

# Christmas 06



**Guardian**  
Series Newspapers



Christmas is coming and things are happening at Knutsford's exciting new gallery. On Sunday November 12th from 2 to 5pm you're invited to come along and meet and talk to Kate Carlyle, the talented creator of the exquisite Mustardseed and Moonshine botanical range of ceramics, on a rare visit from Cape Town. Enjoy a glass of mulled wine and some nibbles – and maybe do a little Christmas shopping at the same time. If you're looking for something different, we have lots of unique and unusual handcrafted gifts for absolutely everyone.

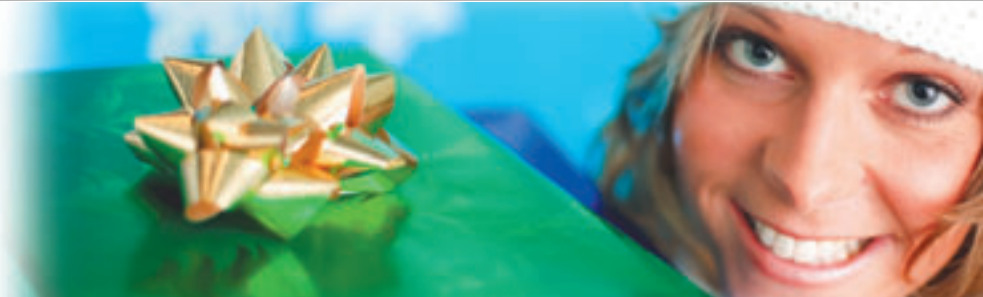
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## This year's dream toys



**T**HE fantasy world of entertainment has influenced the toys that will grab the imaginations of children this Christmas. The Top 12 covers six popular categories — pre-school, boys, girls, hip 'n' cool, games and creative.

Gary Sadler, chairman of the Toy Retailers Association, which made the predictions, said: "The toy industry turns the latest trends into up-to-the-minute concepts to provide today's kids with innovative and creative toys. We are currently seeing a resurgence in licensed toys, which combine fun and playability with the familiarity of popular characters. However, we've also been seeing a real shift towards toys that truly capture the imaginations of children, young and old."

Top gifts for girls are an exciting mixture of glitz and glamour coupled with traditional favourites and advanced technology. Bratz Forever Diamondz Assortment (Vivid) comes with a unique gift — a piece of jewellery with a real diamond! With a passion for fashion, Girl Crush Steak and Style (Spin Master) allows the young and trendy to experiment with funk hair colours (easily washable of course!). Using special wrist and ankle bracelets, Let's

Dance Barbie (Mattel) moves as you do so you can dance together, while Tomy's Nintendogs provides a tetchy edge for the younger girl in this category — the cute doggies come with a special magnetic bone which makes them perform tricks.

Boys will be boys and their list is packed with rip roaring cars, action figures and sci-fi adventure.

Cars Fast Talkin' McQueen (Mattel) is the ultimate interactive toy. Inspired by the hit movie, the car performs 15 stunts and tricks, says more than 30 fun phrases and makes fun of himself if he crashes. Dr Who Cyberman Mask will give boys an experience they'll never forget — the voice changer transforms a boy's voice into that of a Cyberman's. Innovative sci-fi favourite Test Tube Alien is predicted to be a playground craze this winter. Using a test tube, kids hatch their alien from a chrysalis and then monitor its health, extending their lives using an interactive website.

Licensed toys and technology continue to shine in the pre-school group with Fifi and the Flowertos 3 wheeled scooter (Halsall) and Fireman Sam Jupiter (Martin Yaffe).

