



Bed, bath and ... beyond



Actress
Courtney Peldon

Maxim magazine is showing its softer side with a line of branded home products designed to appeal to the male market. A sample of the goods:

- Duvets
- Comforters
- Bathmats
- Shower curtains

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Maxim brings home the beer, babes, bathmats

By LAURA PETRECCA

Maxim's motto: Girls, Sports, Music ... and now duvet covers.

Dennis Publishing has licensed the Maxim moniker for a line of home products to be sold at Filene's and Foley's department stores beginning this July. The publisher is also in distribution talks with Federated Department Stores and Bed Bath & Beyond, said one source.

Maxim's entry into home goods may seem odd — young men are often more apt to buy beer than bathmats. But branding and retail experts say a move to the bachelor pad should pay off.

Bed and bath products will reap \$11 billion in 2004 retail sales, according to Chicago market research company Mintel. That marketplace is expected to swell as image-conscious males spruce up their abodes.

Already, 42 percent of 18- to 34-year-old men said they're spending more on home décor than a year ago, reports WSL Strategic Retail.

"Men are increasingly being seen as a growth target for traditionally female categories," said marketing ex-

pert Mark DiMassimo. "Oscar Madison can't get as many dates as Feli Unger anymore."

Maxim's 21- to 35-year-old readership has a median household income of \$64,000. As shows like "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" push aesthetic appeal, these newfound shoppers are using their cash on grooming and household goods.

"The woman used to be the driver of home and hearth," said branding expert Marian Salzman, "but today men are shopping at Williams-Sonoma and Pottery Barn."

The Maxim Living line, which includes duvets, towels and shower curtains, will be promoted through Dennis' Web sites, live events and retail ads.

"We can drive people into stores the way Martha drove people to Kmart," said Dennis brand development director Barry Pincus — who was once CFO at Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia.

Dennis is also exploring licensing deals for its Stuff and Blender magazines, with a focus on automotive, food and music categories.