



home sweet home

DESIGN & LIVING WINTER 2009



KING OF THE PLAYGROUND

When you think about it, the Rockwell Group has been in the business of playgrounds for years, creating a showy interior for a glamorous jeweler, a JetBlue terminal and Nobu restaurants from New York to Dubai. So the Imagination Playground at Burling Slip, which opens next summer in a former parking lot near South Street Seaport, is a logical next step. The peanut-shaped park is inspired by midcentury adventure playgrounds, where children used found objects and postwar debris. It features sand and water, Playground Associates to oversee the action, and more than 350 loose parts, including wheelbarrows, pool noodles and weather- and germ-resistant foam blocks (above, in Brooklyn). David Rockwell, the founder and C.E.O., has created a standard kit that can be deployed cheaply in open spaces across the country, but at Burling Slip he pays homage to its nautical past with pulleys, masts and periscope-like tubes through which children can talk from opposite ends of the park. "Each place encourages a kind of cooperative, self-directed fantasy play," he says. "Or you can just run around like a maniac." **JILL SINGER**