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**The top gifts for Christmas 2006**

Baby born with magic eyes, Zapf	Character Options
Bratz Forever Diamondz Assortment, Vivid	Let's Dance Barbie Doll, Mattel
Car Fast Talking' McQueen, Mattel	Paper FX, Flair
Deal or No Deal Electronic Board Game, Drumond Park	Pixel Chix Mall, Mattel
Dr. Who Cyberman Mask,	Tamagotchi Connexion V3, Bandal
	Thomas Aquadraw, Tomy
	Trivial Pursuit 90s, Hasbro
	V.Smile Baby, VTech

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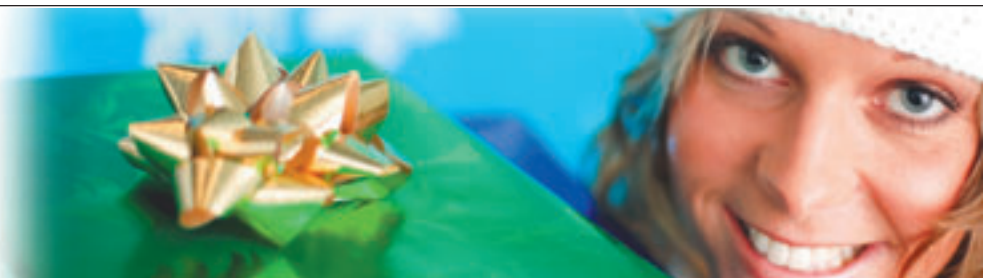
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## New season, new do

By Shereen Low

**T**HE new season often means that people yearn to try something new. Victoria Beckham, Madonna and Cameron Diaz have all succumbed recently, with the former Posh Spice escaping from her lengthy extensions and opting for an edgy 'Bop', while the Queen of Pop tried a dramatic platinum blonde wig for her 48th birthday. Cameron, on the other hand, transformed herself from blonde to brunette. But how do you look after your new style in the cold months ahead?

Women don't change their hairstyle just because of the weather, although 12.5 million British women admit they would change their hair colour after a relationship break up to give their confidence a boost, according to research by Dove.

Winter already means endless problems for hair, with central heating, extreme temperatures, wind, rain and hats leading to dehydrated, damaged hair and an irritated flaky scalp, so a new do can mean even more hassle.

Winter time can be especially harsh on hair. The arctic air combined with low humidity, brisk winds and dry indoor heat can draw moisture out of even the healthiest hair, leaving strands parched, dull, brittle and prone to breakage.

James McGynty, from John Frieda, said:

"Although conditioning your hair is very important over the winter months, you should be using a lot less conditioner — which can weigh down your hair — especially when it is short, making it appear limp. Going from long to short is a dramatic change and means that overall, the amount of hair product you use should be adjusted."

You should apply conditioner on the ends of your hair rather than the full length to prevent dry and split ends.

Philip Kingsley Body Building Conditioner, £14 and Frederic Fekkai Protein RX Reparative Conditioner, £16 from Space NK are ideal for fine textured, limp or lightweight flyaway hair.

James continues: "Another thing to take into consideration is frizz. When you have shorter hair, any frizz caused by damp winter weather will be accentuated more than if you have longer hair. Using an anti-frizz



product is absolutely key."

Try Mark Hill's De-Frizz, from £5.49 at Boots, and Elvive Smooth-Intense de-frizzing ranges, from £1.97, for a complete regime.

If you decide to go for a new colour, whether you've transformed into a brunette, redhead or blonde, you'll have to start paying your new locks much more attention than before.

Chemically treated, chronically dry and damaged hair should be treated weekly. Having such a drastic colour change means that your hair will need some looking after. Maximise the time you spend luxuriating in the bath with effortless multi-tasking. Just slap a treatment on your hair when you get in and rinse off when you finish. Aussie 3 Minute Miracle Reconstructor, £4.49 is ideal if you want maximum benefits. It's perfect for very dry hair and will repair those nasty split ends and smooth rough cuticles.

Keep colour looking richer for longer by using specialised shampoos and conditioners, particularly if you're going darker.

Going from blonde to brunette can sometimes make you feel like you need more shine for your hair — dark hair will absorb light rather than reflect it so products specially created for this should be used.

The John Frieda colour ranges — Brilliant Brunette, Sheer Blonde and Radiant Redhead — are all delicious, from £4.28 but the ones from Sorbie, from £4.49, will also work wonders.

☐ The latest news on the fashion front is that Hollywood style glamour is dominating the fashion scene this Christmas.

Womenswear is cool and sophisticated - low cut tuxedos with satin lapels and extra wide leg trousers are available in black or white, stunning evening dresses include all over sequins on vintage tunic shapes, chic gold rose brocade cocktail and flowing red Grecian styles with ladylike outwear for chillier evenings.

