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\$35,000 for a bed? Perhaps you'll want to sleep on it

by Johanna Ginsberg
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How much are you willing to pay for a good night's sleep? How about \$35,000?

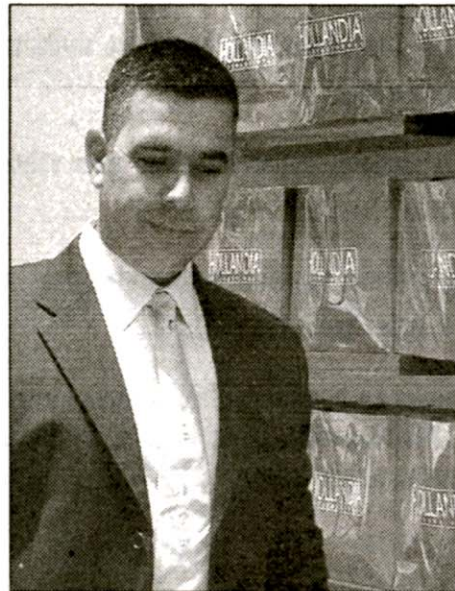
For Avi Barssessat of Tel Aviv, that's a small (okay — enormous) price to pay for what he calls a "luxury sleep system."

President and CEO of the Israel-based Hollandia International, he unveiled the company's \$35,000 Platinum-Luxe Elite bed at the Hollandia store in the Mall at Short Hills on Oct. 11. Ten Elite beds have already been sold to customers — in Moscow.

Hollandia said he hopes to sell thousands more around the world this year.

"This is a bed for people who love life, want to have fun, and can afford it," said the 42-year-old Barssessat, in a conversation with NJN during the opening event at the store.

How much sleeping they'll actually be able to do in the bed is another question. Features include an iPod docking station built into



Avi Barssessat, 42, of Tel Aviv is president and CEO of the Israel-based luxury bed company, Hollandia International. The company opened its second location in the United States in the Mall at Short Hills and unveiled its \$35,000 bed at its Oct. 11 grand opening celebration.

Photos by Johanna Ginsberg

the headboard, a retractable 32-inch HDTV with surround sound,



The Hollandia International Elite bed system, priced at \$35,000, features an iPod docking station and HDTV with surround sound, a woofer, and a CD player. It was unveiled at the grand opening of the Hollandia International store at the Mall at Short Hills on Oct. 11.

BED

and a CD player that rises from inside the footboard at the touch of a button. Made primarily from natural latex finished with a coating of aloe vera, the mattress is designed to wick away perspiration. Four German-engineered motors control the motion of the adjustable bed, and a 12-program massage system mounted under the bed turns off automatically after 30 minutes — just in case one happens to fall asleep in the midst of all this luxury.

The event marked the opening of Hollandia's second store in the United States. The company sells about 2,500 pieces per month, according to Barssessat. Stores at 120 locations worldwide sell Hollandia; there are 11 company stores.

Barssessat's father, Isaac, now 77, founded the company in 1981 after literally breaking his back as a farmer on Moshav Orot. Unable to farm, he opened a furniture shop instead, according to his son.

"He was selling mattresses, and he found out all the mattresses were the same and that nothing could help cure his back problem. He was a little bit upset about it. He decided to find a solution to his back problem," said Barssessat.

The company his father founded eventually began to focus on lifestyle as much as comfort.

"You're having fun in bed; you're spending a lot of time in bed. You can read. You can watch TV," said Barssessat, who joined

the company in 1986. "More than the comfort aspect, you have the fun aspect. Now they're joined together."

Prices at the Short Hills store begin at \$899 for an ottoman that unfolds into a cot; the most popular item, according to store manager Kathy Elder, is the \$2,000 day

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bed. Other beds sell for \$10,000-\$12,000, and the deluxe bed unveiled on Thursday has a more expensive cousin that sells for \$50,000 but is not being shown in the Short Hills store.

Barssessat lives in Tel Aviv with his wife, Anat, and his children, Lee and Tamar. They all sleep on Hollandia beds, but Barssessat's favorite is the Elite.

"I feel like a king in this bed," he said. "Everything is with you, around you. I like to spoil myself. This is the bed for me. I like the good life." ■

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