

Insights

THE MAGAZINE SUPPLEMENT TO THE ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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EDITORIAL



Frank Göring,
Chairman of the Management Board

Dear Readers,

As the name of our magazine suggests, this year we want to provide you with some more insights into the varied work we do at Villeroy & Boch. You can expect to read about a wide range of topics, but there is one key word you will encounter again and again: innovation. From the Bathroom and Wellness Division to the Tableware Division, from production to customer services, Villeroy & Boch seeks to innovate in every single area. Insights presents these new developments and the people who have worked on them.

A pioneering spirit has always been one of the strengths of Villeroy & Boch. The innovations of the past have made the company what it is today. And the innovations of today and tomorrow will ensure that Villeroy & Boch continues to set new standards. Today's innovations include software for 3D glasses that allows customers to walk through their planned new bathroom in virtual reality, as well as new services in the Tableware Division to connect the in-store and online sales channels.

*“We reflect the spirit
of the times with our
products”*

Villeroy & Boch is also typically innovative when it comes to design – and another three of our products won awards this year. I am always particularly pleased by accolades like this, because they show that we reflect the spirit of the times with our products.

The awards are not restricted to our products, however: in the past year, we were also highly ranked in a survey on consumer confidence conducted by WirtschaftsWoche magazine and the analysis and consulting firm ServiceValue, in which more than 278,000 customer ratings were evaluated. Villeroy & Boch achieved first place in the household goods category, while our brand also enjoyed a strong tenth place in the overall ranking of 973 companies from 62 industries, with a consumer confidence index of 90.9 percent. We are pleased that our high standards in terms of product and service quality, design and functionality are being rewarded in the form of customer confidence in our brand. At the same time, this award also provides us with inspiration to continue to do our very best.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine.

Yours,

Frank Göring

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Optimally combining online and offline sales channels and offering customers intelligent services: The Cross Channel campaign in the Tableware Division yielded new, customer-oriented tools in 2015.



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Things are getting coloured at Villeroy & Boch, with new colour concepts bringing colourful ceramics back to the bathroom and kitchen. A good reason to take a look behind the scenes of colour development.



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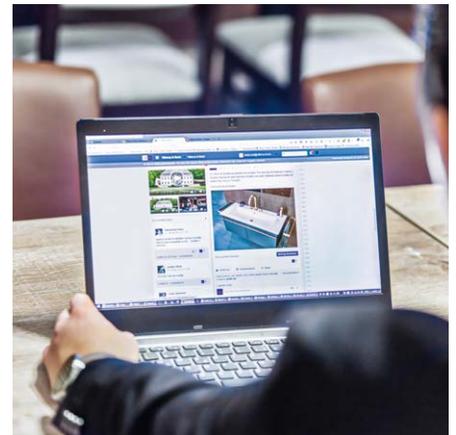
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The new material TitanCeram is particularly suitable for delicate forms and exclusive designs. Why? The Insights team asked ceramic developer Bernhard Thömmes.



30 PROJECT BUSINESS

The list of international references is long — and getting longer every year. Insights presents four highlights from Villeroy & Boch's project business in 2015.



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Posts, tweets, likes: Villeroy & Boch has around a million fans on social media. Insights found out what opportunities social media offer.

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Gifts were a key topic in the Tableware Division in 2015. Nicolas Luc Villeroy, Head of the Tableware Division, discusses the ideas and strategies behind the company's gift range.

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The Torgau plant has a colourful past. The Insights team used the 25th anniversary of its return to the Villeroy & Boch fold as an opportunity to look back at the history and development of the plant.

NETWORKED THINKING: CROSS CHANNEL AT VILLEROY & BOCH

The innovative ideas developed by the Tableware Division are not restricted to new product ranges, décors or ceramic shapes, but also extend to intelligent customer services.

“Cross Channel” is the keyword. Insights looks at the background to the networking of the company’s online and offline distribution channels and the new opportunities this opens up for Villeroy & Boch customers.

The days when in-store sales were the only distribution channel are over. For example, today’s customers also enjoy searching online then buying in person, or vice versa. Studies show that around 40 percent of in-store purchases are preceded by a search in the online store. This makes it all the more important to ensure that the various sales channels are optimally networked.

“We no longer view sales channels in isolation but are increasingly seeking to integrate them,” explains Erik Walter, who manages the “Cross Channel” project team in his role as Head of Own Retail International at Villeroy & Boch. A seamless shopping experience and a strong focus on the customer are the driving forces: “We want to give our customers a wide range of options when it comes to experiencing our brand and buying our products,” says Laurent Turmes, Director of Sales for the Tableware Division. “For example, Click & Collect is one of the services we launched in 2015: customers can buy online then pick up their purchase at a store of their choice. There is also an online search function for finding nearby stores,” adds Walter.