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## Give your kitchen a little charisma

### Dark wood units and worktops will find favour

**T** IRED of battling to be a Christmas superchef in an old, ill-equipped kitchen? Take a look at the latest trends for winter 2006. Think rich, dark and handsome — no, calm down, not George Clooney — it's the new trend for kitchens. Dark, grained wood with curved units and a more luxurious look in general is going to be one of the fashionable choices. Naomi Cleaver, design expert and television presenter, believes that the popularity of the rather severe stainless steel, industrial-style kitchens is on the wane. "I actually embraced that stainless steel look for my own home," she says with a wry smile, "but now I think things have moved on and there's a return to units in natural wood, in dark,

sumptuous colours." This more glamorous, decorative look is also in tune with the desire to use kitchens for more than simply cooking. More often today they double as dining or family rooms and are larger open-plan spaces where people want to linger in comfort. Naomi banishes the outdated view of dark woods as overpowering and dominating. "When we think of dark wood it conjures visions of 'brown furniture' — that heavy, over-varnished stuff of yore. "This new trend in dark timber such as rich walnut couldn't be further away from that — now what's important is the beauty of the grain and crisp design." Softer lines will also feature, with curves making a comeback. "Curves make a lot of practical sense, especially

if there are kids running around as well as being a refreshingly feminine trend of which we will be seeing more." Award-winning kitchen designer Simon Bray agrees: "Stark modern angular designs do not lend themselves easily to creating the right environment for today's kitchens." He uses oak, burr oak and high gloss acrylics and curved contours. "The current trend in kitchen design is all about making materials and textures and creating a practical modern room which is full of warmth. "This is in some degree a result of the desire to entertain — not just cook — in the kitchen." If dark woods aren't to your taste, the warmer traditional looks such as Shaker and Rustic Oak will still find favour. These can be enlivened by contemporary-style materials such as glass splashbacks.



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## Out and about in Cheshire



A winter's view of historic Arley Hall

ARLEY Hall and Gardens is organising a Christmas Floral Extravaganza between December 2 and 10 when you can view the decorated mansion.

Highlights include performances by the Rivendell Singers and a Craft and Gift Fair organised by Cheshire Fayre on Sunday, December 3. The following day, December 4 there is a Candle light and carols evening with a Craft and Gift fayre.

An Evening Musical Soiree in the Hall with the Rivendell Singers, Elaine Lomas and Anna Walton takes place on Tuesday, December 5. Tickets cost £15 including a glass of wine and canapés. No Christmas is complete without a trip to Walton Hall Gardens, Warrington for a Christmas experience not to be missed.

It all happens between 11am and 4pm. on December 2, 3, 9, 10, 16 and 17. Why not go along and enjoy free admission to the beautifully decorated Heritage Yard where Santa will be waiting to meet young and old in his enchanting Grotto.

In addition there will be bands playing festive music, school choirs, amazing entertainers, land

train rides, a Victorian carousel, stalls and seasonal food. There will also be twilight openings on December 22 and 23 (grotto and carousel only).

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The Christmas Gift Fair offers an inspirational range of gift ideas, decorations and art in the grand surroundings of the Tenants' Hall. Tatton by Candlelight including a Christmas Gift Fair and Christmas Lights in the Garden takes place from Wednesday, December 6 to Friday, December 8 from 6.30pm. to 9pm.

Adults £5.50, children £3. Pre-booking is strongly recommended by phoning 01625 534400. Bring the children to meet Father Christmas and his friends at Tatton's Farm on December weekends.

