



STAFF PHOTO BY ANGELA ROWLINGS

www.bostonherald.com

The big sleep

Upscale wool bedding goes up against down

By JILL RADSKEN

If Tracy Jean-Chronberg has her way, I'll soon be sleeping like a baa-by.

Her young line of luxury bedding, Wul, is woven from merino wool, and aims to give goose down a run for its money.

"It's the iPod of bedding," said Jean-Chronberg.

Wul's mattress pads, comforters and pillows are woven through an innovative wool

treatment that makes the bedding machine washable and dryable, while remaining super-soft. The line is itch-free and, more importantly, allergy-free. "It's a whole new paradigm in bedding," said Jean-Chronberg, explaining that every piece is conditioned with the antimicrobial solution Ultra Fresh.

She said West Coasters are hot for the goods, but the 18-month-old company finds New England a slower sell.

"California's easy. The rest of the states, education's required," she said. "On the East Coast, they're toe-dippers."

But we're coming around. Jean-Chronberg said last month's sales with New Hampshire-based Garnet Hill, its biggest New England account, were her largest to date. Come fall, Lekker in the South End also will carry Wul. Prices for the comforters start at \$288 (twin) to \$427 (king) while pillows cost between \$99 and \$120. Mattress

pads range from \$299 to \$585.

"The challenge is getting people to get the concept," she said. "They think Dad's old Navy blanket."

I tested her theory on my husband, a goose down loyalist. Blasting the air conditioning on a humid summer night, he awoke with a refreshing change of heart.

"I'm surprised how un-woolly it was, how smooth it was," he said. "It was warm without the lumpiness (of down)."

Wul bills itself as a better alter-

native to down. "Down gets you warm, but it keeps you warm," said Jean-Chronberg. "Wool works with your body. It keeps you cool in the summer and hot in the winter."

Which would explain the steamy (read: huge) July sales of Wul's year-round-weight comforter — even to places like Florida.

"People have air conditioning," Jean-Chronberg said. "It's freezing."

— jradskan@bostonherald.com

THURSDAY AUGUST 6, 2009 BOSTON HERALD