

COVER STORY

# Why beds matter mo



The Supercad adjustable bed from Treca Interiors Paris. Inset below: Heal's Wallis bed, created by the furniture designer Russell Pinch, will be available in spring



The classic Balmoral bed, with a deep-buttoned headboard, upholstered in Divina fabric by Kvadrat, from Savoir Beds. S

The quest for a good night's sleep means that people are spending more on this piece of furniture than on a car, reports **Carol Lewis**

**W**e are finally waking up to the importance of sleep and its impact on our physical and

psychological wellbeing. As a result mattresses are suddenly hip, with cool names such as Casper, Eve, Simba and Emma, podcast promotions and wacky advertising.

Beds are fast becoming the most important furniture purchase we will make, with people willing to invest more in their bed than their sofa and, in some cases, their car. "People don't think twice about spending thousands on a car that they use for only a few hours a day, so why not spend more on something you spend hours and hours on at night and has such a large impact on your health?" asks Brent Cooper, the managing director of Westend Bed Company, a luxury bed store in London.

Alistair Hughes, the managing director of Savoir Beds, a bespoke

manufacturer, says: "Twenty years ago it was difficult to spend more than £4,000 on a bed. Now you can spend £50,000 to £70,000. There are more luxury products on the market and people are realising that investing in a bed makes sense. People are taking sleep a lot more seriously."

**It's all about the mattress**

"People have to stop believing the old adage that the harder the mattress the better," Cooper says.

"You need something that supports the body and supports your sleep cycles. The top surfaces of mattresses and toppers are softer, and rather than more springs, the focus is on better springs. It is about gentle support."

According to Hughes, the word orthopaedic doesn't mean anything. "It is just a way of marketing hard beds."

If you suffer from lower backache you want your bottom to sink into the mattress to place the support on your lower spine. You don't want to be perched on top, you need to sink in. A soft mattress is not a hammock, it should take your shape and offer support."



Many mattress companies offer a 100-night guarantee that they will replace or rebuild your mattress should it prove uncomfortable within that time. A mattress needs to feel good and support your spine, holding it in alignment. Ideally it should also keep you warm in cold weather, and cool in summer.

For this reason, the trend in the luxury market is towards natural and organic materials, says Kris Manalo, a senior buyer for sleep and upholstery at Heal's, the furniture and homeware store.

"To promote deep sleep we need to be cool. Temperature regulation is important, so people want natural materials — lamb's wool, cashmere, cotton, horse hair. They are also conscious about sustainability."

How long a mattress will last is variable. Savoir mattresses come with a 25-year guarantee, although many sources, including the National Bed Federation and the Sleep Council, recommend changing mattresses every seven to ten years.

This is less because the mattress is unusable after this time and more



Nottinblu's Veron from £8,000, comes with a matching ensemble for your pooch, from





# Take a test drive

Sleeping in a bed overnight in a hotel is clearly a better way of deciding whether you'd like to buy the same model than lying on one for a few minutes in a showroom is. It is also how one of Britain's oldest bed companies began.

Savoir Beds was set up in 1905 by Rupert D'Oyly Carte, the proprietor of the Savoy Hotel, to make beds for the hotel. Although the company is no longer owned by the Savoy, it still supplies its hotel beds.

The link between hotels and luxury bed makers is still relevant today. The Italian company Nottinblú has beds in several hotels in the United States and Italy — including the Ca' Sagredo palace hotel in Venice. A well-known Hollywood actor (who cannot be named) reportedly bought one after a night in a Florida hotel.



...-buttoned headboard, from £1,249 at Heal's. On the cover The Amelia bed in powder pink, at, from Savoir Beds. Savoir has made and supplied beds for the Savoy Hotel in London since 1905

Stefano Gandolfi set up the Italian luxury bed brand Nottinblú to manufacture beds that feature his patented pressure balance system. Nottinblú bed bases are made with hydraulic or mechanical levers that automatically move up and down as the body shifts on the natural rubber or foam mattress above to provide support and keep the spine aligned.

