



# A RIVAL FOR THE DOLL DOLLAR

By LOIS CAIRNS

**BARBIE'S REIGN** as queen of the plastic dolls could be under threat this Christmas from a new chick who is more cool than cute.

Moxie is being marketed by toymaker MGA Entertainment as a more wholesome alternative to Barbie in the hope she will appeal to parents who think Barbie no longer resonates with young girls because she is too sweet, too flashy and far too, er, perky.

Moxie hangs out on scooters and skateboards, favours casual denim over faux fur and sparkly tiaras, and drives a carbon-friendly small car instead of the gas-guzzling SUVs favoured by her rival.

She is one of two new dolls challenging Barbie for her crown this Christmas. The other, Liv, is selling like hot cakes across the Tasman but will not be available here till the new year.

Liv and Moxie each have their own website and their interactive features and fresh-faced looks have already propelled them to the top of Christmas shopping lists at Wal-Mart, Target, Amazon and Toys "R" Us in the United States.

Farmers' toy buyer Rob Taurima said Moxie was effectively Bratz mark two – a toned-down version of the Bratz dolls which have largely vanished from toy shelves since Mattel, the company behind Barbie, won a lawsuit for copyright infringement against MGA

last year.

So does this new contender have what it takes to end Barbie's 50-year reign as the youthful icon of girlish fantasy? Taurima is not sure. "What is working against any new doll is just the heritage Barbie has built up, the intellectual property that it has across not only across dolls but apparel, manchester and different licence products.

"There's the whole 'Barbie was around when I was a kid so that's what I want my children to be playing with' thing to overcome . . . but you can never say never. Bratz got pretty close."

Christchurch office worker Karen Smith, 32, was last week shopping for a Christmas present for her seven-year-old god-daughter. "She's quite a girly girl – she likes playing with dolls and dressing up," said Smith. "I wouldn't buy her a Barbie doll on principle but I think the Moxie doll is kind of cool. If I had to pick between who I wanted my god-daughter to model herself on – Barbie or Moxie – I would definitely go for Moxie."

*Does this new contender have what it takes to end Barbie's 50-year reign?*

## TOP TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS 2009



Stuck for what to buy the kids for Christmas? Here's what Farmers' toy buyers are picking will be the hottest toys this festive season.

Littlest Pet Shop Deco Pets, \$24.99

Club Penguin Penguin Plush, \$12.99

Gogo's Crazy Bones, from \$5.99

Ben 10 Omnitrix Watch, \$39.99

Transformers ROTF Movie Figures, from \$9.99

New Moon Board Game, \$29.99

Wot Wots Talking Plush, \$39.99

Bop It Game, \$39.99

Swing Ball Set, \$39.99

LEGO - Space Police, Power Miners and Star Wars Ranges, from \$12.99



**Grace, four, from Auckland is ahead of the trend with her new best friend – Moxie.**

Photo: Peter Meecham