

Sleep Savvy

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The magazine for sleep products professionals

The cover story

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RETAIL ROAD TRIP

Southern Pines, NC, Duxiana boutique pairs luxury beds and linens

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CLOSING WORDS

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RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene

Duxiana at The Mews



Owners Tanda and Neal Jarest

Luxury linens retailer hits hole-in-one with ultra-premium beds

By Barbara Nelles

Photography by Scott Nelles

The golfers' paradise of Southern Pines, NC, adjacent to world-renowned resort Pinehurst, is where you will find Duxiana at The Mews, a true luxury sleep shop where the average ticket for a new bed plus accessories is a mattress retailer's dream.

Tanda and Neal Jarest opened their luxury bed and bath accessories boutique, Opulence of Southern Pines, 14 years ago. Last winter, they decided to expand by opening a Dux sleep shop in an adjacent space at The Mews, which they own. The two were long-time admirers of Duxiana, a high-end, Swedish-made line of mattresses sold exclusively in dedicated boutiques around the world.

Tanda is a former sales rep for high-end linens lines and had several Dux retailers as customers. The couple hoped the Dux shop would provide one-stop convenience for current Opulence customers, as well as attract a whole new clientele to both stores. They closed a cafe at The Mews and converted the 1,200-square feet to a perfectly sized Duxiana shop.

A year later, both the Duxiana and Opulence boutiques are thriving. According to Neal, typical Dux customers buy at least the mid-priced bed—\$6,780 in queen—and most buy king size. Then they will spend from “a third to the full price of the bed on linens.” The attachment rate for top of bed items is 100%, the couple says.

RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene



Opulence, the upscale accessories boutique, has been open 14 years.

'The Bed For Life'

Founded in 1926, Dux is a family-owned company producing handmade beds with the tag line, "The Bed For Life." The durable beds are manufactured at two plants in Sweden and a textile plant in Portugal. They incorporate Swedish northern hardwoods, steel springs, natural latex and fabrics with 100% long-staple Egyptian cotton yarns.

The company claims a Dux bed should last up to 50 years. "These beds get handed down within families," Neal says.

Duxiana at The Mews is one of just 28 retail outlets in the U.S. and 100 globally. All Duxiana retailers sell Dux exclusively and must meet exacting requirements. Dux North America President Bo Gustafsson personally visited the Jarests' site before giving final approval for their license.

Southern Pines is an anomaly for Dux, which is usually in a major metropolitan area, Neal says. "But because we have been so successful selling luxury linens for so long and

because we have built our reputation on luxury lines and are a destination, we were approved."

The look of a Duxiana store is distinctive and everything from wall color to window coverings to cabinetry and fixtures must be purchased through Dux. Every five years, the stores and the beds are redesigned. The Jarests' store is one of the few that already has the Dux "2015 Look," which includes modular all-aluminum wall units with Velcro slipcovers in a brown and gold theme to match the redesigned beds coming out later this year.

The Dux collection includes three innerspring beds and an adjustable bed in twin XL. The beds are European "divan" styles in differing profiles and come with the removable "Extra Support" 2.5-inch latex toppers that can be replaced.

The starting Dux 1001, retailing at \$4,980, has a two-tier innerspring core—product literature says that there are two times as many steel springs in the bed as in a "typical

innerspring bed." The taller Dux 12:12, retailing at \$6,780, has "three times the springs." The Dux 8888—the one the Jarests sleep on—has three layers of innerspring support and "nearly four times the amount of springs." It retails for \$9,510 (all prices are queen).

In both the 12:12 and the 8888, the top innerspring layer is customizable with Personal Comfort Zones, called "Pascal diskettes." There are six coil-filled zones on each king and queen, three on each side of the bed, with a choice of three firmnesses. Consumers can choose the combination they like. "They allow you to rearrange the zones as your body or needs change," Neal explains. The zones also make it possible for a 300-pound man and his 125-pound wife to comfortably share the same sleep surface.

"Many people have it ingrained that you need to buy a firm bed, so shoppers often request all firm diskettes," Neal says. "But I explain that you need a supportive bed, not a firm bed, and that zoning with different comfort levels is best."

The 8888 also comes with an Adjustable Lumbar Support for each side of the bed. A removable hand crank allows owners to compress the bottom springs in the lumbar region, increasing the bed's firmness. "Once your body has lost its muscle memory of your old bed, that's when you should adjust the lumbar support on your new Dux bed," Neal advises customers.

The Axion adjustable bed, with a motorized system to elevate head and foot, is proving popular among sleepers of all ages. It retails for just over \$6,000 in twin XL. "Buyers are anywhere from their 20s and 30s into their 80s," Tanda says. "Even some Special Ops guys from the (nearby Fort Bragg) base" have bought the Axion, says Neal, himself a retired Special Ops Colonel in the U.S. Army Special Forces.

RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene



Duxiana at The Mews is one of just 28 Dux stores in the U.S.



Backlit displays showcase Dux top-of-bed items.



Rounding out the Dux collection is an assortment of coordinating bed legs and two styles of adjustable headboards with a choice of Velcro-fastened slipcovers or leather upholstery.