Villeroy & Boch’s IT, Own Retail, Marketing, Supply Chain Management and Sales department are working in close cooperation to optimally network the channels and establish

various new tools. “All with the same goal – to make Cross Channel services as accessible and usable as possible for our customers,” says Walter.

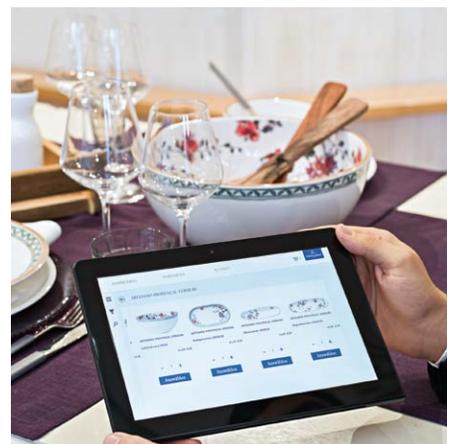
Challenges like synchronising information from the stores, the e-shop and the central warehouse have been successfully overcome, employees have been trained and a wide range of Cross Channel services have already been established (see illustration). And the response has been positive, as demonstrated by the user numbers for the “Check & Reserve” service for example: In December 2015 alone, 8,500 customers used the e-shop to check whether an item they viewed online was also available in their branch of choice.

“Our aim is a global roll-out.”

Having begun in the German-speaking markets, Cross Channel activities are now being expanded into neighbouring countries such as France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. Walter: “Our aim is a global roll-out. Needless to say, we will also continue to permanently develop our tools and work on establishing additional Cross Channel services.”



Erik Walter is in charge of the “Cross Channel” project. One of the tools is the Personal Sales Assistant, which shows customers in store the entire product range.





PERSONAL SALES ASSISTANT

Personalised assistance is and remains important for customers. The Personal Sales Assistant (PSA) helps sales employees to provide customers with targeted support. The tablet contains the entire product range in digital form, so items that are not in stock can be displayed and ordered. They are then delivered to the customer's home or to the store for collection as preferred. One useful side-effect is that more targeted delivery according to demand means less storage space is needed at the Villeroy & Boch stores.

VILLEROY & BOCH'S CROSS CHANNEL SERVICES AT A GLANCE



CLICK & COLLECT

Order online, collect in-store: this service allows customers to order products from the comfort of their own home and collect them "offline" at a store of their choice. Another advantage is that customers can take a look at the items in person and return them immediately if they are not to their liking.



IN-STORE AVAILABILITY

In the age of mobile devices, customers often quickly check online to see where the next store is and what products are in stock. This information can be called up flexibly online.



GIFT LIST

Villeroy & Boch has provided an offline gift service for a number of years, allowing bridal couples or people celebrating their birthday to make a wish list of Villeroy & Boch products for their guests to order from. Now the offline gift list has been linked up to the e-shop and can be created and edited both online and in-store. This gives customers greater flexibility when it comes to buying gifts: now they can make their purchase in person or in the e-shop, with the option of having the products delivered or collecting them in a store of their choice.



CHECK & RESERVE

This function allows items to be reserved for 72 hours if they are in stock, so the customer can be sure they will still be available when they visit the selected store at a time that suits them.



ONLINE RETURNS

Customers who place orders online can return items free of charge either online or in-store.



ONLINE & OFFLINE GIFT VOUCHERS

Whether they are purchased online or offline, all Villeroy & Boch gift vouchers can be used both in the e-shop and in-store.

“WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED HERE IS SOMETHING UNIQUE”

Modern technology is changing our ways of communicating, our habits, and our world.

At Villeroy & Boch, it is even making it possible to see the future – at least when it comes to planning a new bathroom. 3D glasses are the reason. Welcome to virtual reality.



Cor de Rooij knows all about high-tech and digital gadgets – they form the basis of his work at Villeroy & Boch. The multimedia manager is in charge of one of the most exciting innovation projects in Mettlach: the virtual bathroom, viewed using 3D glasses, which represents an entirely new form of bathroom planning.

The project was launched in September 2014 and the results were already presented at the ISH, the leading trade fair for the sanitary ware industry, in Frankfurt in March 2015. Seven months from the initial idea to the première: a challenge, without a doubt. The success of the tight schedule was due in part to the Hamburg-based innovation agency Nerdindustries, which develops 3D software for virtual reality

glasses – predominantly for gaming. But as de Rooij explains: “A visionary project like this means taking new approaches.”

The appearance at the ISH was a big hit and the virtual bathroom met with great enthusiasm. The main ingredients for the digital spatial experience: the “Oculus Rift” 3D glasses, which bring a bathroom to life before the user’s eyes, and special 3D cameras that record the user’s movements to ensure that the space is displayed realistically.

