



THE LAND OF OZ

The classic Frank Baum story appeals to preschoolers through teens, and parents love it too. The painted mural and the house-themed bed with ruby slippers peeking underneath are whimsical touches from Position by Design in Fort Worth, Texas. Continental Homes, a D.R. Horton Company, built the Dallas model.



NOTHING FLUFFY HERE

Mia Hamm is a big hit with today's young women in this MBK Homes model at Emerald Square in Gardena, Calif.

KEN WONG

Beyond the Stereotypes

Kids' rooms push a universal hot button, says Georganne Derick, CMP, president of Merchandising East in Laurel, Maryland. "The emotional impact is so seductive," she says.

How does Derick reach out to today's kids? With real-world rooms. "A girl who is a budding scientist might have a picture of Einstein on her wall as opposed to horses, kittens and puppies." Girls' rooms, in particular, no longer fit old molds. "Now it's more of a 'girls rule' approach," Derick says.

Kane also encourages the rule-breaking approach. In one of the Emerald Square models, the designer suggested a Hollywood theme for the girl's room. "I said 'Okay, but I want her to be the director or the producer, not a starlet,'" Kane says. The room was accessorized with cameras and memorabilia from the University of Southern California film school.

Forget pastels. "The colors now are bright and fun," says Suzanne Felber, MIRM, of The Casa in Tucson. "We have stronger children's rooms now. It used to be all Care Bears and fluffiness." Felber recently saturated a girl's room in shades of tangerine and fuchsia.

Boys' rooms should appeal to kids' sense of play, Kane suggests. He urges merchandisers to think like an 11-year-old boy when doing an 11-year-old's room. At a model he toured recently, Kane fell for a room that boasted a Star Trek theme. "I told my wife she could have the master, I'd take this one," he jokes. The bed resembled the Starship Enterprise's bridge. Textured rubber flooring gave the room an authentic edge.