHEN WE DEVELOPED TANTRUM WE HAD FOUR CORE PRINCIPLES: THE SALON HAD TO BE COOL, FUN, GOOD FOR CHILDREN AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT HAD TO BE A PLACE ESPECIALLY FOR THEM WHERE THEY CAME AND THOUGHT “WOW”’



but that isn’t what the venture was ever about”.

Above all says Malik, she and Ambler wanted a visit to Tantrum to be an experience for children. “Ultimately, what we had in mind when we conceived the place was how the children should feel when they come here. The end product – the hair cut – has to be good of course but what people pay a high price for is experience”. To realise their vision Malik and Ambler teamed up with designers at Caulder Moore and spent £145,000 on creating the pieces which make the salon so unusual and extraordinary.

For the upstairs ‘Moon Space’, designed for babies and children up to the age of seven, they ordered custom-built barber chairs in the shape of cars – “they had to be bespoke and we had to have them otherwise there would be nothing to mark us as different” – while in the basement’s “glitzy, glamorous, grown-up, aspirational” Hollywood-esque ‘Vogue’ room for older children they installed televisions at each station after focus groups with seven to twelve year olds revealed ultra-modern ultra-cool technology was a must.

The explanation for Tantrum’s popularity with children normally opposed to the idea of a haircut though appears to be far simpler. “When the children come they always want to go straight to the treasure chest. It’s amazing how their minds work and how they associate things. To most of them Tantrum equals the treasure chest, everything else, the rest of it, comes after that”.

This much loved treasure chest Malik talks about is packed full of sugary treats and in a strange way it embodies why her and Ambler’s salon has done so well. Neither have children and yet, remarkably, they both seem instinctively to understand kids and, crucially, what kids want. As Malik puts it, “when it comes to children you either get it or you don’t”.

Of course Malik is the first to admit that not even Tantrum gets it right every time, on some occasions she says “we know from the very beginning we’re doomed”. But if Malik holds steadfastly to her belief in lending an ear to children and their all-important opinions, in creating a space where they can have an unbelievably amazing experience, then there is little doubt that she and Ambler will continue to enjoy the satisfyingly sweet taste of success. **LX**

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# RALPH LAUREN

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Tidy Tots

# Treasure Chests

Bespoke toy boxes bring a touch of sophisticated individuality to children's bedrooms while keeping them tidy

**WORDS** Aasiyah Dana

Practical storage solutions they may be, but toy boxes have to look good too. A few years ago it was the colourful, funky boxes which drew attention and were much coveted but it's all change for the new kids on the block. Covered in specially designed fabric, crafted from finest wood or hand painted to order by artisans using a muted colour palette, these toy boxes are the last word in kiddie chic.

**For boys 1. VIP Kids personalised toy box, £290 (01482 831563)** Hand painted to order for that personal touch. **2. Little Childs contemporary toy box, £148 (05139 741177)**

Contemporary toy box in Finnish plywood. **3. Steve Allen traditional toy box, £215 (0161 870 1118)**

Traditional wooden toy box hand crafted using Canadian timber. **4. First Impressions toy box, £113 (01280 847188)** Hand painted in pale tones with quilted animals; great for toddlers. **5. Frances Hunt animal print toy box, £89 (020-7385 5282)** Fun, fabric covered toy box for the little ones.

**For girls 1. VIP Kids personalised toy box, £240 (01482 831563)**

Individually painted to order. **2. Hippins hand painted fairy design toy box, £300 (01531 650843)** Pine toy box with cream finish; fairy tale scene hand painted to order by English artists. **3. Tutti Bambini white walnut toy box, £124 (0870 889 0390)** Draw pull adds variation to vintage style toy box. **4. Art For Kids nursery rhyme toy box, £1,064 (01507 463113)** Classic toy box, hand painted with nursery rhyme scenes. **5. The Posh Box Bespoke toy box with blackboard lid, £285 (01487 831400)** Bespoke toy box with blackboard lid for kids with a creative streak. **LX**



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MARC JACOBS



*Chill Out*

# Break Time

Once upon a time luxury was the sole reserve of adults but with a new generation of savvy, stylish children dictating tastes and trends even spas, the inner sanctum of chic, child-free bliss, have opened their doors to pre-teens wanting to indulge in the latest top-to-toe treatments

**REPORT** Aasiyah Dana

Y

ou are never too young, it turns out, to enjoy a warmed oil massage or to have gentle pressure applied to your scalp, legs and feet in order to rid your body of its many stresses. Nor are you too young for a cooling hot stone body facial that can fight the signs of anti-ageing, smoothing wrinkles and restoring that much sought after youthful glow.

