

## Hollandia's Philly store soaks up history

By David Perry

PHILADELPHIA — Alexander Hamilton and Betsy Ross frequented the neighborhood in Old City here where Hollandia International recently opened its flagship store. Unfortunately for Hamilton and Ross, company officials said, they lived long before Hollandia perfected its line of adjustable beds.

History hangs heavy in Philadelphia's trendy Old City. The Betsy Ross home, where tradition holds that Ross created the first American flag, is just around the corner from the store. Hollandia's landlord says Alex-

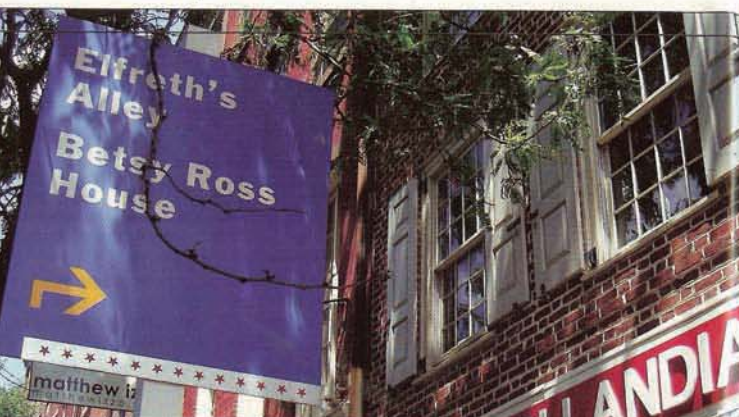
ander Hamilton once owned the building housing the showroom.

"I don't think that's the case," said Stefan Sklaroff, Hollandia's showroom manager, who has done research on the building's history. But there may still be a Hamilton tie. "There is some evidence that one of his sons owned the property," Sklaroff said.

"There is a chance that Betsy Ross would have stopped in here, as she lived a short distance away," said Therapedic President Gerry Borreggine, a Philadelphia native, who joined Hollandia International President



Therapedic's Gerry Borreggine relaxes on an adjustable Hollandia bed as store manager Stefan Sklaroff explains features of the product line.



### ► Hollandia

from p141

Avi Barsessat at the grand opening of its new showroom earlier this summer.

Therapedic recently signed Hollandia as its licensee in Israel, and the two companies are working together on an exclusive product line.

Borreggine said he was pleased to see Hollandia set

up shop in such an historic part of the city. "This is a dynamic retail district, one in which Hollandia's health-oriented selling story should resonate," he said.

Hollandia International is helping Philadelphians get a better night of sleep, officials said. The Israel-based company first came to the City of Brotherly Love in 2006, setting up shop in the nearby Marketplace Design Center.



Hollandia's new store in Philadelphia is in the shadow of historic sites, including the Betsy Ross House.

That center is only open to consumers who visit with their designers.

Hollandia wanted to broaden its customer base, so it moved to a storefront on Third Street in a neighborhood of coffee shops, art galleries and boutiques. The move has already paid off, Sklaroff said.

The showroom was flooded with traffic on a recent First Friday, a popular tradition in Old City, when galleries and businesses open their doors to the public. Hundreds of consumers visited the Hollandia store that day.

The retailer hopes to keep the traffic coming by joining with the local arts community. The showroom currently doubles as an art gallery, featuring several of artist Chris DiSalvatore's acrylic on canvas works, which retail from \$150 to \$2,500. Other artists' work will be featured in coming months.

"We are excited about our new home in Old City, which not only allows us to serve our customers directly, but also contribute to a community that's rich in culture and internationally diverse with its myriad art galleries, restaurants, events and nightlife," said Barsessat.



**David Perry**  
Bedding editor

## Hollandia shares secrets of selling high-end bedding

PHILADELPHIA — How do you sell a \$10,000 sleep set?

The Hollandia International store here has some answers to that question. It opened recently in the trendy Old City district of Philadelphia, which is aptly named: There, a couple of famous guys named Washington and Adams went to church, and there you will find Ben Franklin's final resting place. Hip art galleries and shops abound nowadays.