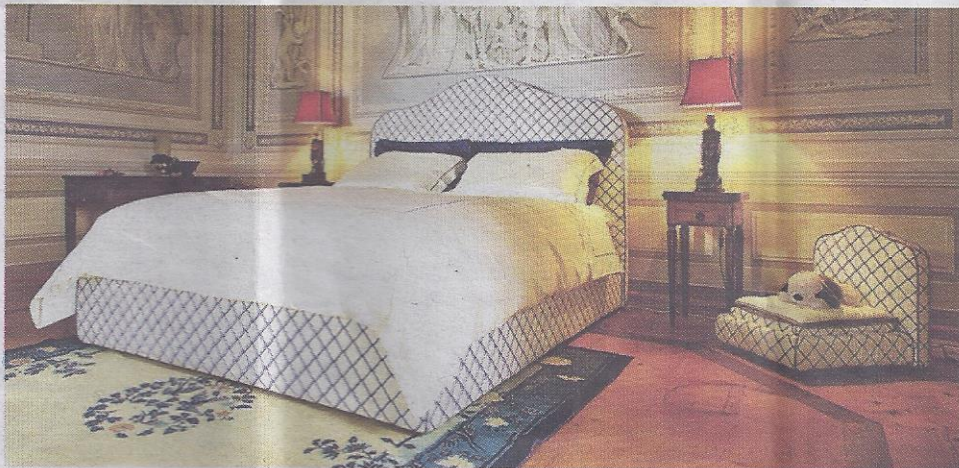
"The idea came from my observations of water mattresses, the best of which offer great support, but they are impractical, heavy, with no airflow, the pressure is dispersed to the sides and they can't be used on adjustable beds," Gandolfi says. "Our beds move continuously with your body as you sleep in the same way as water, but are much more practical and better for you."

Cooper, whose company is the first to sell Nottinblú beds in Britain, says he thinks that they could bring a revolution to our way of thinking, shifting the focus from mattresses to bases.

Adjustable beds, which you can move up and down to raise your head or legs, are also growing in popularity. The norm in many parts of Europe, they have long been viewed with suspicion by Brits, who associate them with hospital beds.

However, Cooper says: "They are not only for sick people, they are for people who sit up in bed and look at a laptop or watch TV. Okay, that's not great for sleep, but people do it. They're perfect for today's lifestyle, and the change is coming at the top end of the market. At the last bed show I went to there were more manufacturers displaying adjustable beds, the buzz is definitely out."

Nottinblú, Savoir and Heal's have noticed a greater interest in bed upholstery, too, and a greater emphasis on fashion, with people keen to have their bed made in a fabric (a hot favourite is velvet) that co-ordinates with their decor and that can be changed when trends move on, as might happen with a sofa. In spring Heal's is set to follow up its bestselling Wallis sofa with a Wallis bed, created by the furniture designer Russell Pinch. Matching beds and sofas are now a thing.



Nottinblú's Verona bed, from £8,000, comes with a matching ensemble for your pooch, from £558

about hygiene — it collects sweat and skin particles. A topper can extend the life of a mattress. Invest in a good one and you can replace that every seven to ten years instead.

### Choosing the right bed

With beds the focus is definitely on the mattress, rather than the base, but an invention from Italy may change that.



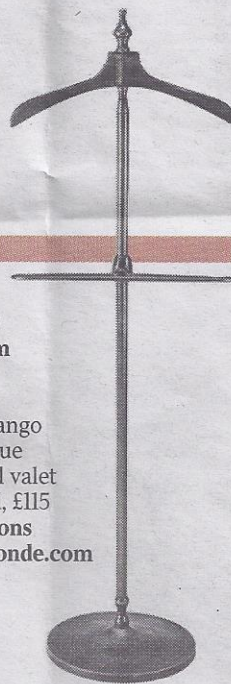
◀ Pimlico cheval mirror, £120 johnlewis.com



◀ Pompom throw, £69 marksandspencer.com



▲ Lulu ottoman bench in paprika orange velvet, £399 made.com



▶ Django antique metal valet stand, £115 maisonsdumonde.com