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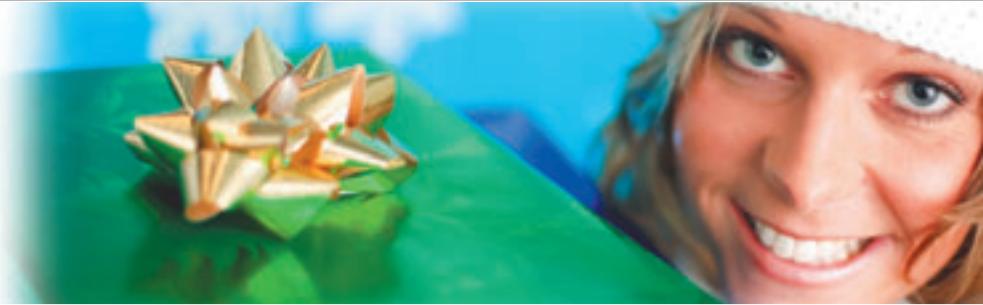
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## Gearing up for guests

**T**HE best part of Christmas is sharing it with your family and friends. And it can also be the most difficult part. Guests can add up to a lot of worry and cost as you do your best to make sure they will be comfortable, well-fed and entertained. Yet with just weeks to go, a little preparation now can see you - and your home - in tip-top shape for the festive visitors. First, and most importantly - don't panic. You may think that corners of your home are truly grotty, but the chances are your guests won't even notice them. They'll be too busy overeating!

Remember - the most important thing for guests is to have a welcoming atmosphere; you need to be relaxed when they arrive, so try not to overdo things.

### Food

This is one of the times in your life when you really do need a list. That way, you can do all the shopping in one go, and you won't suddenly remember on Christmas morning that you've forgotten the cranberry jelly. Make sure you have plenty of freezer room for everything you are buying, and - crucially - remember to get the food out in plenty of time to defrost. Turkey in particular needs to thaw thoroughly before you cook it. The last thing you want is your guests struck down by food poisoning!

### Furniture

If the sofa's looking tatty, cover it up with a throw. They can brighten your whole room if you choose dramatic colours - look out for this season's favourite deep reds and russets to add

But if you feel you must decorate, remember that your time now is short - stick to simple amendments to your colour schemes that won't involve major wallpaper-stripping or a huge mess in the house; you'll only have to clear it up later.



some real luxury to your decor. Plan where your dinner guests will sit. Is there enough room at the table? If not, add a folding table at the end and cover it all up with an attractive tablecloth. Make the table look splendid by adding candles, holly wound into wreaths and writing out namecards for each place setting in gold pen on thick cream card. You can also change the look of your room by altering the lighting and moving lamps to create a cosy, welcoming room for that special meal.

### Beds

Sure you've got enough? If not, now's the time to invest in either a campbed or something a bit smarter - perhaps a futon which will fold up into a sofa during the day. Check your bedding, too, and ensure you have enough pillows. If you can't afford to buy new, revitalise your old stuff with dyes, and fabric paints if you have an artistic streak.

### Bathroom

Guest towels in order, with plenty in reserve (if you've teenagers coming, they'll use twice as many as normal people...and spend twice as long in the bath). A new shower curtain or rug will make the room look fresh; pot-pourri in small wicker baskets is a nice touch.

### Kitchen

Forget it - the room will be so packed with people hurrying about making tea that no-one will notice if the flooring is shabby or the units have seen better days.

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# Christmas 06

## Decorating traditions

### Adorn your interiors with Yuletide spirit



### Create some festive warmth

MAKE the whole house smell of Christmas, either by burning cinammon joss sticks or by brewing up a bowl of punch on the stove. The scent will flood through your whole home.

Warm the cockles of their heart with a real fire. If your fireplace is blocked, it may simply need some remedial work to open it up again. But gas is a convenient alternative and there are even some electric fires now that can give the effect.

Lower the lights to create a more intimate feel. Instead of overhead,

rely on lamps, move them round the room until you get the right effect.

Dine by candlelight. There's no light more romantic and intimate. Indulge in some super-fluffy hand towels and luxurious soaps for the bathroom.

No matter how busy you are in there, make space for people in the kitchen. It's always the heart of the house and they'll always end up there!

In the guest bedroom splash out on a velvet throw and some cushions.

**O**NE of the major pleasures of Christmas is decorating our homes according to tradition. But did you know that the way you do it at this time of year is supposed to make a big difference to whether you'll be lucky in the coming year? Most of our Christmas traditions date back to pagan times, when superstition ruled the world. We bring greenery into our homes, for instance, to symbolise fertility - and mistletoe harks back to the sun-worshipping of Druid days. The Yule Log, too, was supposed to bring long life to a household, burning right throughout the Christmas season - and the bright red of holly berries stands for blood and the life force.

