

INTERNET

Matouk spurs customer creativity with bed linen visualizer

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uMatouk bed

By SARAH JONES

U.S. linen maker Matouk is helping consumers visualize their “perfect bed” with its first online configurator.

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Luxury Daily

uMatouk allows both retailers and consumers to mix and match bedding to create their own combinations, which appear on a photorealistic 3D bed. Since it can be difficult to imagine how the range of possibilities would look once on an actual bed, this tool will help to make the decision process easier, and make consumers more confident in their final choice.

"Bedding is a difficult product category to merchandise in a store," said Stuart Kiely, senior director of technology and marketing at [Matouk](#), Fall River, MA.

Beds are large and take up valuable square footage in a store and changing a bed is a time consuming process, so it's difficult for customers to visualize how different Matouk styles coordinate to form a complete bed.

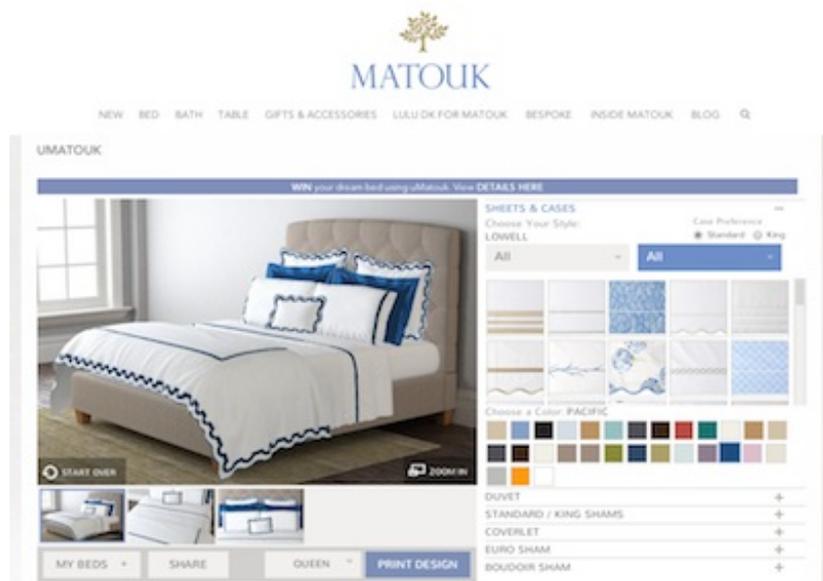
"With the visualizer tool, customers are encouraged to dream up and create their own personalized recipe of coordinates that match perfectly with their needs and tastes," he

said. "We think that this tool will give consumers more confidence to mix and match across our entire product line in a way that was previously impossible."

Picture this

Matouk worked with ecommerce consultancy Fluid, Inc. on its configurator tool, which launched Nov. 10. The tool is powered by the cloud, to allow for a large amount of imagery available.

The configurator opens with an image of a queen bed pre-made with a set of white sheets with dark blue accents, to show what can be achieved.



