

Get Comfortable

BY STEFANI C. O'CONNOR

When guests pull back the covers on their hotel bed to sleep for the night, the comfort of the mattress, the quality of the linens and the overall sensation of being at rest—or lack thereof—will travel with them for much longer than the actual time spent between the sheets. Bedding and linen manufacturers are well aware of this and are eager to meet guest demands with their latest offerings.

"Quality and value are always important, but never more so than now," said Cuddledown's wholesale and hospitality manager, Michelle Harrison. "We're seeing a trend away from the cotton/poly blends toward higher quality, 100% cotton fabrics." Cuddledown's products run the gamut from down comforters, pillows and featherbeds to European sheets, such as their 500-thread-count Italian Percale, made from double-ply, extra long staple Egyptian cotton. "Percale is the most breathable, yet durable fabric for sheets," she said, noting that the satin stitching on the pillowcases, shams and flat sheets add a designer feel to the bed.

Attention to colors and patterns are also prevalent, according to Bill Friese, vice president of Fabtex, Inc. "The white bed has been a popular choice for many years, but it has also contributed to a certain look of sameness in hotel guestrooms. Hotels are looking to differentiate their guestrooms by creating a unique style and sense of 'brand' through the reintroduction of color and pattern," he observed. To meet that need, the Genesis Bedding by Fabtex line creates a great deal of flexibility for either the designer or hotelier since it offers a broad selection of patterns and colors, many of which are reversible, enabling opportunities to mix and match.

Karen Nilles, hospitality product development manager for 1888 Mills, noted hotels often have to choose between durable bedding with limited color and design options, and high end, design-focused products that can be very expensive to maintain in commercial laundry settings. Her company's trademarked Beyond Impressions decorative top sheet program eliminates the need to purchase a separate top sheet and bed scarf. "Beyond Impressions is a patent-pending, two-in-one concept that combines a traditional bed scarf and decorative top sheeting into one product. Using a colorfast technique, the bed scarf is printed directly onto the top cover which provides a significant cost savings," she said. The Beyond Impressions line also incorporates trademarked JetSpun technology yarns that are considered abrasion resistant with the ability to last 100-plus washes in commercial laundering, according to the company.

With the lodging industry's keen focus on sustainability, Deborah Herman, president of Fabric Innovations, feels bamboo bedding "has created an exciting shift in the hotel bedding marketplace, not only because of its contribution to 'green' hotel initiatives, but also because of its softness and superior comfort. Bamboo is cool in summer and warm in winter. It feels like silk, but is naturally lightweight and very durable."

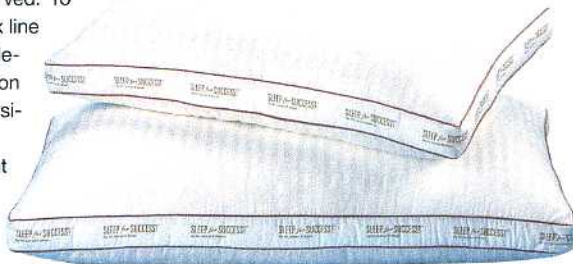
The company's new environmentally friendly bamboo bedding line is crafted exclusively from 100% Moso bamboo. Since bamboo is a highly

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Bedding & linen manufacturers continue to raise the bar with more luxury, green products



Above, Cuddledown's 500 thread-count Italian Percale sheets



Above, United Feather & Down's Sleep for Success! By Dr. James B. Maas for Hospitality pillow collection



Above, Fabric Innovations' bamboo bedding line



Left, The Genesis Bedding by Fabtex

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sustainable crop, this can contribute to the earning of LEED points for hoteliers, Herman observed. "In addition, bamboo is naturally and permanently antibacterial, which helps keep the sheets fresh and clean smelling between washes," she said.

Similarly, Portico Home + Spa has developed an organic cotton bedding program. "It is for hoteliers who would like to make more responsible purchasing decisions, while knowing that the products they use will be beautiful and comfortable," said Portico president Gregg Haft. The cotton used in the line is certified organic and the processing is certified to the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), which prohibits the use of toxic chemicals. "Sales of organic and sustainable bed and bath products, such as sheets, are growing rapidly with companies including Ralph Lauren, Land's End and Target already selling an array of these items," he added.

Mattress companies are equally aware of the environment. Sealy, for example, is utilizing wood that is certified to Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Canadian Standard Association standards. Additionally, all of the steel products in Sealy sleep sets come from recycled steel and its foam supplier recycles all of its polyurethane scraps for use in the production of other consumer products.

The company's new Encore Ultraplush mattress features five inches of comfort layers, including an extra inch of memory foam and its new Motion Stabilizer provides greater structural integrity than standard foundations to improve durability in high-traffic hospitality environments. "By providing hotel customers products that they prefer, hotels will continue to see an increase in their business," said Leo Vogel, director of global contract & export sales for Sealy, Inc. Sealy will also introduce a new Posturepedic collection this spring.

Meanwhile, Simmons' zip-on, zip-off EverNU mattress top continues to meet hoteliers' demands for a sustainable mattress product. Steve Tipton, vp, Simmons Hospitality Bedding, commented the product's removable, replaceable and recyclable top "is perfect to sustain the life of the mattress in the hotel for longer period and fits all of the segments of the hotel market for any owner that is interested in sustainability at zero cost impact." He stated the product can reduce the investment in mattresses by more than 25%.

Cost-savings are one thing, but an optimal sleep experience for the guest remains paramount. United Feather & Down has introduced the Sleep for Success! By Dr. James B. Maas for Hospitality Collection inspired by Maas' work in the field of sleep and performance. The collection offers fabric and fills that target moisture management and temperature regulation and have eco-friendly down alternative fills. Pillows are designed for side, back and stomach sleep positions to improve head, neck and spine alignment.

"Quality of sleep is one of the most important determining factors to guest satisfaction and delivering the kind of good night's sleep that creates repeat guests and positive reviews goes far beyond the mattress and the décor. Investing in a better quality pillow, comforter and mattress pad is the simplest and most impactful way a hotel can differentiate itself," said Stephen Palmer, United Feather & Down co-president.

And of course, the national news on bed bug infestations has driven another trend in bedding: prevention. In order to help hotels protect their investments in costly mattresses, Valley Forge Fabrics has developed mattress and boxspring encasements made of the company's Tencel+Plus Lyocell with waterproof lamination. "The hotel bed uses the most fabric in the entire guestroom and is typically one of the largest investments made by the owner. It becomes a symbol of the brand and hoteliers should do everything they can to protect their beds while simultaneously protecting their brands," said Ahmet Sapmaz, vp, strategic global business development for Valley Forge Fabrics. The face of Valley Forge encasements is made of Tencel+Plus Lyocell Eucalyptus, which is also anti-allergen and tested to eliminate dust mites.



Above, Portico Home + Spa's organic cotton bedding collection



Above, Simmons' EverNU mattress top



Right, Mattress and boxspring encasements by Valley Forge Fabrics



Left, Sealy's Encore Europlush mattress



Right, 1888 Mills' Beyond Impressions decorative top sheet