Spa breaks, weekend retreats, resorts equipped with sleek, state-of-the-art saunas, gyms, eternity pools and relaxation rooms have always been the privilege, the right even of women and men desperate for a getaway from fast-paced, urban lives which leave little room to breath. But in today's jam-packed, full-speed ahead world children too have finally been granted access to that special place.

From The Gleneagles in the heart of Scotland to Brown's in London's exclusive Mayfair, hotels were amongst the first to realise the potential of child friendly spas. With the introduction of specially designed treatments for girls (and boys, should the ever popular manicedis and oxygen facials turn out to be their thing) under the age of twelve fun filled, family spa holidays – an apparent contradiction in terms – became part of the package.

“Children's spa treatments are very popular in America where resorts have been offering them for a longer period of time than in Britain but the market here is continuing to develop and grow” says Ricardo D'Amato at Aqua Sculpture Day Spa in west London where there is a noticeable emphasis on the needs and wants of young but equally sophisticated clients eager to maintain themselves at all costs.



**Ayung Spa, Indonesia; previous page, Brown's Hotel**

Whereas treatments offer the usual spa goer a chance to unwind and relax for girls, particularly for those in their early teens, facials and body exfoliations can be the solution to age-old skin problems like acne or pimply backs. Aqua Sculpture created their signature Pure T Facial for twelve to sixteen year olds with troublesome teen skin in mind and though, at £70, it is in the same price range as adult facials, it has proved a huge hit with girls returning and recommending it to friends dealing with similar issues.

Hazel Marsden at the spa at Brown's, where even four year olds can have a cleansing mask applied, suggests the same when explain-

**GLENEAGLES SPA,  
WHICH LAUNCHED ITS  
LITTLE MISS NAILS AND  
MAKE UP TREATMENTS  
FOR GIRLS AGED FIVE  
TO SIXTEEN IN 2003,  
GAVE 250 MANICURES  
AND MAKEOVERS IN  
THE FIRST YEAR**

ing the rise in popularity of spa treatments among younger people. “Brown's introduced child-orientated treatments a couple of years ago and one thing we've noticed is that a lot of the younger clients that visit the spa actually come for treatments that will help them to eliminate or reduce blemishes” says Marsden.

So it seems that while the luxury experience associated with foot massages and face masks may have been responsible for children's initial interest in the exotic world of spas as well as the development of spa menus focussing on indulging young clients, it is the practical aspect of such treatments that has ultimately helped the market to expand and allowed it to flourish – albeit at a steady rather than explosive pace.

“Certainly more and more places will start to cater for children because there is so much potential in that sector of the market but stringent restrictions are going to continue to limit spas that want to make their services available to younger customers” says Marsden who points to issues of safety as the chief reason why only a select number of spas are currently able to offer children's treatments.

Agnes Zhukova at the spa at The Vineyard in Berkshire which a few years ago established its Early

Starters range of treatments that includes twenty-five minute facials at £35 for children as young as eight raises the same point.

“Right now the market isn't as big as it could be mainly because certain hotel policies [which state that children under sixteen must be accompanied by adults at all times on spa premises] are impeding the move towards family-friendly spas that provide something for everyone regardless of their age”.

For D'Amato the limitations are a concern as well but he cites other reasons for why some spas are resisting adding children's treatments to their schedule despite the obvious success of such ventures at other spas in the UK and abroad.

“Older clients who are frequent visitors to the spa are not happy with the idea of allowing children to use the facilities. Mostly they're worried about the noise the children will make” D'Amato says. “For many people permitting children to enter spas defeats the very purpose of these places.”

In spite of such drawbacks and regulations the list of spas offering something for children as well as the number of pre-teens enjoying treatments during their holidays or as part of a birthday present with friends is increasing.



Serenity Spa, Seaham Hall



Spa Grande, Hawaii

Fiona Johnston at Gleneagles Spa, which launched its Little Miss nails and make-up collection of treatments for girls from five to sixteen to great success in 2003 – they gave 250 manicures and makeovers in the first year – says they regularly receive enquiring phone calls from women interested in treating their daughters to a taste of adult luxury.

