

# THE £125,000 QUESTION

## Helen Croydon tries out a bed that costs as much as a flat. Is it worth it?

It isn't often that I get paid to sleep on the job, so I jumped at the chance to try out the world's most expensive bed in one of London's priciest hotel suites. Indeed, so excited was I by the prospect of eight hours of shuteye on this 10ft-tall, 6ft-wide, hand-sewn dream machine in a riverside suite at the Savoy, I was worried I wouldn't be able to sleep at all.

The structure on which I was about to go horizontal has a price tag of £125,000 — enough for a chic studio flat or a couple of sports cars — and is made from a unique cocktail of cashmere, carded virgin lamb's wool, cotton and curled horse tail. Horse tail apparently wicks away moisture and helps maintain

body temperature; the curls supposedly add springiness. This deliciously soft mass is then engineered around hand-tied, star-lashed, 10-turn pocket springs.

Did this costly concoction work? You bet. I melted into it, every muscular contour supported. Savoir, the bed's manufacturer, assured me that, should I wish to invite a bedfellow to share the experience, the mattress is designed to absorb the ripples from body movement. Perfect if, like me, you struggle to share a bed and wake to the sound of so much as the flick of your lover's toe.

The bed can be customised for style and comfort — for really sensitive couples, the two sides of the mattress can



Helen Croydon puts the Royal State Bed through its paces

Francesco Guidicini

be made with different levels of firmness — but I wouldn't have changed a thing about the prototype on which I slept.

If all this wasn't enough extravagance to justify the six-figure cost, the bed, the headboard, the panels and the half-tester canopy are covered with gold silk — 1,600 miles of thread, enough to stretch from John o' Groat's to Gibraltar.

The stitching is done by the Royal School of Needlework, which worked on the Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress, but this isn't the only regal connection. Savoir calls this the Royal State Bed, because the design is based on models used by 17th- and 18th-century monarchs. Palace beds were made to impress dignitaries lucky enough to get an audience with the king or queen in their chambers. So, when you consider that it's been designed to double as an office, that price tag doesn't seem quite so shocking. And the grand half-tester has been finished with timber cornice

work and silk starburst fabrics, so you could probably do away with a roof.

Sadly, I didn't get to lie in like a Hanoverian queen. Soon after my delicious £125,000 slumber came to an end, the Royal State Bed sample was removed from its resting place at the Savoy and escorted into a waiting vehicle, in which it was chauffeur-driven to Monaco to start a promotional world tour.

Only 60 of these beds will be made, and Alistair Hughes, Savoir's managing director, thinks they will be snapped up. "It is a lot of money, but at the top end of the market, people buy tailor-made clothes for comfort, or custom-made shoes to protect their feet. You spend a third of your life in bed — why wouldn't you have that made for you, too?"

"It's an investment that will pay off every morning. It's designed to last for at least 25 years, which works out at £15 a night."

Put that way, it almost seems a bargain.