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CONCIERGE 2006-2007

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BUYING FINE LINENS

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EXPERT TIPS

- When shopping for luxury linens, trust your hand more than the thread count.
- The whole idea of thread count has become overblown in consumers' minds. The notion that the higher the number of threads per square inch, the better the product, is just not true. There are other more important factors in determining the quality of linens and the level of comfort and pleasure they can deliver their users.
- Sheets have to be light in weight and have to "breathe" to avoid excessive and, quite honestly, highly uncomfortable perspiration.
- To test softness, use the so-called "hand" approach (the industry word for the sensation when linens are caressed with the back of a hand). The sheets have to be smooth and soft to the touch.
- When it comes to durability, the sheets must be able to maintain their light weight and softness after many washes.
- A vast majority of luxury hotels choose 100 percent Egyptian cotton in a percale construction, normally on a 200 thread count for their bed linens. But many consumers think luxury linens are 300-plus thread count on a sateen construction. What has deceived people is that sateen sheets are more expensive than percale sheets. Sateen sheets have the tendency to retain humidity (due to their tighter construction) and to be more delicate than percale sheets.
- The only advantage the sateen construction has over the percale is the fact that they do not wrinkle much.
- Another myth to dispel is the fact that the more threads are in a square inch the softer the product will be: The more threads there are in a square inch the heavier the product will be. The balance between the thread count and the weight is most important. There are plenty of people sleeping on 1,000 thread count sheets unaware of the fact that, in reality, they are sleeping on tablecloths.
- When dealing with natural fibers, the more you wash the linens the better they feel.