

MOMPREENEURS SPOTLIGHT: BUGGY BUBBLES

Interview by Amy St.Clair DiLaura

Meet **Jamie Mamikunian**, founder of **Buggy Bubbles**, a stroller and car seat detail, repair and rental shop. Based in Twin Peaks, Buggy Bubbles has been restoring strollers and car seats to gleaming condition since 2006. Buggy Bubbles also handles mending, rust removal, tire and brake repair, chassis alignment, spare parts and specialized detail.

What inspired you to start Buggy Bubbles?

My stroller! In 2005 I was at the corner of Broadway and 76th Street in New York and at all four corners I saw the exact same stroller in the same color as ours. I immediately thought how cool it would be to make them all look personalized. The thought developed into a reality when I moved to San Francisco, joined an incredible playgroup, and detailed one of the mom's strollers. Turned out she didn't need personalization, but she did want a deep cleaning. Word of my work was passed around to other GGGMG moms and the business was born!

What has been the best part about owning your own business? What's the biggest challenge?

The absolute best part is the flexibility and the ability to create. I have been able to build my work schedule around my children. My business grows and changes as my family does, and I am able to expand and trim hours as needed. This is also a benefit for my customers, who may want to drop off their stroller or car seat at times that may not be considered normal business hours. I love coming up with new ideas to make the company more family friendly, fun and efficient. I get my best ideas while I am scrubbing a stroller. The best part is that my Board is made up of the five-and-under set, and they usually approve all mommy's ideas swiftly and enthusiastically!

Having the opportunity to dish with a mom during a morning stroller drop-off always makes my day. San Francisco has some of the smartest, most talented and driven women in the world, and I feel lucky to have the opportunity to surround myself with those who have chosen to become moms, too.

The biggest challenges are lack of

investment/marketing funds, defending my intellectual property, and the difficulties of recruiting "Friends" and "Likes" on Facebook. But all these challenges have made me stronger and wiser. I have put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into my company in the last five years and I really feel like I am running a solid business.



Any other favorite mom-owned businesses?

Bumblebee Bakeshop in Cow Hollow, started by Lisa Lan, another GGGMG mom. Lisa was instrumental in helping me the first couple of years that I was navigating starting my own business. She also makes fantastic cakes! I also owe a lot of thanks to Drea Lester of Red Tricycle. I love supporting other mom-owned businesses because I know how hard it is to make it all work.

Be honest: Is there any mess too gnarly for Buggy Bubbles?

I'll take on any stroller—the dirtier the

better! We average more than 20 strollers a month, and we see a lot of mold. The only one I think of as "the one that got away" was a Joovy Caboose. At first I thought it was a black stroller, but it turned out to be red—and completely covered by mold. It also needed some new parts, so I called the company and asked if there was anything they could do to help us out...and they sent a replacement stroller! The parents were thrilled, and I was so happy I'd been able to help them.

How do you find a balance between work and family?

It's a work in progress. Customers call at all times of the day and they might want drop off a stroller on their way to preschool in the morning or after their child goes to bed at night. The nice thing about running my own business is it's easy for me to be there when the customers need me. I have a set work schedule but I try to keep as flexible as possible for customers.

I've learned how to work with my kids around. My kids have their own stroller repair kits, and sometimes they help me clean. When the youngest baby came along, things got tougher. We have a sitter in the mornings who helps me manage. It's about finding a happy balance.

BUGGY BUBBLES

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Founded and operated by Jamie Mamikunian, mom to Isadora Grace (5½), Magnus Julian (2½), and Evangelina Therese (9 months). Buggy Bubbles donates 10% of profits to relief efforts in Japan and has an ongoing donation program with the Homeless Prenatal Program.

May 4th is Derby Day! Buggy Bubbles and Seesaw are teaming up to offer GGGMG moms our stroller/car seat cleaning service at a discounted rate. Moms or caregivers are welcome to pop by Seesaw anytime between 9 to 11am to drop off their car seats (or strollers with registration), enjoy a coffee and play with their little ones. Musical guest and prizes on pick-up day 24 hours later. Preregister at: 415.342.9090 or orders@buggybubbles.com.