



TURNING THE BED MARKET ON ITS HEAD

When it comes to snuggle factor, together or alone, with high hopes of satisfaction at least where quality sleep is concerned; a supportive bed is the most important piece of furniture in the bedroom, but when have you been excited by a bed?

Indeed, say "bed" and most of us still think of the innerspring mattress – hardly changed since Queen Victoria shared hers with Prince Albert. Even though the last forty years have seen increasingly rapid changes in the way we live, our need for sleep remains undiminished.

Despite our modern lifestyles, our body clocks are still more in tune with the rising and setting of the sun than with the artificial lights controlling our lives today. Believe it or not we can survive longer without food than without sleep. Sleeping for less than four hours a night affects the body's ability to process and store carbohydrates and regulate hormone levels. These changes mimic many of the hallmarks of advanced ageing. They can diminish our levels of concentration, make us liable to mood swings and depression and allow the immune system to run down. Lack of sleep can also affect the memory. A good night's sleep is an essential aid to learning by not only playing an important part in how we learn but also in retaining any information learnt. And, if we're not convinced that sleep is crucial to our physical and mental well being, a night or two of no sleep is probably enough to persuade us.

WHAT'S THE CHOICE?

The Consumer Association echoes the advice given by The Sleep Council, The National Bed Federation, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, BackCare, and the BMA, stating that "The most important function of a bed is to support your body, especially the spine, so that your muscles can relax while you rest. Ideally, your spine should keep its natural curve when you sleep on your back and stay straight when you lie on your side. A good mattress will mould itself to the shape of your body: it should let your shoulders and hips sink into it, but then spring

back to give enough support to the base of your spine and legs." This may sound straightforward enough but it can all be rather bewildering. How can we assess these criteria properly before we buy? And, if you happen to find something that looks good and you trust the feel of, you find out that it is only going to last you ten years. Of course, mattresses do not suddenly cease to function at year ten. Over its limited life span it is deteriorating. As well as absorbing litres of body fluids, kilos of dead skin, countless dust mites and other allergens, the springs and surrounding fillings are compressing. The truth is that even if a mattress happens to be perfect for us on day one its support can be reduced over time forcing our bodies into unnatural positions. Our spines may not be supported correctly and pressure on bony areas such as our shoulders, hips, knees and ankles may result. Not to mention the uninvited bedfellows sharing the space with you.

The bed industry is aware that a surface should ideally contour to the natural curves of our bodies and has more recently introduced products such as memory foam and pocket sprung mattresses in an attempt to improve, but innovation in the truest sense of the word has been limited. Other issues such as poor air flow as well as the practicalities of delivering bulky bases and heavy mattresses haven't been addressed at all.

A NEW RESOLUTION

At last there is a radical departure, a fresh way of thinking, a challenge to the status quo. The Ammique suspension system has been developed by conscientious research taking into account all the problems associated with beds today. The Ammique promises to alter the way we sleep and enhance the quality of our sleep. Unlike all other designs of beds, and without a mattress in sight, the Ammique is a patented system where thousands of precision engineered components ensure that the surface area conforms perfectly to our moving bodies. There is no deterioration and the system will maintain full support for many years to come.

Throughout the night, the Ammique will have

responded to your every movement no matter how slight, constantly shaping to you. There is no need to toss and turn because you will be held in the perfect sleeping position as soon as you lay upon it.

Could there be a better place for combining a bit of fun with all important function than in the bedroom? If two of you share a bed, you are both supported independently so there is absolutely no roll together – but if you're in the mood to get together, the Ammique can yield to two as effectively as it does to one.

The Ammique has been constructed with hygiene and cleanliness in mind. Just three removable and washable quilted coversoifs are supplied for the top surface. Beneath the sheets, and for general cleaning, the Ammique side panels can be removed easily allowing access to vacuum the base beneath, where any dust might have accumulated over time. All the components within the structure are made from either plastic or stainless steel so if really necessary, the Ammique can even be steamed cleaned.

Our population in the UK had been growing upwards and outwards over the last 30 years; therefore, it is comforting to know that as we change we can easily adapt our bed. The Ammique is modular; each module is simply attached to the next. Ten modules are provided as standard but, if extra length is required an eleventh or even a twelfth module can be easily attached. In addition, awkward to reach bedrooms with restricted access present no problem with the modular system.

But the good news doesn't end there. The Ammique has been created to be versatile, to offer us all the opportunity to personalise it. Not only with the selection of bedding or headboard as we might with traditional bed designs. The Ammique has interchangeable panels within the outer frame which can be simply slotted in place offering you a wealth of styling option.

Ammique will be exhibiting at Grand Designs Live! which launches Friday 10th June 2005 at London's ExCel exhibition centre. ■