



belle

Gentle Front-Support Baby Carrier

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THE BELLE OF BOULDER

A BABY CARRIER FIT FOR THE STARS

BY ERIN LOVE

NEW PARENTS no longer have to give up fashion for function. In fact, the two can go hand-in-hand and Belle Baby Carriers has the design to prove it.

Two local rock-climbing dads, Seth Murray and Mark LeBeau, created the company. Murray and LeBeau both worked in the outdoor industry designing climbing gear, and couldn't believe there weren't any baby carriers on the market that they liked. So they designed their own and named it after their daughters: Murray's daughter Isabel, 6 years old, and LeBeau's daughter Isabelle, 9 years old.

Murray brought Sue Edmiston on as co-partner, and together they have been marketing their baby carrier around Boulder and at trade shows across the country. Edmiston's background is also in the outdoor industry, but she has a special flair for creative sales and marketing. Something she proved early on when she sent a Belle to Julia Roberts.

The story goes that Edmiston actually sent the baby carrier to Roberts' agent - who promptly called to say that Julia didn't accept gifts, recalls Edmiston. Evidently, Roberts saw the baby carrier, tried it on and decided to keep it. Then Roberts and family went for a walk in Central Park and voila! Pictures of the Belle appeared on the cover of several major magazines.

Edmiston was on vacation when all of this happened, and came back to a barrage of emails inquiring about the carrier. Great publicity? Yes, but with a great product to back it up. "When someone like Julia Roberts, who is an educated consumer, chooses this [baby carrier] to wear, it says something," says Edmiston.

The Belle was designed with proper ergonomics for both parent



Belle Baby Carriers are designed for comfort.

and baby in mind. And good ergonomics equals comfort. For the baby, this means being seated with hips at right angles so their legs aren't dangling, and head support for newborns, says Gabrielle Johnson of Becoming Mothers, a Boulder-based store for new and expecting families. For parents, the weight of the baby should be transferred to the hips, taking the weight off the back and shoulders.

One of the biggest complaints Johnson hears about baby carriers is that they aren't comfortable, but not so with the Belle. "The Belle carrier is one of the most user-friendly carriers and one of the easiest to get on and off. But the number one positive thing about it is how comfortable it is," says Johnson.

The Belle's products are incredibly soft to the touch. Murray takes great care in selecting the textiles, and buys only the most durable



and luxurious upholstery-grade material for their line. The hip patterns catch your eye and the fabrics feel luscious against your - and your baby's - skin. There are over 10 color styles to choose from, including: black, cheetah, orange blossom and cappuccino, to name a few.

Murray is quick to point out that the sleek, streamlined style appeals to both women and men. He's used a Belle to carry his daughter and reports sighting men around town wearing the oh-so-stylish lavender and silver Belle.

For green-minded parents, an organic version has recently been

added to the lineup. It features an outer layer made from hemp with supple corduroy on the inside. Julia Roberts has one of these, too. She asked the company to make her an organic carrier and received one of the first models, complete with custom adaptations.

"Our focus is that we are a locally-centered company with a high emphasis on customer service," says Edmiston. The Belle is hand-crafted in Colorado and all of the materials are domestic. **W**

FIND MORE INFORMATION about Belle Baby Carriers at www.bellebaby-carriers.com.