

## **Villeroy & Boch and TOTO launch cooperation**

**Frankfurt am Main, March 12, 2013 – In connection with the ISH (international plumbing show) in Frankfurt, Villeroy & Boch AG and Japanese bathroom product manufacturer TOTO Ltd. today announced that they are cooperating in technology for the European market. The ViClean Ultimate bidet toilet from Villeroy & Boch, which uses the advanced TOTO WASHLET® technology, is being shown at the ISH for the first time.**

Villeroy & Boch and TOTO ideally complement each other's strengths in this newly announced cooperation: Villeroy & Boch, as the leading European complete bathroom supplier, offers the European market its strong design skills, while for more than 30 years, TOTO has been the leading technological innovator in the world-famous Japanese bidet toilet category. Since 2008, TOTO, with its offices in Düsseldorf, has made its name in the German market.

The Villeroy & Boch and TOTO cooperation covers, in addition to the new technology, the distribution alliance launched by Villeroy & Boch and TOTO in North America in 2012. Since then, all bathroom products offered by Villeroy & Boch USA are sold exclusively through the TOTO USA distribution and sales channels.

Villeroy & Boch and TOTO are seeking a successful strategic cooperation to benefit both companies. They are pooling their strengths: high-end lifestyle and design competence from Villeroy & Boch and absolute high-tech-expertise from TOTO. Villeroy & Boch and TOTO hope that this cooperation will foster more rapid development and better growth for both companies, not just in Europe and the USA but worldwide.

“The goal of our technology cooperation is to dominate the bidet toilet product category in the core European markets with ViClean Ultimate and foster market growth in this product area for everyone. In TOTO, we have a technology partner with outstanding expertise at our side,” notes Frank Göring, Villeroy & Boch AG Board Chairman. “We believe in the future of the bidet toilet throughout Europe and, as one of the best known European premium brands, we would like to make this product category a significant sales segment for us,” explains Andreas Pfeiffer, head of the Bath & Wellness corporate division.

Kunio Harimoto, President of TOTO Ltd., sees this cooperation as offering a major opportunity for spreading the bathroom culture of hygiene and cleanliness: “Ever since we were founded in 1917, it has been our goal to make the bathrooms of the world more comfortable. In the USA and Asia, along with our home market in Japan, we have already been very successful. We are convinced that with the help of our technology and cooperation with Villeroy & Boch in Europe, this culture will spread even faster.”

TOTO’s WASHLET® technology, which the company first brought to market in 1980, has been immensely successful, especially in Asia but also more recently in the USA, with more than 34 million units installed. More than 70 percent of Japanese households today have a bidet toilet. The market for toilet bidets in Europe, however, is still being developed. This new form of hygiene can only find broad acceptance in the European market if a high-value design product is matched with a high performance, safe technology. That is why the European premium manufacturer from Mettlach and the Japanese plumbing fixture supplier TOTO decided to cooperate.

ViClean Ultimate is being introduced on the market as a Villeroy & Boch brand product that is “powered by TOTO”. The bidet toilet combines a comprehensive and innovative technology in a product for those who want the best in form and function. Individually

adjustable washing functions using a balloon jet technology (\*1) allow an especially gentle cleaning of the relevant anatomy. Comfortable drying functions are also part of ViClean Ultimate, along with a heated seat that can be continuously adjusted and offers a uniform distribution of heat. Additional features are a powerful deodorizer as well as automatic raising and lowering of the toilet lid and seat, using proven sensor technology. Because of the advanced TOTO technology, the washing function uses only 430 ml water per minute, which is up to seven times less than competitive products. ViClean Ultimate, which complies with such official standards as DIN (\*2) EN1717 (\*3), reflects consumer demands for sustainability, safety and efficiency.

**(\*1) Balloon jet technology**

Balloon jet technology is TOTO's original spray system that sprays a mixture of water and air. This system does not use a pump when spraying water like the "Wonder Wave" system which is also an original spray system by TOTO. Therefore, users still feel the cleansing process but it minimizes the amount of water used.

**(\*2) DIN**

Stands for Deutsches Institut für Normung. It is a German Industrial Standard (National standard)

**(\*3) EN1717**

Protection against pollution of potable water in water installations and general requirements of devices to prevent pollution by backflow.

Further material available for download:

Photos of the press conference at ISH and new product releases of TOTO:

[www.toto.co.jp/en/press/ISH/index.htm](http://www.toto.co.jp/en/press/ISH/index.htm)

Press text and photo material:

[www.villeroy-boch.com/presse](http://www.villeroy-boch.com/presse)

About TOTO:

TOTO was established in 1917 and since then, we have been focusing on our overseas operations, aiming to “make bathrooms around the world more comfortable.” Today, TOTO’s overseas operations have expanded into 18 countries around the world with more than 100 bases. There are 25,000 TOTO employees worldwide. TOTO has gained great brand awareness and trust in these markets, especially in North America, and Asia, particularly in China. TOTO is the oldest comprehensive household equipment manufacturer in Japan and 2017 will be its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary since establishment. Today, TOTO has the biggest market share in Japan of “technologies to manage water” such as water saving toilets and Washlets. We were also trailblazers as the only manufacturer that helped shape the Japanese lifestyle. For European market, we opened TOTO Europe in 2008 in Dusseldorf, Germany. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://www.toto.co.jp/en/index.htm>

About Villeroy & Boch:

Villeroy & Boch AG, with its headquarters in Mettlach, Germany, has around 7,500 employees and operates production facilities in Europe, Mexico and Thailand. Villeroy & Boch offers innovative product and decorative concepts for both consumers and commercial developers. At its House of Villeroy & Boch shops, Villeroy & Boch presents complete concepts for the “single-source bathroom” and “perfectly laid table,” and is represented worldwide in 125 countries. Villeroy & Boch has always been a path-breaker through its use of innovative materials and production methods and above all its innovative design approaches, one of the brand’s most characteristic features. That is proven by the numerous design and innovation prizes the company has been awarded. A publicly traded company, Villeroy & Bosch can look back on 265 years of history.

Interested consumers can find Villeroy & Boch on the Internet at [www.villeroy-boch.com](http://www.villeroy-boch.com).

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