

# The price to pay to sleep like Angelina Jolie, Drake and Vladimir Putin



**Damien Woolnough**  
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Cost per wear is the calculation used by seasoned shoppers to justify splurging on a pair of chunky Loewe loafers or a Zimmermann dress, but it faces competition from a new spending formula: cost per sleep.

Luxury brands are moving out of the wardrobe and creeping between, above and beneath the designer sheets with \$4281 weighted woollen blankets, \$4380 pyjamas and \$1 million beds.



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**Patterned pyjamas** from Olivia Von Halle, Sleeper, Gucci and Kiki de Montparnasse are the gateway drug – no prescription required – to bedroom accessories that use wellness to target the wealthy, while making others even richer.

The global sleep market, including mattresses and pillows, generated \$US60 billion (\$90 billion) in 2020 and is **predicted to reach \$US112 billion by 2030**.

“Sleep has become a growing part of our business since the COVID-19 lockdowns,” says Anton Assaad, founder of Scandinavian furniture specialists Great Dane. “Our bedrooms and sleep became our sanctuary and that has continued. In Australia, the search for wellness is strong and sleep is an important part of that.”

This month, Great Dane started stocking beds from the 171-year-old Swedish brand Hästens, with prices starting at \$32,000 and stopping just short of \$1 million.



Sleep's big spenders. The natural layers of a Hästens mattress, which features horse hair, flax and wool; merino wool sleep brand Shleep at David Jones.

“We’ve already had quite a few leads, so there’s definitely a brand awareness in Australia. It reflects that Australians want the best bed in the world,” says Assaad, who plans to roll out standalone Hästens stores.

With a distinctive blue check, spotted in episodes of *Emily In Paris* and a tour of rapper Drake’s Toronto apartment, Hästens’ beds feature hand-placed springs and layers of teased horse hair, flax and wool, assembled in the same Swedish factory since 1852. Drake’s \$US400,000 mattress, the Grand Vividus, takes 600 hours to assemble.

Tom Cruise, Angelina Jolie, Vladimir Putin and the Swedish royal family are all regularly found on top of a Hästens bed.

“People see it as a brand that adds significant value to their life,” Assaad says. “Athletes are always looking for that 1-2 per cent improvement in their wellness from sleep. Now more people are willing to pay for it.”

Former New York advertising executive Indi McCullough is leaving horse hair and flax to the Swedish and focusing on Australian merino wool as part of her bedding range Shleep, which launched in David Jones in May.

In a market crowded with designer names such as Frette, Ralph Lauren and Yves Delorme, Shleep is focusing on technology rather than a luxury logo to sell \$1637 doona covers and \$310 pillow case sets.

“With the technical merino wool weave we are changing the perception of what it means to sleep surrounded by wool,” says McCullough. “If you feel most underlays, they’re like the inside of an ugg boot. These sheets and our calming blankets are like rabbit fur.”

“University studies have shown that it is easier to fall asleep surrounded by superfine merino wool. Now it’s about educating people before they buy. You can’t just try on a bedsheet.”

For the time being, Shleep is online and in David Jones’ flagship Sydney store, where they have hosted VIP showings.

“Our customers care about sleep and have been spending in that area since lockdown,” says Chris Wilson, general manager of home at David Jones. “There’s strong competition, but we just have to get customers to feel it and they understand the product.”

Unlike Hästens, which balks at the idea of being a luxury brand, despite selling beds more expensive than a Birkin bag from Hermès, McCullough is leaning into exclusivity.

“Merino wool is luxury. So, the price is high. It’s an ultra-luxury sleep brand.”

“I want to own the sleep arc,” McCullough says. “I want to be a sleep wellness brand, not just a bed linen brand. No one has really tackled bed linen as performance for sleep.”

Along with David Jones customers, McCullough is focusing on the European and US market despite economic headwinds.

“If you look at the market, the rich are getting richer and there are too many mass brands. The wealthy aren’t going to have a problem spending money on something as important as sleep. They will take their Shleep with them on holidays, or hopefully buy another set.”

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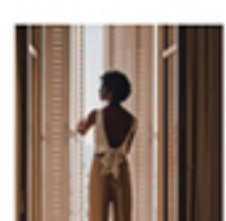
**Damien Woolnough** is the style editor of The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age. Connect via Facebook.

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