In the Media: Bambino Goodies - UK - June 2008

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A shopping guide for hot baby and mama products

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I am a big fan of baby wearing and have several slings already. Imagine my delight when I was asked to try out a soft baby carrier!

Belle Baby Carriers have been designed by two outdoor enthusiast Papas from Colorado. They are suitable from 10lb - 25lb and are a front only carrier which can hold the baby facing in to your chest or outwards. It's made from deliciously soft fabric! Julia Roberts was papped using one last summer with her youngest child.

The Testers: This has been trialled by two Mamas, two babies and one Papa. The Mamas were short & round and tall & slim respectively. The babies were a 1 year old 17 pounder and a nine month old 22 pounder. The Papa was super skinny, medium build and bearded!

Instructions: Very easy to follow. Six simple pictures with explanations tell you how to put it on. There are also suggestions to help make use more comfortable and warnings for safety. It also passed my 'idiot test' - I was able to figure it out without looking at the instructions (I forgot to!).

Set up: Quick and easy to get on. You tie the waist strap and then hold your baby against your chest whilst doing the shoulder straps. The shoulder straps cross over on your back and buckle under your arms. I found the shoulder straps a little tricky as you have to do them one handed but once you have the knack it gets easier. My fellow Mama tester said it was by far the easiest carrier she has used (compared to Baby Bjorn and Tomy Freestyle Classic) and she is much faster at fitting it than I am.

In use: In the last week this carrier has been taken on every trip out to the shops, zoo, market, farm and even the swimming pool. As soon as you put it on you can feel that there is no weight on your neck or shoulders; it is all supported on your waist. The interior of the sling is very tactile and fluffy which was a big hit with the babies. BabyGeek was very happy to be facing out and wriggled her legs lots (Papas - beware of this!). My co-tester even carried both babies, one in the sling and one on the hip, with great ease. I quite happily managed the carrier with a pram to push. I found the carrier best on short trips as after an hour or so I felt a pull in my middle back. That said, we were testing with babies at the upper end of the weight spectrum and I imagine it would be less wearing with a 10 pounder.

Overall: A good soft carrier made from lovely materials. I would recommend this for the Papas who want to carry the baby and keep their style. This carrier will probably give you between 9 to 15 months of use depending on how quickly your baby grows.