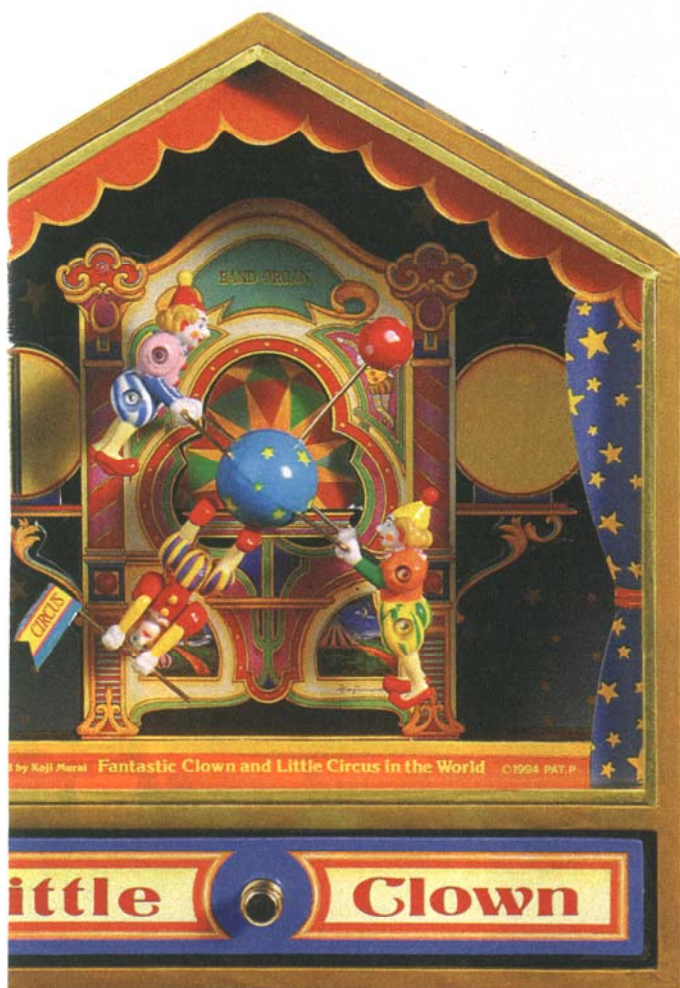




## DANIELLE PROUD ON THE HOUSE



## Play's the thing

This is my last column for a while as I am giving birth in two weeks. Eek! It's my first child and a boy, in case you're interested. Having a baby is a nostalgic time, so it's not as if I'm looking for any trendy accoutrements, or to spend a fortune. I just thought it would be nice to buy a few (not deeply unstylish) pieces to mix in with the essentials from Kiddicare, Babies 'R' Us and John Lewis.

A good starting point is a hand-painted toy chest. It conceals all the garish plastic that kids really like, while for parents, the sturdy wood variety has keepsake appeal. The Posh Box Company will make one for you bespoke (from £275), painted with 1960s-style rocket ships. The V&A Museum of Childhood's Space Age exhibition (on now) will give you style direction. If you're feeling creative, buy something plain, such as Little-Childs' Finnish birch-ply boxes (from £98), which you can paint, or decorate with photos. If traditional toys are more your thing, select from Pollock's hand-crafted puppets, toy theatres and wind-up music boxes with a vintage circus vibe and dancing clowns (£39, pictured).

As eating is a large part of a child's early life, I'm seeing the spacey Mozzee Nest chair (£255) as not only an heirloom (it is reaching design-icon status), but also a damage-limitation exercise. If I can save my little one from trashy, tweeny taste, that's an investment worth making. Not to mention a legacy that reflects well on me. Ciao! [www.poshbox.co.uk](http://www.poshbox.co.uk); [www.little-childs.co.uk](http://www.little-childs.co.uk); [www.pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk](http://www.pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk); [www.mozzee.co.uk](http://www.mozzee.co.uk)

## FLOOR FILLER

Concrete has been a huge trend for years, loved by modernist architects for adding industrial chic to bathrooms and kitchens. Stylistically, you couldn't fault it, but the material does have a tendency to crack and go dusty after a time. Solid Floor has come up with the solution — its new Betonlook liquid flooring. The matt finish captures concrete's hip factory vibe, while the flexible polymer composition means it doesn't crack. It is slip-proof, fine with underfloor heating, allergy-free and non-toxic. Another benefit for those tiring of concrete's greyness, is that it comes in many colour combinations. Primaries, especially vampy red — which Diane von Furstenberg has already ordered for her Moscow, Brussels and LA showrooms — look great, but be cautious with the pebble and sequins effects, even if the small samples appeal to your magpie tendencies. From £140 per square metre; [www.solidfloor.co.uk](http://www.solidfloor.co.uk)

## BABY TALK

1 Helene Ige's Birds of a Feather mobile, laser-cut from walnut plywood, features delicate suspended branches and birds. Contemporary respite from all those bright plastic jangly things. [www.littlebabycompany.com](http://www.littlebabycompany.com)

2 The cutest ride-on toys I've seen are the leather Wheelybugs by Hippychick. Enough to make even the least maternal type warm to the idea of children. [www.hippychick.com](http://www.hippychick.com)

3 No time or inclination to knit your own blanket? Let Greta Sani crochet one for you in cashmere. Laundered in lavender to encourage sleep and keep moths at bay, her Boogaloo blankets are for luxed-out babies. [gretasani@hotmail.com](mailto:gretasani@hotmail.com)

4 Beastly Bags combine the trends for retro-fabric toys and supersizing. At nearly 2 metres long, the hippo, lion- and rhino-shaped beanbags make comfy seats, and cool alternatives to raggedy teddies. [www.beastybags.co.uk](http://www.beastybags.co.uk)



## BUBBLING UNDER

PINPRICK GYPSY-STYLE HEARTS-AND-FLOWERS MOTIFS INTO A PAPER LAMPSHADE FOR MODISH FOLK PATTERNS ON YOUR WALLS AT NIGHT