Always accessorize

Duxiana at The Mews has some enviable advantages over the typical bedding retailer seeking to expand into accessories—namely, a well-established reputation for accessories among a very well-heeled clientele. They are also adept at introducing new shoppers to fine linens. The Opulence boutique stocks luxury French and Italian sheets and top-of-bed brands, as well as everything from fragrances and lingerie to bath rugs.

“Many existing Opulence customers come to us already educated on bed linens. They have a fabric they prefer and in many cases they have a favorite brand name,” Tanda says.

“If they aren’t already an Opulence customer, they become one,” she says. “For those who are first-time buyers of ‘nice sheets,’ we love to

educate them a bit, show them the difference between Percale and sateen, damask and jacquard. We have all of our fabrics on hand so they can feel them. We also have the lesser quality fabrics found at the discount stores so our customer can feel the difference. By allowing customers to compare side by side, they can see that you really can’t go wrong with any of our fabric selections.”

When the Dux customer steps inside The Mews, the first thing she sees is a beautifully dressed Dux bed with fine sheets, duvet, pillows and bed skirt—a display that changes with the seasons. Shoppers feel drawn to touch and caress.

Ahead is an eye-catching wall of backlit Dux-branded top-of-bed accessories. The most popular is a wool mattress protector—this item has a 100% attachment rate with new beds. At \$143 to \$209, it’s breathable, washable and fits over the bed’s latex topper. Nearby are lightweight, down-filled Dux-branded comforters and the Xleep pillow, which has an innerspring

core, a neckroll and a down-filled 100% cotton cover. The pillow retails for \$235 to \$260.

Once the shopper has selected her Dux-made accessories, she is mere steps from the entrance to Opulence, which spotlights an inviting array of artfully dressed beds. The boutique carries more than 18 high-end bed linen lines. Fitted and flat sheets range from \$150 to \$700.

“In almost all cases, anyone buying a new bed also wants new bed linens—it just makes sense,” Neal says. “In our case, it’s a natural add-on because everyone that purchases a Dux bed needs a Dux protec-

RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene

tor. This allows us to progress to the base covers, headboards, headboard covers and sheets.”

Handling sticker shock

Sometimes even existing Opulence customers get sticker shock when perusing the Dux showroom, but that’s something Tanda and her staff are accustomed to handling. “It’s the same shock when you’re told a flat sheet is \$500,” she says. “But there is acceptance when you educate shoppers about quality and workmanship.”

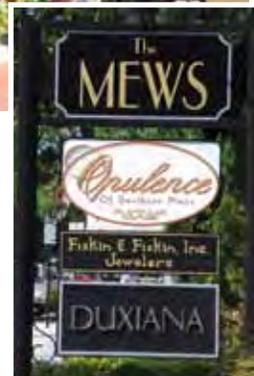
Dux point-of-sale materials offer customers plenty of product information. There are mattress cut-aways, handsome brochures and touchscreen video guides. But it’s up to the salesperson to take the measure of each customer, Neal says—to determine how much information



about the beds is just right.

“Typically, women want a more ‘touchy-feely’ introduction to the beds, the softer information,” Neal says. “Men are more likely to delve into the technical side of product specifications.”

The Mews, with its three boutiques, is in Southern Pines’ quaint shopping district.



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RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene

“When you get people to lie down on them, the beds sell themselves,” Tanda says, adding that it’s not unusual for a customer to lie down and remain on the bed throughout the entire sales process.

The couple received training from Dux’s corporate stores in New York before opening their store. And successful cross-selling by the Opulence sales staff has resulted in many Opulence customers making the leap to purchasing a Dux bed.

Neal, an avid golfer, says that opening the Dux showroom has “ruined my golf game.” While many women pre-shop for beds during the week, the Jarests find that the day for both wife and husband to shop and make a purchase is Saturday.

Mattress delivery is typically within five days and never more than a

month, Neal says. The store stocks one of each model and the central Dux warehouse in New Jersey delivers once a month.

“But we never say ‘no’ to a customer,” Neal says. “If they want immediate delivery and are willing to pay the extra freight, we are always willing to arrange that.”

“No” is not part of Duxiana corporate vocabulary, he adds. “They will custom manufacture beds to any specifications.”

The Dux network

Consumer inquiries to the Dux corporate website and its 800 number are an invaluable source of referrals to Duxiana at The Mews. Customers are referred to the store from across the Carolinas and the Southeast, Neal says.

In addition, Dux has many ready-made fans among transplants to this popular region of North Carolina and second-home owners from the Northeast, where the brand has a decades-old presence. They are the kind of customers who call and say, “I can’t live without my Dux bed” and will order over the phone from as far away as D.C., Neal says.

The Jarests invest in frequent print advertising to raise awareness. The stores run side-by-side Opulence and Dux spreads in area dailies and in the region’s major newspapers, the *Raleigh News & Observer* and the *Charlotte Observer*, as well as in the many glossy magazines and travel guides focusing on this affluent resort area—a perfect fit for these upscale bedroom boutiques. ●

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