

## Bedding Today

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### *High Point news: Green beds, coffee colors, more*

**A**nother High Point Market has come and gone. Here are our thoughts on some of the notable happenings:

**Green beds are blooming.** There are several compelling natural bedding lines in the market already and more are coming. Among the highlights: Natura, a company that continues to impress me, offered new green packaging, Vivetique unveiled organic beds in the Mary Cordaro Collection, Magniflex showed beds and pillows fashioned from environmentally friendly foams, and Springwall unveiled an eco-friendly line.

I see more companies jumping on the green bandwagon. The industry can easily reinvent itself as a purveyor of green products.

**Coffee colors are percolating.** Therapedic's new ACafe line featured coffee-colored ticking and had a catchy "breakfast in bed" theme. Chef Andre Carthen, who helped cook up the new line, is part of Kathy Ireland's talented design team. Hey, I thought beds could only be covered in white ticking. It's nice to see someone break that mold.

**Jazz from Jacuzzi.** The new Jacuzzi-branded bedding line debuted at Thurmo-Medical Sleep Products. I like the way the Jacuzzi name is featured in the ticking. The top bed, at \$6,999 retail, is loaded with gel visco foam and feels great.

**Tasty Chinese takeout.** Despite a spate of bad publicity of late (tainted toothpaste, toxic toys, etc.), it's a mistake to dismiss China as a bedding supplier. Glideaway showed several nice-looking Chinese beds, and Primo did well with new encased-coil and latex lines from China that offer sizable margin opportunities for retailers. Also, Eastman House, an old brand returning to the market under Steve Lytell's supervision, announced a hybrid production model: Chinese components will be assembled in the United States.

**Going global.** The bedding lineup this market featured beds from Italy (Magniflex), Spain (Spaldin), Turkey (Istikbal) and China (Alfa Airbeds, in addition to the companies mentioned above).

**Scientific selling.** Boyd's new Sleep Metrics diagnostic system quickly determines a consumer's comfort level and provides pillow and sleep accessory recommendations. Boyd's Kris Thomsen and her team did a nice job with the system, which adds a much-needed level of professionalism and credibility to retail sales floors.

**New kid on the block.** Solid-wood producer Kincaid rolled out a bedding line, imported from China. (See China notes above.) The cotton duvet covers, enclosing memory foam clusters, had a nice feel.

**Market matters.** I was surprised by the amount of talk about markets. That was one of the consequences of the light traffic in High Point in many bedding showrooms. Therapedic's Gerry Borreggine said there is a "new world order," one in which all of the markets are dividing up the retail base. "Retailers are over-marketed," he said.

Those are interesting points.

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