

LDB

INTERIOR TEXTILES

July 2011 • \$7.00

Rug Riches

Eye-catching introductions
from leading rug suppliers on
view at the Summer Markets

PLUS

Atlanta Market
Preview: Design Driven

Las Vegas Market
Preview: Desert Oasis

SMART Report Trio
Fashion Bedding: Style In The Bedroom
Bath: Function In The Bath
Basic Bedding Plus: Comfort In Sleep

www.LDBInteriorTextiles.com

LEFT Home Source International offers a new Bamboo Bedding box design in new colors.

BELOW LEFT This is one of the Vera Wang beds produced by Revman International, Inc. that is slated to be sold in China.



BY WANDA JANKOWSKI

Style In The Bedroom

Suppliers' recipes for success in fashion bedding mix cupfuls of value with dollops of innovations in embellishments and construction

The economic recovery has been so sluggish it has some suppliers questioning, "What recovery?" Whatever it's called, it is having an effect not only on how suppliers do business, but on how their retail partners are reacting as well.

"It's definitely a lack of recovery," says Rich Roman, president and ceo, Revman International, Inc., "exacerbated by the rise in cotton pricing, which has prevented the retailers from aggressively promoting products during this soft economic period."

Scott Sorgeloos, vice-president of sales, Home Source International, agrees that raw material cotton pricing is one of the biggest issues in the industry. "The recent surge in cotton has caused vendors and retailers alike to raise prices to maintain margins," he says. "Relationships are everything in business and Home Source has worked to maintain a level playing field with our retailers."

Quality & Value

At the same time that some retailers are passing the increased cost of goods on to consumers, the role and value of quality when paired with pricing issues is in the eye of the beholder. Michael Vidra notes that many retailers are requesting better goods, but at very competitive prices.

"The recession forces us to either develop products with a lower price point in mind, or go in the complete opposite direction, where our product, though at a slightly increased price point, has so much added value that we are giving the consumer a valid reason to spend their money," says Sam Samani, vice-president, Pacific Coast Home Furnishings. "In terms of our relationships

with our retail customers, it is imperative at this time, when the economy is weak, that we partner very closely and effectively with our customers, to jointly address the specific needs of their markets and their consumers."

Robin Wilson, founder of Robin Wilson Home, sees an opportunity for quality goods to keep their shelf space at retail. "Consumers have begun to be willing to pay a bit more if the quality is there, as they know the product will last—and they cannot afford to buy inferior items," she says.

Croskill stands by its tradition of offering quality products in spite of the variances brought into the buying public's mindset by the recession. "Our customers know that we design quality products," says Michelle LaRovere, senior vice-president of business development & Croskill sales. "A great example of this is that we introduced three beds that retail for \$299 and they were all placed this past market. The product is built to show that quality costs more and our customers know and love that."

Style & Design Trends

In the ever-changing world of style, Pacific Coast Home Furnishings strives to be on the forefront of the latest in design. "We are seeing a move toward classic wovens, done with a modern flair, and a lot of pattern mixing," Samani explains. "Neutrals are still very strong, particularly in the gray and stone palettes combined with a smattering of bright colors."

Stacy Testa, senior vice-president of design, Raymond Waites Design, asserts that bedding is following the same directions as ready-to-wear apparel fash-

RIGHT Raymond Waites presents Brushcreek, a fern jacquard with a subtle stria woven background. Made with Modal, a natural fiber with a silky soft hand from Lenzing, Brushcreek was introduced in Macy's this past June.

BELOW RIGHT Bliss, a midtone contemporary, large-scale floral rendered in watery blues, greens and grays on a cream textured linen fabric, is part of the Robin Wilson Home fashion bedding collection.



ion, particularly in retailers' desire for frequent new designs and in the boldness of patterns and palettes.

"We are developing both fresh abstract watercolor florals and a playful mélange of patterns in sweet vibrant colors as prints," she comments. "The Galvano printing lets you feel as if the watercolor painting were hand-painted on the fabric."

Wilson adds that linear and geometric patterns are also popular, especially with added color and texture.

LaRovere notes that what is in vogue today is "layering, mixing and matching that does not look forced or contrived. Color is always important, especially as Spring Market approaches. Utilizing fabrics that give a decorator feel, we are incorporating three-plus fabrics, rather than one or two."

