

# Nostalgia can accent even kids' rooms

By Debbie Wallis Landau  
special writer

**T**ODAY'S CHILDREN are enticed with so much high-tech stimuli. Video arcades, amusement parks and home computer games increasingly tantalize the captive young audience of baby boomers' kids.

It's pleasing, therefore, that manufacturers of children's furniture are creating expanded lines of bedroom pieces that offer some of the nostalgic charm and serenity of times long past.

Many Victorian, country and European style designs are cropping up from renowned companies like Lexington, Simmons, Lea and Universal.

Whether in indestructible hard woods or lovely treated veneers, local stores and designers are promoting and selling these themes to patrons tired of the impersonal laminate look.

"People are much more inclined to invest their money on beautiful things that last," said Terry Ellis, a Bloomfield Township interior designer and an associate with Barbara Kopitz Design Associates of Birmingham. "Children are especially mesmerized by the way things used to be."

Ellis recalls accompanying her 8-year-old daughter, Dory's school group to the Troy Museum and historic village green, which she calls a delightful, scaled-down kind of Greenfield Village. "They were enchanted by the antique furniture, toys and household items people used a hundred years ago."

**COORDINATING HER** design expertise with Dory's hobbies and interests, Ellis created a Victorian bedroom for her daughter.

An antique reproduction sleighbed from Link Taylor's "Directorio" series is angled diagonally from a corner and covered by an exquisite, washable Battenburg lace comforter. The Victorian dollhouse Ellis built five years ago is a perfect blending of past and present because that's where Dory plays with her modern Barbie dolls.

The antique armoire is a repository for a comprehensive assortment of books. Hats, one of Dory's dress-up favorites, adorn the wall above a floral border printed in rose, teal and lilac tones.

"I think a bedroom should contain elements of one's life," said Ellis, pointing to Dory's oversized wooden Pinocchio lounging next to the dollhouse.

Dory's love of Disney characters is reflected in the large framed commemorative poster of the movie version of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." Her wicker night table lightens the impact of the wooden pieces and is the perfect showcase for some of Dory's miniature collectibles and a floral arrangement.

**WICKER'S COMEBACK** in the design industry lends itself perfectly to infants' rooms, too.

Gert Glazer, manager of Bellini Juvenile Furniture in Birmingham, displays a gorgeous handpainted wicker basket on a stand that can be custom ordered and was created by Fairyland Industries. One seen

recently in the store boasted mint green and pink fabric ribbon accents. With the mattress, the basket is priced at \$190. Adding a coordinated comforter and triple ruffled pillow will cost about \$900.

"This basket has been a strong seller for us. Although it may seem expensive because it's limited to infancy, it lends itself beautifully to an heirloom," Glazer said.

Bellini sells a matching wicker mirror in coordinated colors. Miniature lamps and wastebaskets crafted of wicker also are available.

**THE WICKER** rocking chair in 21-month-old Mikayla Bouchard's bedroom is a nice counterpoint to sturdy period pieces her parents have discovered through the years.

Pam and Mike Bouchard bought their daughter a Jenny Lind crib. The antique dresser circa 1860 and an old school table with chairs are substantial and multi-use. As Mikayla grows, she'll probably enjoy tea parties with the commemorative tea set in her room, or she can do homework on the school table.

"Mikayla's room carries out the more traditional theme of our home," said Pam Bouchard of their Birmingham residence. "Now that she's outgrown it, her antique wooden cradle is in our attic."

The choices in wooden case pieces, which grow with one's children, are abundant at Baby and Kids Bedrooms in Novi.

White furniture in cherry or maple are available, manufacturers are bringing forth lots of whitewashed oak and solid pine. But they're giving their lines satin finishes, bead moldings, bisque finishes and adding colors in the rose and blue families reminiscent of the pastoral landscapes of Europe. This is particularly true of the "At Home" collection created by designer Lynn Holland for Lexington Furniture.

**TRACY FORS**, Baby and Kids Bedrooms buyer, explains, "Holland's pieces resemble family



Dory Ellis and her cat, Diva, spend a quiet moment on her antique reproduction sleighbed. The Victorian dollhouse, wicker nightstand and chintz-covered chair lend traditional charm.

heirlooms but they don't present a stuffy appearance. Her case pieces truly do grow with children. The line offers a dresser, an eider and a nightstand crafted of solid white pine, stained a bisque finish but embellished with floral handpainted designs. The pieces also come in blue or terra rose.

If you look at one of Holland's brochures, you see her personal philosophy is that "surrounding oneself with beautiful things is one of life's pleasures." Baby and Kids Bedrooms carries some of the baby bedding and artwork available at Lynn Holland's Madison Avenue, New York store,

which offers bedding from infancy to adulthood, floral arrangements, wallpaper borders, scented pomanders and china.

Sleighbeds, armoires, vanities with trellis mirrors and unusual desk-gossip bench combinations are a growing trend, Foris said. Her store's top seller is the "Secrets" line by Universal. "It's warm, oak sleighbed is \$500, reasonable compared to some companies."

Simmons' spindle crib, double dresser, mirror and chest could

definitely be unique, and Foris' advice for the soul wardrobe with chest mirror, nightstand, double sleighbed and four- and five-drawer-style dressers, which is part of the "Secrets" line from Universal.

MANY A young lady, however, will fall in love with the vanity dresser and triple mirror from the "Country Lane" collection of Le Industries.

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Mikayla Bouchard's wicker rocker complements the Jenny Lind crib and fabric balloon shades of her bedroom. Floral wallpaper, commemorative plates and collectibles give her room a Victorian air.

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