“In the next phase, we will improve the bathroom animation”

A “walk-through” of four virtual bathrooms was initially available at the ISH. Since then, the system has been developed further to allow the measurements of the bathroom to be set in advance. Another development is aimed at removing the need for a dedicated showroom space in future: users will be able to stay comfortably seated, using a joystick to control their virtual tour and move the bathroom around them instead of vice versa. De Rooij: “In the next phase, we will improve the bathroom animation so that users can open drawers, for example.”

One key element when it comes to providing optimal service for retailers is the connection to the other bathroom planning and product software that is already in development, with the release date set for August 2016. This means it will soon be possible to virtually integrate every collection and hence plan bathrooms creatively – a



Looking through the 3D glasses brings the planned bathroom to life.

unique service offered by Villeroy & Boch to its retail partners. A pilot phase using the 3D glasses has already begun at the House of Living in Lübeck, and a wholesaler in Dülmen has also been using the system since late January 2016. A total of ten pilots are planned in the major cities of Milan, London and Paris and at seven locations throughout Germany.

“The 3D glasses are intended to supplement the showroom concept”

Will the 3D glasses make the bathroom showroom a thing of the past? “The 3D glasses are intended to supplement the showroom concept – after all, people will still want to touch ‘their’ washbasin, see how the surface feels, and so on. At the same time, what we have achieved here at Villeroy & Boch is something technologically unique. The virtual bathroom serves to demonstrate our innovative strength. And it means we can offer one thing above all else: truly unrivalled, groundbreaking service.”



Multimedia Manager **Cor de Rooij** is in charge of the virtual bathroom project.

INSPIRE WITH GIFTS

Birthdays, weddings, Christmas, Easter, Valentine's and Mother's Day, as an invitation or to say thank you – there are all kinds of reasons for making someone happy with a gift. Gifts are a key area for Villeroy & Boch. The current product portfolio features a wide range of gift items aimed at satisfying a broad spectrum of customer demand. Nicolas Luc Villeroy, Management Board member responsible for Tableware, talks about the ideas and strategies behind the company's gifts.



Appealing packaging is key when it comes to gifts.

Mr Villeroy, Villeroy & Boch has been focusing on gifts for some time now. Why?

Villeroy: Gifts are a diverse and emotional field with a large market – a market in which Villeroy & Boch now also has a share. People looking for a suitable gift might not have previously thought of Villeroy & Boch right away. We changed that: since early 2015, we offer special gift series like Little Gallery and Rose Cottage, which are enjoying an extremely positive response among customers. But we also offer items from our existing ranges as gift items. After all, almost anything can be given as a gift – the only limit is your imagination! (laughs) It doesn't always have to be a full service. Individual items from our coffee and tea range also make good gifts, for example.

„Since early 2015,
we offer
special gift series”

One of our aims was to help consumers to come to a decision and make a spontaneous choice thanks to inspirational presentation at the point of sale (POS), our new „online gift finder“ and appealing packaging, for example. Attractively packaged gifts can also potentially attract more customers.

What is the target group for the gift items?

Villeroy: Broadly speaking, there is no such thing as the specific target group – after all, who does not enjoy giving gifts? We try to appeal to consumers who are looking for a gift for a specific occasion. But for fans of Villeroy & Boch, we have also transferred some of our favourite décors, such as Mariefleur and Amazonia, to existing popular forms from our product range. These can be given as stand-alone gift items or added to a collection or an existing service. For example, one particularly special item for passionate collectors is the limited-edition tureen Lucia's, which is produced at our Luxembourg manufacturing plant.

Gifts enjoy a particular status in many countries of the world, such as in Asia and the Middle East. Does the range also meet different regional requirements?

Villeroy: Yes, this naturally formed part of our thinking. As an international company with a presence in more than 125 countries, it is important for us to demonstrate foresight, recognise customer demand and develop product ranges that meet this demand. We identified key markets for the different collections and décors. For example, Mariefleur, Mariefleur Gris and Petite Fleur are extremely popular in our Central European markets, the Asian market likes Design Naif and Samarkand is popular in the Middle East, while Rose Cottage is especially appealing to consumers in the United Kingdom and Australia.

The gift item concept was introduced at the Ambiente trade fair in 2015. What has the response been like to date?

Villeroy: We are extremely satisfied with the response. Our customers appreciate the high quality of our gift items. Particularly popular ranges, such as the Rose Cottage collection or the Nek, Numa and Tiko mini-vases, will be expanded further in 2016 and accompanied by new collections and items.

To finish with a personal question: if you could pick out an item to receive as a gift, what would it be?

Villeroy: That is a very difficult question for me to answer. (laughs) I like surprises. But if it is a Villeroy & Boch product, I will certainly like it!



