



Kind Und Jugend is always a good indicator of fabric trends, as the new launches here will follow through into the UK next Spring at Harrogate. If the fabrics at this fair are outrageous, too bright for UK tastes, we will end up with a year of ultra safe Grey and Navy with a couple of the bright fabrics put in to fill out the range. This year looks like being a good year for fabrics

with a couple of the bright fabrics put in to fill out the range. This year looks like being a good year for fabrics. The German fabric leaders such as Hartan where showing a good range of Grey combinations, Navy with embossed and woven designs, mid grey and dark denim. I am not sure if this has been done before Knorr – Baby GmbH are using a hard shell plastic for their carrycot bodies, which has allowed them to print on similar graphics to those now appearing on suitcases, anything from children's characters to abstract designs seems possible, and of course this can then be coordinated with the soft fabric designs. A hard shell also allows for details in the moulding, such as inserts or picture windows. The resultant styling has moved the traditional carry cot on to a very different looking product and seemed to be attracting a lot of interest.

For me this year's highlights included;- Multi child pushchairs, (last time I asked there was no safety standard to cover these but the situation may have changed). See below in the innovation section where a six seater won the World of Moving Baby section, another version by New Century Products, the Familidoo was also attracting attention in its 2x2 and 3x2 versions. Also the trend for lighter, smaller fold product continues, Last year's show highlight the multi award winning Doona, was proving very popular, with a very busy stand. I also caught sight of a lightweight buggy on the Jette Kinderwagen stand which folded down in to an almost impossibly compact

unit, certainly smaller than even the smallest hand luggage allowance.

Storksak, a UK company, had some very stylish changing bags, including a co-ordinated range with Bugaboo, got to be worth a look if you are one of the privileged few who sell Bugaboo. Another appealing accessory line was New Life – New Look from Maguari. Very simply this is a handle cover made from artificial leather in a selection of colours, uniquely designed to fit specific pushchairs and infant carriers. (Handle designs are so different, a one fit design is impossible apparently). Clearly this simple accessory allows co-ordination with fabric designs and even clothing, but can also be used to refresh a tired or worn out handle. The product should be available to fit most popular UK models by Harrogate and is expected to retail at around £30.00.

A similar style of fabric bands allowing universal fit, and co-ordinating with a liner was being shown by the American accessory company Choopic, a two pack for large pushchair handles would be \$18.99 with a co-ordinating liner and strap covers \$26.99.

On a totally different level Maguari also had the 'Wee Pot'. This is shiny silver – stainless steel looking, plastic mini urinal shaped potty, including an aiming target. It suction to the wall, allowing boys to go to the toilet just like dad!

I would also like to include a couple of comments about this year's Innovation award. Firstly given an initial entry of 184 products from 135 exhibitors and 28 countries, this competition recognises the very best of the new products available in the nursery sector this year. Doona, of course, won the World of Travelling Baby, while in the Moving Baby the Six seater pram from Childhome was voted the winner. Doona is already available in the UK, it will be very interesting to see if multiple seat pushchairs become popular in the UK.

Other attractions at the fair included the exhibition area 'Future of kids design' where colleges and designers exhibited future orientated ideas and concepts. And finally the Trend Forum, I talked a little about this last year, again if you wanted a perspective on the German market the talks here were excellent. One other talk that was not to be missed this year was 'Pimp my Shop NOW' by a retail design company!

All the national buyers attend this show every year, in the past a group of our key independent retailers also visited. This year I was pleased to see a few more independents travelling to Cologne. We have a great buying fair in Harrogate in the Spring. I would recommend to any retailer a visit to Cologne in the Autumn, this will give retailers a wider perspective of the Nursery market and a chance to step back, look at longer term trends, and think about their business.

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