



This page: Designer, inventor, and mother Rebecca Finell. Opposite page: The Frog Pod stores bath toys, holds soaps, and is a joy to look at.

THE NEW FAMILY VALUE

Rebecca Finell gives new meaning to the phrase, “Let mommy fix it ...”

BY PETER J. WOLF PORTRAIT BY JEFF NEWTON

FOR MOST OF US, HAVING CHILDREN MEANS GIVING up certain things—we trade in the Mini for a minivan, give up the club scene for a stack of SpongeBob videos, and “sleeping in” means getting up only once during the night. That’s all part of the deal. But what about all those clunky, frumpy “baby” products that can quickly turn your once-hip pad into a red, blue, and yellow day-care center? Can parents have cool stuff?

Rebecca Finell—designer, inventor, and mom—has been asking herself that same question since she first became a mother five years ago. At the time, she was only halfway through the Industrial Design program at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. Now, less than a year after graduating from the program, she has the answer. The tagline for her Tempe-based company, Boon Inc., says it all: “Innovations for modern parents.”

Finell’s debut product, the Frog Pod, is a wall-mounted device

used to scoop, rinse, drain, and store children’s bath toys. Its life began when the world of her Junior-year studio project collided with the world of parenthood. “When I was in school, I didn’t go home and sketch all night [like other Industrial Design students], I went home and changed diapers,” she says. Motherhood introduced Finell to the \$6-billion juvenile products market – a market she could see right away was in need of a serious makeover. Immediately, she was struck by how poorly designed, and downright ugly, many of these products are. Finell saw this as her opportunity, and wasted no time.

She entered the Frog Pod in the 2004 Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) Student Design Competition, and won first prize (a \$2,500 cash prize and a trip to JPMA’s annual trade show in Dallas, where the Frog Pod was a huge hit with manufacturers and distributors, retail buyers, and the press). She



had several offers to license the Frog Pod, but opted to start her own company instead. The companies interested in bringing her concepts to market wanted to make changes to fit their budget or marketing plan. Finell knew that if she'd let somebody else bring her concepts to market, they would have made changes and "it wouldn't be my design anymore."

It was a wise move. When Finell attended the JPMA show in 2005, it was as Design Principal of her own company, Boon Inc. Once again, the Frog Pod created a buzz, landing Finell and Boon the 2005 JPMA Innovation Award—an honor unheard of for a newcomer to the industry. In addition to several orders from hundreds of boutiques, she also landed deals with several retail giants including Target and Babies R Us. The Frog Pod is already available at www.target.com, and starting April 15, Target stores will be carrying both the Frog Pod and Boon's next release (a contemporary training potty with everything you need to potty-train your child—except maybe for patience). Before the end of 2006, Target will be carrying five Boon products.

So, thanks to Rebecca Finell and Boon Inc., "modern parents" really can have cool things. And speaking of cool, Finell hasn't lost her head, despite all the attention. She says simply, "I'm a very lucky girl." She's eager to share her good fortune, too. Finell is donating 10 percent of Boon's profits to children's charities, beginning locally in the Phoenix area. Now, how cool is that?

More: www.booninc.com

