The unthinkable: A sleep sofa comfortable for both sitting and sleeping!

BY ROSS ENDICOTT
Endicott Home Furnishings

This is one of the reasons we've transformed into a niche retail furniture store focused exclusively on well-made smaller furniture. Late in 2006, a customer explained that she no longer had extra bedrooms after downsizing to a condo, and that she would have fewer overnight guests in her smaller home. Visitors are more special, and needed to be made very comfortable for what might be a week or more. Also, with only two bedrooms, and since she did not want the TV in her living room, she needed the second bedroom to double as guest quarters. We heard other similar stories and realized that while we offered very good quality sleeper sofas, we did not offer a premium, reliable product comfortable both for movie watching and extended overnight visits.

We searched and found more than a few American and Canadian solutions that used air mattress "toppers" over conventional 4-5 inch thick inner coil spring mattresses. Apparently developed because manufacturers had not wanted to alter existing mechanisms to accommodate thicker mattresses, the air mattress added the equivalent extra softness of egg-crate foam or down padding to the sleeper mattress. During one demonstration by a manufacturer, one of these models malfunctioned as I waited for the pump to inflate the supplemental mattress. We run a super-lean operation which requires us to carry better quality merchandise we can offer with confidence; the failure of that air mattress made me realize we needed a simple, proven solution, not more complexity.

On another occasion, we found a 6" thick memory foam mattress in a sleep sofa. It felt as though the foam had not fully expanded to its fullest potential, so I asked the maker about time required for the mattress to be at optimal firmness. The answer was 48 hours, and that in less than 12 hours after opening up the sleep sofa bed, the mattress would be at around 80% thickness. How many people want to have a sleep sofa in the bed position when it is not time for sleeping? People who downsize want convenience, so that wouldn't work.

Ultimately, we took our requirements to one manufacturer we prefer over all others for timely delivery, consistently high quality, fair prices, and excellent warranties. Not only was customer service a high priority, this company was also keen to modify existing designs to help our customers create unique upholstery pieces. Moreover we found we had a partner willing to improve a simple, existing sleeper style without adding untested or otherwise potentially undesirable components.

The result is now our standard for all sleeper sofas. Combining a thicker, inner coil spring mattress with an improved mechanism on several new styles with varying seat cushion configurations has been very rewarding. Customers who expect some discomfort as either a seat or a bed are pleasantly surprised by how the sofa sits, as well as how the mattress feels without painful bars-in-the-back sensations. Several people have remarked, "Hey, this is more comfortable than our own bed!" which led my wife to say, "See! I told you we should sell beds!" Well, now we do!

For more information, visit Endicott Home Furnishings, LLC, 717 US Route One, Scarborough, call 207-883-3264, or visit www.condofurniture.com.