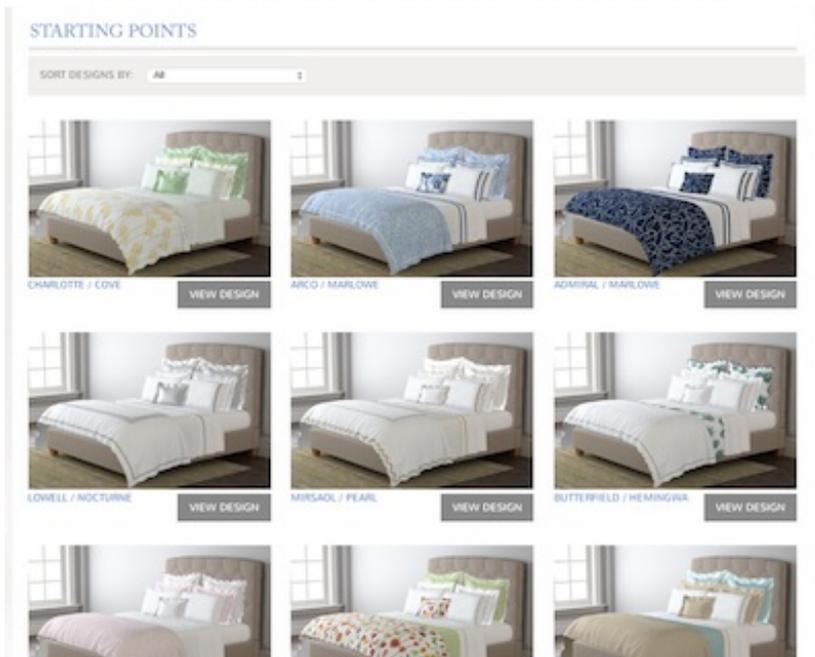
Screenshot of uMatouk configurator

Consumers can go through step by step and alter the sheets and cases, duvet, shams, coverlet and shams, each of which offers different pattern and color options. More than 80 million combinations of styles and designs are available.

"Historically, our photography has had a big impact on depicting how styles coordinate with one another," Mr. Kiely said. "But we typically only take one or two photos per style, which certainly isn't a comprehensive set of options given the number of styles, colors and textures in the Matouk line.

"Today, it's possible to construct over 100,000,000 unique combinations of style, color and component using our visualization tool," he said. "Our tool helps bring out the creative side in our customers and allows them to dream up coordinating products that they might have otherwise had a difficult time visualizing."

For those unsure where to begin, Matouk offers "starting points" of inspiration. Consumers can select from about nine different pre-made groupings, and then tweak to fit their needs.



Screenshot of uMatouk

Once satisfied with their design, consumers can save it to their beds or share it to social media to get a second opinion. They can also print their design for reference.

When mulling over options, having this visual comparison may help consumers make a tough decision.

While Matouk has ecommerce, the configurator does not directly link to product pages. However, consumers can use their list of choices as a guide to find what they are looking for.

Matouk plans to use the configurator to introduce new products.

In addition to a consumer-facing tool, uMatouk allows has applications for retailers.

"We built this tool as a way for all of our channel partners to sell Matouk more effectively," Mr. Kiely said.

"For instance, our bricks and mortar retailers can pull up the tool from within their store and visualize a bed configuration side-by-side with their customer," he said. "They can save multiple ideas and even email the configuration to their customers for later review.

"Our Interior Design partners can use the visualizer from within the Matouk tablet app to review style coordinates right in their clients' homes."

To introduce consumers to uMatouk, the brand framed a Pinterest contest around the tool.

Featured on the homepage, the contest invites consumers to "win your dream bed." To enter, consumers have to create their own design on uMatouk, and then share it on Pinterest, Twitter or Facebook with the hashtag #uMatouk.

Consumers are also supposed to email their design to Matouk using the share button, so it can be pinned to Matouk's dedicated Pinterest board. The consumer who receives the most likes and repins on Matouk's board will win their dream bed as submitted.

Two other winners will be chosen for other prizes.

Mix and match

Other brands have installed visualization tools to ease the shopping process.

For instance, Saks Fifth Avenue is empowering consumers with the ability to digitally put together outfits on specific body types by joining up with a fashion-centric iPad application.

The app created by Stylewhile aggregates product images from participating retailers such as Diane Von Furstenberg and allows consumers to see how outfits look on an avatar with a similar body type. Since consumers will have an idea about how items mesh or clash before making a purchase, the app will likely reduce the amount of returns ([see story](#)).

Also, Italian fashion house Brioni has created a digital component to its made-to-measure tailoring to help consumers visualize a completed custom look.

Brioni's "Mirror" uses 3D technology to show virtual representations of what garments will look like in different fabric and fit options. Allowing consumers to visualize on a screen how their particular choices will look may make the in-store consultation process less overwhelming ([see story](#)).

Since consumers are able to access this tool in their homes, it may inspire more time on Matouk's Web site, beyond just sales.

"This tool enables a customer shopping experience that is not available in a store or in a design studio," said Angie Flynn, customer success at [Fluid, Inc.](#), San Francisco. "The ability to mix and match any style and or color.

"We expect increased customer engagement, and consumers are more likely to spend more time on site," she said. "Fluid customers have seen increases of 120 percent and up to 300 percent.

"Customers can create many different designs and share them with their social shopping circles via Pinterest design boards. Consumers are able to visualize their dream bedroom and not have any constraints on sku level availability."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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