

Children's notebook How to survive a child's party at home, by Daisy Bridgewater

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All at sea Take 10 children under eight, fill them with refined sugar, and watch as your house and sanity are destroyed during the two long, obligatory hours of a birthday party. Should you wish to take some of the agony out of the homemade party, check out Carousel, a new company set up by an ex-model and mother, Charlotte Saye, which somehow manages to make cake sprinkles and neon dinosaurs look aspirational. Saye decided to set up her design-conscious shop having put on a party for her son and his entire reception class. 'Parties and party bags don't have to be expensive,' she says. 'Some of the simplest things – such as striped paper bags and spotted paper drinking straws – can make such a difference but are really hard to track down among all the licensed products.' Bringing together Nepalese paper bunting (£7.50), French face-painting kits (£17) and Japanese wooden toys (from £22) under one stylish banner, Carousel will help you create the antithesis of the *Ben 10*-themed party your five-year-old yearns for (carousel.co.uk).

Costume dramas You go to all that trouble with the party and then the birthday girl insists on appearing as a synthetic Snow White, complete with school lunch down the front from Red Nose Day. If your little darling has a thing about dressing up, the upmarket children's boutique Bobo Kids has a newly launched range of luxurious fancy-dress costumes, including this hand-made purple velvet cape, £85 (bobokids.co.uk).



Three of the best Parties

in a box The Boxed Party Company has three clever themes – my favourite is the Construction Party (pictured), complete with traffic-cone decorations, from £139.99 for eight (theboxedparty.com). The Jolly Box Company's boxes include filled party bags, invitations, decorations, and, crucially, ideas for games and timings, from £75.55 for eight (thejollyboxcompany.co.uk). Props from Dreambox Parties include a 6ft inflatable palm tree in the Jungle Party box, as well as coconut-shaped cups, from £99.96 for six (dreamboxparties.com).



Wish list I love these paper wish-boats, £9.95 for 10, by Julianne Matter, from Life's a Party, although their subtle colour palette may find itself at odds with the Party Rings (lifesaparty.co.uk).

Good on paper It took me about five out-of-control parties before I discovered the craft table: set one up and insist that young children get started on an enticing project the moment they arrive. Eggnogg has a great range of colouring-in paper products, including table cloths (£11.99 for 2), fairy wings (£4.99) and bunting (£3.99, eggnogg.co.uk).

downside, there's no backyard. So there's the logistics of constantly having to take the kids somewhere outside for exercise or to just play.'

Otherwise, the timeworn salvaged European oak floorboards allow indoor scooter-riding without fear of damage. And in the summer there are weekend trips to a Hamptons beach shack. 'It's on a dead end, and the kids play outside all day and collect eggs from local chickens,' Lemieux says.

As you would expect, the home is a testing ground for Lemieux's latest designs. Founded as a home textiles company in 1999, DwellStudio has grown into a fully fledged lifestyle brand with furniture, accessories and bed linen for all ages. There are more than 600 dealers in the United States, and a new flagship store in SoHo. Last year Lemieux featured in *Fortune* magazine's list of the 10 most powerful women entrepreneurs.

The apartment is an eclectic mix, from glamorous gilded coffee tables to Chinoiserie cushions and geometric rugs in upbeat colours. And this vision has most recently been applied to a new range that the designer has created for House of Fraser. Despite its more accessible price points, Living by Christiane Lemieux manages to capture the essence of DwellStudio very well. When *The Telegraph Magazine* visited her at home a few weeks ago she was trying out a sulphur-coloured Crawford armchair, which provided a welcome pop of colour against slate-grey library shelves. Tabletop displays of collected objects included eccentric brass ornaments, which are now available on British high streets.

There is no betting that pieces will stay where they are for long. The loft is an ever-evolving space, its artfully conjured vignettes regularly reimagined in new formations. For Lemieux there is more undecorating to be done: she is considering adding more colour to the sofas, and toying with the idea of a 'salon wall' displaying mix-and-match photograph frames. 'Maybe it will never be "finished",' she says. I suspect she hopes it won't.

Living by Christiane Lemieux at House of Fraser (houseoffraser.co.uk)

The children's rooms Both William and Isabel have their own bedrooms – blue for him and 'popsicle pink' for her. 'The kids have totally been involved in the decor of their rooms,' Lemieux says. 'As they have got a little older, their personalities are more evident.' William's room features an abundance of dinosaurs, and Isabel's en suite bathroom pays homage to unicorns and ponies. Her Perch bunk bed and Sparrow bedside table are by Oeuf and are available from Bobo Kids (bobokids.co.uk). The ceiling light is a Bubble Saucer pendant designed by George Nelson in 1947, now produced by Modernica and available from SCP (scp.co.uk).



The master bathroom

The en suite bathroom was raised to help define the space, which is clad in Imperial Danby marble from a quarry in Vermont.

The double-width doorway has pocket doors to allow some privacy. The ceiling beam is a continuation of the one seen in the main living area, extending from the front of the apartment all the way to master bedroom at the back.

The master bedroom

is a corner room at the back of the loft, and has windows across two of its sides. Even on a grey day there is ample natural light on the taupe walls. The 1950s walnut bedside tables were bought at a flea market in Massachusetts. The Birdsong bedlinen is part of Lemieux's range for House of Fraser.