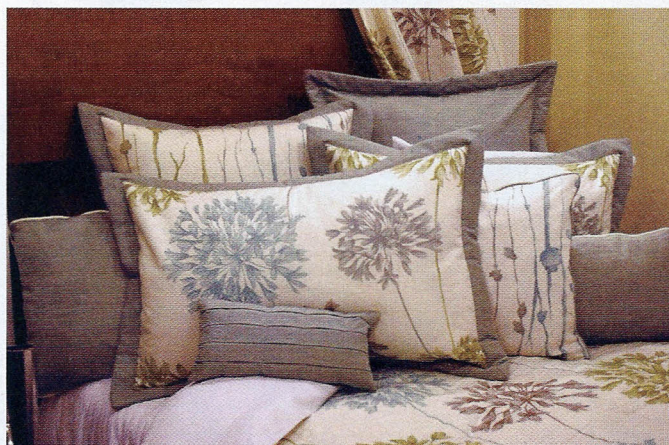
When it comes to style preference, Diane Piemonte, vice-president of creative services, Revman International, Inc., says, "Modern has a greater resonance with a broader spectrum of the population than it ever has before, but perhaps the definition of modern has also broadened to allow it a greater reach. A more eclectic approach to modern styling—more an attitude than a definition—allows us to see familiar things and make them fresh and modern in the way we put them together. In that sense, I think that 'modern' is a powerful influence that touches the design of all our brands."

Home Source is staying true to its classic roots, according to Sorgeloos. "We continue to offer solid color, core and classic designs in our Bamboo Bedding Collection and that is the direction we are moving towards with our Made in the U.S. bedding items, such as bedspreads, comforters, coverlets, duvets and shams," he says.

Product Innovations

The sluggish economy has not put a damper on efforts to innovate. Suppliers continue to develop new embellishments and constructions.

Piemonte says, "We continue to work on incorporating new techniques and effects as we find the opportunities to do so. The newest techniques we utilized for the Fall 2011 line were laser cutting, burnout and intri-



cate, origami style pleating for bedding as well as panel printed, ombre flocking for shower curtains."

"Fashion-inspired embellishments, especially for decorative pillows, are a very important highlight to fashion bedding, [such as] smocking, soutache, embroidery, eyelets, sequins and pintucking," says Testa. Raymond Waites is also using varied materials, such as Modal, in woven jacquards.

"We have been smarter about how we utilize our fabrication without compromising the product through printed or woven backs on the comforters and shams to make them truly reversible," explains Croscill's LaRovere. "Our freestanding windows have patented a new cut and sew design."

Wilson teases, "We are launching our Robin Wilson Home textile line in retail stores this Fall and have a unique construction we believe will differentiate our hypoallergenic products—you have to wait and see!"

New Directions

Beyond specific product innovations, suppliers are moving in fresh directions to attract consumer dollars to their wares.

In reaction to the high costs of cotton, Raymond Waites is developing microfiber prints that offer the look and feel of cotton affordably in sheeting and comforter sets. It has also expanded its coverlet lines with



ABOVE Croscill's "Plateau" bedding ensemble is distinguished by rich colors and textures. **ABOVE RIGHT** Pacific Coast Home Furnishings sets a large-scale floral pattern against a pastel background in Savona.



prewashed cotton fill that provides a very soft hand.

Robin Wilson Home remains committed to the concept of "wellness" in its offerings. "As a pioneer and leader in this area, we will be able to partner with our licensees and retail partners to effect change and awareness of beautiful options in the marketplace," says Wilson.

"Croscill is focused on a realignment for a solid long-term growth plan," LaRovere says. "We are not planning on changing our distribution direction to retailers, since our quality and price points deserve to be with fine retailers."

Revman is turning its attention overseas. "I am very excited about the prospects for opening the market for our products in China," says Roman. "We will have Vera Wang bedding positioned at retail there this Fall and we are working on adding Tommy Hilfiger products for Spring 2012."

Fashion bedding is alive and well with suppliers dedicated to attracting consumers through fresh ideas and creative techniques. **LDB**

RESOURCES

- Croscill Home, 212-213-8000, croscill.com
- Home Source International, 404-682-9820, homesource-online.com
- Pacific Coast Home Furnishings, 323-838-7808, pacificcoasthomefurnishings.com
- Raymond Waites, 212-447-8700, raymondwaites.com
- Revman International, Inc., 212-278-0300, revman.com
- Robin Wilson Home, 212-863-9197, robinwilsonhome.com

Fashion Bedding's Greatest Challenges

"The greatest challenge facing the bedding category is the high price of cotton, which means that the consumer may be faced with higher shelf prices."—Robin Wilson, founder, Robin Wilson Home

"There are many more challenges than one. Price cost escalation from all over the world poses a major problem, especially when many retailers/suppliers substitute first class specs with inferior goods. Designing and shipping on a timely basis is an issue. Fashion bedding has less longevity than in prior years and has become more like apparel."—Michael Vidra, president and ceo, Raymond Waites Design

"Industry-wide, the challenges are universal. The dramatic price increases for cotton and labor over the past year. Price quotes that last less than three weeks from factories in China."—Michelle LaRovere, senior vice-president of business development & Croscill sales, Croscill Home

"In a word, uncertainty; uncertainty in commodity pricing for cotton and petroleum products, as well as the housing market. All of this uncertainty puts purchasing bedding products in a lower priority category for the consumer."—Rich Roman, president and ceo, Revman International, Inc.

"The greatest challenges facing the bedding industry currently are low-ball pricing and [high costs] from overseas coupled with a poor economy."—Sam Samani, vice-president, Pacific Coast Home Furnishings **LDB**