That's a lot of symbolism for one festival. But if you are superstitious, and you'd like to make sure you have good luck in the coming year, take a look at our quick guide:

#### Blinds

Tie them up securely - in some parts of Europe, a blind that falls suddenly is said to signify a death in the family.

#### Candles

A must at the Christmas table, but they do have their risks.

Blowing them out with one breath brings good luck for the year - but it's bad news if your puff's not enough! Accidentally knocking out a candle means a wedding is on the way.

#### Chairs

If you can't stand any of your festive visitors, make sure they put their chairs back against the wall before leaving. This means they will never come back again.

#### Decorations

Make sure you get them down by Twelfth Night, January 6, or mischievous spirits will plague your home.

#### Flowers

Fresh flowers are lucky, but only if they are in season; red roses in particular symbolise life. But Feng Shui experts hate our passion for dried flowers - they say they block the life force.

#### Ivy

If it climbs your walls, encourage it - it is supposed to protect your family from evil spirits. But if it's looking a bit poorly, bad luck with money is on the way. Bring in fresh fronds to twine among your hearth decorations for luck.

#### Lights

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# Win an M&S Christmas hamper worth £250



Image of hamper for illustration purposes only

We would like to know more about you and your views of your local Guardian, good or bad. This will help us to ensure your newspaper caters properly for your needs and interests in the future. The following questionnaire invites you to comment on all aspects of your local Guardian and also asks general questions on your reading likes and dislikes. Please complete this questionnaire and send it back to us for your chance to win an M&S Christmas Hamper worth £250.

**Q1** Where do you get your local news from:

- The Guardian
- Another local newspaper
- Local radio
- Local television
- The Internet

**Q2** What would you say was your main source of news?

.....  
.....

**Q3** How often to you buy the Guardian?

- Every week
- Once or twice a month
- Occasionally
- Never

**Q4** Do you buy any other local weekly newspaper?

- Every week
- Once or twice a month
- Occasionally
- Never

**Q5** Do you regularly buy a national or regional daily newspaper?

- Yes
- No

**Q6** If yes, which one? .....

**Q7** Do you buy the Guardian as well as another local weekly newspaper?  Yes  No

**Q8** What do you think about the print quality of the Guardian?

- Excellent
- Good
- Acceptable
- Below average
- Poor

**Q9** Are you aware of our websites?  Yes  No

**Q10** If yes, how often do you look at our websites?

.....

**Q11** Do you buy the Guardian mainly to read about:

- Local news
- Amateur sport
- Major sport, ie Northwich Vics, Witton Albion
- Entertainments information
- Weddings
- Funeral reports
- Clubs and societies
- Business news
- Readers' letters
- Schools reports
- Crime reports
- Local government
- District news -reports from your village or area
- Photographs of local events and people
- Display advertisements from local shops
- Classified advertisements
- Jobs advertisements
- Property advertisements
- Motor vehicle advertisements

**Q12** What do you think of our entertainments coverage?

- Excellent
- Good
- Acceptable
- Below average
- Poor

**Q13** What kind of events do you think we should cover ie, entertainment at local pubs and clubs, restaurant reviews, local amateur theatre, cinema, TV, performances in nearby towns and cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Stoke, Chester, local bands.

.....  
.....

**Q14** Do you want to see more, less or the same level of coverage of village and district news?

- More
- Less
- Same

**Q15** If you could change one thing about the Guardian, what would it be?

.....  
.....

**Q16** Which section of the Guardian do you turn to first?

.....  
.....

**Q17** What topics or subject areas not currently covered by the Guardian would you like to see included?

.....  
.....

**Q18** What factors would make you more likely to be a regular purchaser of the Guardian?

.....  
.....

**Q19** What factors would or have stopped you buying the Guardian on a regular basis?

.....  
.....

**Q20** Age:  Under 20  20 - 30  30 - 40  40 - 50  50 - 60  60 +

Title:  Other  Mr  Miss  Mrs  Ms

First name: .....

Surname: .....

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