



Housekeeping

by Paola Mabasa

Duvet covers: An upcoming trend that promotes cleanliness

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One of the top trends in the hotel industry concerning its guestrooms focuses on the bed. Major hotels are coming up with innovations to provide more comfort since the development of Westin Hotel's "Heavenly Bed" debut in 1999. Along with the demands of comfort, the use of duvet covers provides a certain aspect of cleanliness as well.

Duvet covers in hotel accommodations are a popular trend in Europe and are slowly catching on in the United States. They are used to replace the comforter/bedspread and blanket on beds. Duvet covers consist of a removable insert within an outer shell that has a zipper running along the side to keep the insert secure. It is the same concept as a pillow and its pillow case.

Shortcomings of bedspreads

Most bedspreads are washed infrequently because they are too bulky for the recurrent washings in the washers and dryers and too heavy for collection in the housekeeper's cart. Due to their absorbent nature, once they are washed, the drying process is lengthy. Unfortunately, most bedspreads and blankets were not manufactured for daily laundering. Such infrequent washings have led to the many germ habitations, invisible to the human eye, within the unsanitary bedspreads. This has been regularly featured on various television shows such as *Dateline*, *20/20* and *Primetime* where an investigative journalist visits a hotel room, pulls out an ultraviolet light, and gets an eyeful.

The likelihood of a guest contracting an illness or condition increases without the regular washings of bedspreads. Studies have shown that bedspreads usually contain bodily fluids (such as vaginal secretions and sperm), blood, fecal matter, vermin (such as body and bed lice), bacteria, and other foreign substances. The guest is more likely to contract one of these conditions when they are in direct contact with the bedspread partially or completely undressed. But then again, that is how the stains probably got there in the first place.

Most hotel guests are highly concerned with the hygienic issues in the room. Incorporating duvet covers into hotel rooms provides a better means of maintaining clean and sanitary bed bedding for its guests. Changing the duvet cover during every due-out service controls the spread of bodily fluids, vermin, bacteria, etc. that generally stains the bedspreads. It also eliminates the body moisture that might become embedded into the duvet insert during its use. This is an especially important consideration in geographic regions with warmer temperatures.

Benefits of duvet covers

Duvet covers do not possess the same bulky characteristic as bedspreads do and are, therefore, easier on the wear and tear of the laundry machines. They are also lighter for housekeepers to manage when carrying a load.

Duvet covers are made from many different kinds of materials. For the more economical hotels, they can be purchased in cotton. Cotton duvet covers may seem stiff when brand new, but soften

Pictured below: Last year Hawthorn Suites introduced its new bedding package known as the "Sweet Suite Bed" at all its hotels. The new initiative creates a clean, crisp and inviting look with high quality 250-thread count white-on-white striped sheeting and matching duvet cover.



with every wash. For the more luxurious hotels, they can be purchased in silk and satin to enhance the guestroom's sophistication appeal. Silk and satin are smoother and softer, respectively, than cotton, but requires more care when being cleaned. These three different types of materials are long-lasting and high-quality.

The prices of duvet covers and inserts vary according to size, material, and brand. For example, the Heavenly Bed Collection by Starwood Hotels & Resorts has listed the price ranges of \$210 to \$300 for the duvet cover and \$110 to \$165 for the insert. The Revive Collection by Marriott Hotels & Resorts has listed the price ranges of \$135 to \$175 for duvet covers and \$170 to \$210 for the insert. Obviously, pricing direct from the manufacturer or wholesaler will be considerably less to housekeeping departments that will buy in bulk quantity.

Saves time and easier to handle

It may be a cumbersome task for the housekeeper to place the insert inside the duvet cover, especially for king size. The easiest method to do so is to lay out the duvet flat on the bed with the cover turned inside out. Then lay the insert on the duvet cover turn the duvet cover over the insert and let it fall into the cover. Shake the insert into place before securing the zipper.

There are also duvet covers that are open on two sides instead of one. This makes it easier for the housekeeper to place and remove the insert with less difficulty than the traditional ones with only one open end.

Duvet covers can minimize the time it takes for a housekeeper to make the bed. Instead of making the bed with a blanket and then a bedspread, one can simply place the insert inside the cover and place it on the bed.

This upcoming trend of utilizing duvet covers instead of bedspreads provides a veritable maintenance of cleanliness. They benefit the housekeepers because they take less time to place on the bed and are less bulky to carry than bedspreads. It also looks great and sophisticated within the room! ✧

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