Zhukova too says that mother-daughter spa days where girls can get mini versions of the treatment their mothers are receiving are particularly popular; “it’s nice for the mothers to be able to bring their children with them and to have the chance to bond and the girls love the experience of being pampered for the day”.

Not everyone though is convinced by child-friendly spas and the treatments available to young guests at the hotels and to kids visiting Aqua Sculpture have received criticism for placing an unhealthy emphasis on image. “The truth is that a lot of parents are already teaching their children to be more self-aware when it comes to appearance; they want their children to learn from early on to take care of themselves properly” says Marsden.

D’Amato suggests something similar; “the children that

come for the treatments have been brought up to pay attention to how they look. It’s less about conforming to idealised images from the media and more about maintaining a healthy, clean appearance. For many of the mothers who bring their daughters for a facial or a manicure they see the spas as helping them teach their girls the importance of being well-groomed from a young age.”

The spa experience may long have been the exclusive prerogative of adults but today’s discerning tweens and teens with a fast growing taste for the high life and the art of luxury grooming have seemingly compelled even highly traditional establishments to give them a glimpse of grown-up glamour. And as these urbane children continue to exercise their spending power the subtle, serene revolution taking place within spas the world over is unlikely to be halted any time soon.

*The Gleneagles: 01764 694332, www.gleneagles.com. Brown’s Hotel: 020-7518 4009, www.brownshotel.com. The Vineyard: 01635 589415, www.the-vineyard.co.uk. Aqua Sculpture Day Spa: 020-8741 0338, www.aquasculpturespa.co.uk.*

## Home...

### The Spa at The Balmoral Edinburgh

The Spa at The Balmoral is the only the place in the country to offer the “Nangfa Angel Bliss” treatment for children over six. Launched in October 2007, the treatment, which is part of the hotel’s Five-Star Kids programme and the family-friendly Ytsara spa package, involves a grounding oil massage which aims to improve sleep and soothe and strengthen the nervous system. Perfect if you’ve spent the entire day running around in the park. £50 for 50 minutes ([www.thebalmoralhotel.com](http://www.thebalmoralhotel.com)).

### Serenity Spa, Seaham Hall County Durham

Inspired by Feng Shui the spa at Seaham Hall has a comprehensive list of treatments available for children. Teens can choose from an Elemis Lime and Ginger Salt Wrap designed to exfoliate and refresh the skin, an Indian head massage perfect for relieving headaches or a Dry Float which, with its mix of mud, exotic oils, pulsating jets and Dead Sea salts that help to reenergise the body, gives a whole new meaning to messy play. From £40 per person ([www.seaham-hall.co.uk](http://www.seaham-hall.co.uk)).

## ... and away

### Ayung Spa, Ubud Hanging Gardens Indonesia

Set in the heart of tropical Bali, the Ayung Spa at Ubud Hanging Gardens is possibly the most luxurious spa to offer tailor-made treatments for children. The spa’s three pavilions are set high in the rice terraces overlooking the Ayung river, providing a lush, tranquil location for kids to enjoy massage treatments passed down through generations of Balinese therapists. Great for mini-mes who still need nap time. £60 for one hour ([www.ubudhanginggardens.com](http://www.ubudhanginggardens.com)).

### Spa Grande, Grand Wailea Resort Hawaii

Spa Grande has an exhaustive list of treatments available for teens and pre-teens. Alongside the more conventional treatments like Thai massage, Spa Grande also gives six to seventeen year olds the chance to experience their hugely popular and, it must be said, rather delicious sounding chocolate-coconut massage, honey-mango manicure and pineapple twist polish and massage. Prices start at £45 for 25 minutes ([www.grandwailea.com](http://www.grandwailea.com)). **LX**



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# CLINTON BANBURY PRINT

Now obviously there are hundreds of children's illustrators hard at work, creating exquisitely entertaining drawings and paintings to delight kids the world over but none are quite like Clinton Banbury. Banbury collaborated with all time favourites Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake in the 1990s before he was commissioned to illustrate children's books and we adore his prints: so amusing, so vibrant, so charming, we want to keep them for ourselves. But alas, they're so totally perfect for kids. Apparently money can't buy happiness but it sure can buy a Banbury original – which in a child's world equates to pretty much the same thing. So, what are you waiting for? **Aasiyah Dana**  
Clinton Banbury original painting, £99, from Clinton Banbury (017 3681 0070)

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