Showroom manager Stefan Sklaroff and other Hollandia officials provided these insights on the secrets of selling high-end adjustable beds:

**1. Find the right location.** The Old City site is perfect for Hollandia, which makes a line of contemporary, adjustable beds retailing for as much as \$20,000. There is — literally — plenty of money in the neighborhood; the U.S. Mint is just around the corner. And there's a buzz in the neighborhood. Avi Barssessat, president of Hollandia International, said he likes Philadelphia's "flair for design and fashion-forward sensibility."

**2. Give consumers plenty of reasons to come in your store.** The Hollandia showroom participates in the First Friday event, in which stores and art galleries in the neighborhood throw out the welcome mat with free food and drinks. And the Hollandia showroom offers its own enticements; it features local art on the walls. That's a smart move; consumers who can afford a nice piece



Contemporary art adorns wall of Hollandia sleep shop.

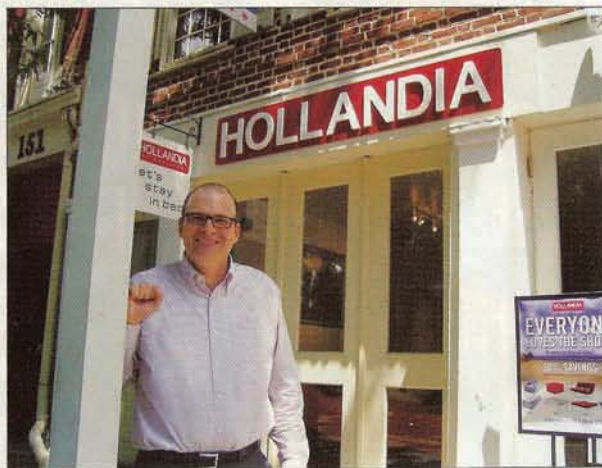
of art can probably also afford a high-end sleep set.

**3. Make the consumers comfortable.** Sklaroff engages his new customers in conversation to establish rapport with them. His goal is to make friends and put those friends at ease. Only then will they be comfortable lying down on the mattresses in the store.

**4. Romance the product.** Sklaroff talks about the ventilated latex in Hollandia sleep sets. The company says that latex greatly diminishes pressure on the body, while still conforming to the body. The ventilated latex breathes, providing a cool and restful sleeping surface, and one that protects one sleeper from being disturbed by another, Hollandia says.

**5. Sell better sleep.** Hollandia calls it "restorative versus restless sleep." "Authentic, deep sleep is one of life's greatest pleasures," Hollandia says, and "it is absolutely critical for our overall well-being." Restless sleep, on the other hand, is poor sleep that is often caused by factors that can be controlled, such as a bed that is too hard or that doesn't have the quality to provide the support you need.

**6. Get consumers to lie down.** "The only way I can show you the magic of the bed is for you to get on it," Sklaroff says. If he's made the consumers comfortable, they will be willing to lie down on the beds.



Stefan Sklaroff stands outside the Hollandia store in the Old City district in Philadelphia, a trendy shopping area.



Colorful adjustable Hollandia sleep sets await consumers in Hollandia International's Philadelphia store.

**7. Take them to zero position.** Now the magic begins. Sklaroff raises the head of the bed and raises the foot of the bed, alleviating pressure on the back. This "zero position" is the best position for sleep, according to Hollandia. "Human bodies are not designed to sleep on a completely flat surface," the company says. "In order to get authentic, restorative sleep, our back needs to be slightly elevated for enhanced breathing and our feet should also be slightly

elevated for proper circulation."

**8. Then take them back home.** This means returning the bed to its flat position and thus calling attention to the contrast between the comfort of the zero position and the less comfortable position that results from the flat bed they probably have at home, Hollandia says. "I don't care what this costs," some consumers say, impressed with the comfort of the adjustable bed. And thus the sale is closed.



The Philadelphia store includes a selection of pillows.

## *Bedding*



**HOLLANDIA INTERNATIONAL/THERAPEDIC  
B-822**

The iCon bed is part of new partnership between Hollandia International and Therapedic. It offers high-tech connections with controls at the fingertips of consumers.