

The Ultimate Man Cave

Bed makers are turning to a market they have paid little attention to before—men. Special features? Flat-panel TVs, iPod docks. D1



Pimp My Bed: The Male Sleep Lair

By Ray A. Suttis

Bed makers are manning up. After years of catering to women, manufacturers are setting their sights on men. The new macho mattresses they're introducing have "muscle-recovery properties" and cooling technology, on the theory that men are more likely to feel too hot in bed. The bed frames feature built-in TVs, iPod docking stations, wine coolers, safes and other guy-friendly gadgetry.

Dave Shapiro, a 33-year-old real-estate investor in Philadelphia, paid \$30,000 for a Hollandia International adjustable bed that offers a built-in 32-inch Sony flat-screen TV, surround-sound speakers and outlets for laptops. "The best thing is the TV," he says. "You don't have to get up."

Mr. Shapiro admits his wife was less than enthusiastic when he picked the bed out six months ago. He delighted in showing her that the TV could be lowered into the footboard via remote, and he let her pick out the color and pattern of the mattress fabric. His wife declined to comment.

While women have historically made household bed-buying decisions, the bed industry sees men as a neglected market and hopes that innovative products will rouse them from their spending torpor. In recent years, manufacturers have engaged in something of an arms race to equip mattresses with new comfort features such as memory foam and fancy toppers. Now, the industry is looking to the success of the bigger-is-better entertainment-system craze, which prompted men to equip living rooms with giant-screen TVs, surround sound and music-studio stereos—as well as "man cave" furnishings such as high-tech recliners. The hope: The new man cave is the bed.

It remains to be seen whether there is more than a tiny market for these hefty beds, especially when the economy is weak. There is the matter of persuading the women who share some of these men's beds to sign off on the purchase of a souped-up model. While a standard queen-size mattress costs around \$800, the male-oriented models can run up to the \$50,000 price of Hollandia's "Sphere" bed. Mattresses costing \$2,000 or up represented just 2.6% of sales in 2006, according to the International Sleep Products Association, an industry trade group in Alexandria, Va.

Still, over the past five years, pricey beds' market share has grown faster than that of cheaper models. And although affluent men shop less often than women, they spend more when it comes to home luxuries like mattresses, TVs, and stereos, says Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing, a Stevens, Pa., market-research firm.

"Women have a sense of how far the family budget has to spread. Men are much more indulgent," says Ms. Danziger. "If men are leading in the purchase of a mattress, they are more likely to opt to paying full price and buying a more luxurious bed."

In an effort to reach a male niche, Hollandia International introduced a bed last spring with a safe built into the foundation, giving new meaning to stuffing money under the mattress. "A lot of our male customers want to keep a gun close to them at night, so now they have the option to have a safe in the bed," says Maya Ben, Hollandia International's vice president of operations. "It gives them peace of mind." Addressing a different market, presumably, the company also makes beds with built-in wine coolers.

Luxury auto brand Lamborghini, which is owned by Volkswagen AG, has teamed up with Italian mattress maker Magniflex SpA to design a mattress aimed at men who love sports cars. The \$2,000 mattress, which made its debut at a recent home-furnishings trade show in Las Vegas

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Flat-screen TV is embedded in frame. Does include a remote control.

Hollandia International's "Sphere" bed includes a champagne cooler, just in case.

Cave-like structure comes in fabrics including suede and microfiber.

Storage in headboard and footboard lets men pare down furnishings to the essentials.

Hollandia International's "Executive" bed includes a 32-inch TV in the footboard.

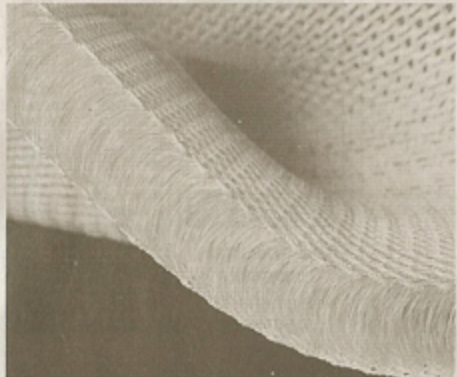
Built-in coolant: Mattress includes technology to minimize trapped body heat.

Magniflex's Lamborghini bed features auto maker's logo; the closest thing to that race-car bed he had at six.

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Hollandia International's "Glow" bed (above) contains discreet storage units and dresser drawers, while its "SAFE-T" bed (below, right) includes a built-in safe. A new Dormia mattress has an outer layer (below, left) made of a breathable three-dimensional material that keeps the body cool.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JANE LITTE

Pimp My Bed: Gadgetry Targets Male Customers

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in September, features the auto maker's logo and signature colors.

Other companies, including Spring Air International LLC and Dormia Inc., are rolling out mattresses that promise muscle recovery after a workout and mattresses with cooling and sweat-wicking features.

The mattresses and beds are sold mostly in mattress stores. CitiSleep, a mattress store in Elmhurst, N.Y., has already pre-ordered the Lamborghini mattress. CitiSleep Chief Executive Abdul Nasir says he is certain it will be a hit with men. "I think most men love the Lamborghini," he says.

To make women more comfortable, he plans to play up a feature in the mattress that allows each sleeping partner to adjust the position of his or her side of the bed by remote control.

Edward Vitale, of Mahopac, N.Y., bought a Cool Sleep mattress, which offers "thermal-regulation technology," according to its manufacturer, Dormia. "I sweat when I sleep, so I wanted to be cooler," says the 42-year-old plumbing-business owner.

His wife, Lisa, wasn't sure about the idea of a mattress that cools. (Dormia says a lot of women ask if the mattress is going to be cold. It says the mattress is designed to absorb ex-

cess body heat or warm the body up, depending on the sleeper's core body temperature.)

Now, Mr. Vitale says, his wife "loves" the mattress. Mrs. Vitale says simply that "this resolved both our issues," indicating that she sleeps better now that her husband doesn't sweat as much.

Dormia showed an updated version of its cool-mattress technology in Las Vegas last week. Its new mattress, which costs between \$1,299 and \$1,995, has an outer layer made of a breathable three-dimensional material. The layer is supposed to permit air flow between one's body and the foam in the mattress, keeping the body cooler. Magniflex and Hollandia International also plan to offer mattresses and beds with new cooling technology.

Meir Kryger, a physician at the Gaylord Sleep Medicine Centers in Connecticut and a past president of the National Sleep Foundation, a nonprofit that supports sleep-related research, says he isn't aware of any scientific evidence of men "being warmer in bed than women."

Michael Zippelli, Dormia's CEO, acknowledges he has no scientific proof that men tend to feel warmer, but he says anecdotal evidence from his customers is persuasive. "Ask 10 girls in an office if it's cold or not and see what happens," he says. "It's a war of air conditioning."