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NEW COMPANY TAKES AIM AT THE LAST BASTION OF TRADITIONAL DESIGN: CHILDRENS' DECOR

Frustrated by boring and predictable product selections, a mom creates a whole new world of kid stuff with style.

FARMINGTON, CT February 20, 2004 — Sozo™, an e-commerce and wholesale company launched in November, 2003, has introduced a line of nursery and kids furnishings that provide a sophisticated alternative to traditional designs. In the world of Sozo, pastels and predictability are passé, while cultural influences, sophisticated color schemes and rich embroidery and appliquéd detail take center stage.

Sozo is a Japanese word that means creation and imagination, just the thing that company founder Tracie Gildea saw was missing from infant décor. "When I left corporate America to raise my son, I could not believe how few choices I had when it came to outfitting his nursery," says Gildea. "It was like the land time forgot where nothing ever changes -- pink and frilly for girls and cars and trains for boys. It didn't mesh at all with my design sensibilities."

In developing room themes and accessories, Gildea says she followed a simple mantra: Sozo products must stand the test of time. The graphics had to be sophisticated enough to extend beyond infancy into the toddler and childhood years. And all products had to offer functional benefits, and be constructed of quality materials that were both kid and parent-friendly.

(more)

In creating a warm and luxurious atmosphere for the nursery, Sozo utilizes plush cottons, faux suede, silk and linen. Details include high-quality stitching and a variety of trim fabrics, richly varied embroidery and appliqués.

"Texture was another thing missing in this category," says Gildea. Tactile experiences are important for kids too, so I wanted richness in fabrication and detailing, as well as graphically. No other company offers a better combination of fabrics, colors, appliqué, embroidery and stitching detail. I also wanted to offer all of this high-end detailing at a reasonable price."

Fun & Functional Room Themes

Sozo offers five room themes that include pillows ($40), quilts ($150), sheets ($30), crib skirts ($60) and slip-covered bumpers ($150), valances ($30) and night-lights ($20):

Plum Blossom—The mysterious little Plum Blossom princess' tranquil world is filled with beautiful flowers and lush colors.

Jungle Land—A playful menagerie includes a monkey, elephant, giraffe and porcupine inhabiting a green and leafy tropical forest.

Koi—Curious Koi and friends swim lazily around their bamboo pond, always keeping any eye on baby.

Sumo—Pudgy little Sumo Boy is surrounded by brightly colored paper lanterns and traditional Japanese cloud formations.

Poppies—A fiesta of bold color where dragonflies buzz from flower to dazzling flower.

Sozo products are available at select specialty retailers and on the company's e-commerce site: sozousa.com.

Press Note: For a product preview, log onto http://www.sozousa.com. Feel free to download images from the site, or request photography samples by calling Tracie Gildea at (860) 673-0396; tgildea@sozousa.com.

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