Nicolas Luc Villeroy, Head of the Tableware Division



Popular décor: The Rose Cottage gift series will be expanded further in 2016.



Small vases, big pleasure: The Nek, Numa and Tiko mini-vases are extremely popular gift items.

TITANCERAM – A MATERIAL WITH A BRIGHT FUTURE

Ceramics are the area of expertise for Villeroy & Boch. The company has strongly influenced the development of ceramic ware and the products and materials used over the past centuries. In 2015, Villeroy & Boch introduced TitanCeram, an innovative addition to its range of ceramic materials.

THREE FACTS ABOUT TITANCERAM

FACT 1

TitanCeram is a material developed by Villeroy & Boch and produced in Mettlach.

FACT 2

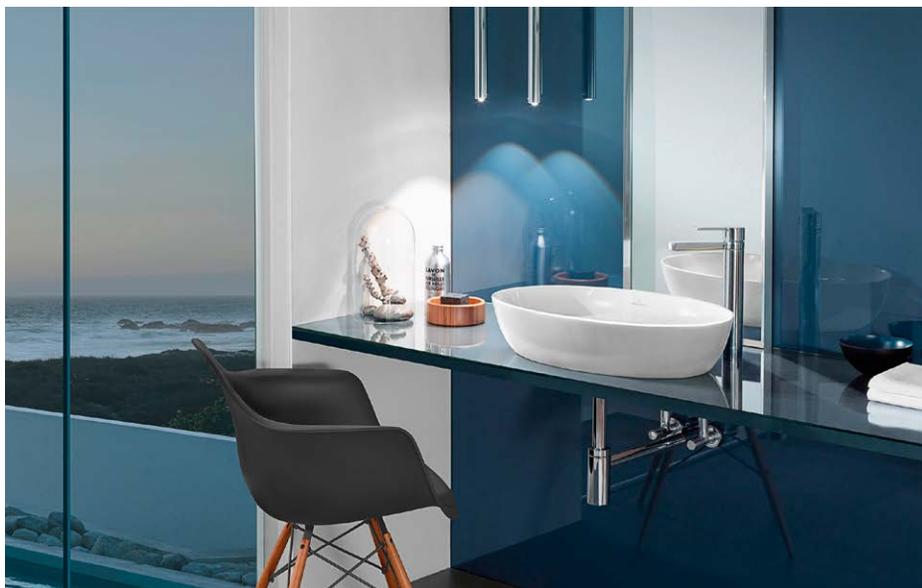
Ceramic sanitary ware loses water during the firing process, meaning it shrinks in size. TitanCeram sees approximately 50 percent less shrinkage during production compared with traditional ceramic sanitary ware, resulting in products with greater dimensional accuracy.

FACT 3

TitanCeram is very strong, which enables delicate designs to be produced with walls that are up to 50 percent thinner than traditional ceramic sanitary ware.



He has been with Villeroy & Boch for three decades and knows the company and, in particular, the materials inside and out: **Bernhard Thömmes**, Head of Ceramic Development at Villeroy & Boch. The capabilities of the TitanCeram material are clearly demonstrated by the Octagon washbasin: exact angles, thin walls and precise edges combine with a brilliant-cut effect to give the interior an impressive diamond look.



One series, four shapes: the **Artis** washbasin. Artis is available in four shapes: round, oval, rectangular and square. What they all have in common is a delicate and light appeal.

Ceramics are perfect for the bathroom, natural and sustainable, yet it is also a high-tech material that is used in a number of industries and that is continuously evolving. Including at Villeroy & Boch, where TitanCeram is setting new standards in terms of material properties. Its strength makes very thin walls possible, opening up new and delicate shapes and designs that are popular among consumers. Strong dimensional stability, resistance to continuous use and a high standard of hygiene are also in demand. In addition to these consumer requirements, ensuring the lowest possible cost of materials in production and limited loss of material in the firing process are important factors for Villeroy & Boch. TitanCeram combines the best ceramic properties.

The material is composed of well-known ceramic ingredients: “TitanCeram is produced using the natural materials of clay, kaolin, feldspar, quartz and pegmatite enriched with titanium oxide – hence the name TitanCeram. But the exact recipe, i.e. the percentage composition of the raw materials, is and remains a company secret,” explains Bernhard Thömmes, Head of Research & Development for Ceramic Development at Villeroy & Boch, with a twinkle in his

eye. TitanCeram is an innovative material, an in-house product that is manufactured in Mettlach following the delivery and strict inspection of the incoming raw materials.

Thömmes and his team spent two and a half years working on the ceramic development of TitanCeram. There was research, testing and development. The company’s marketing and production teams and its suppliers were involved at every stage of the process. The impetus for a new material or product can come from different sources. “In this case, the design specifications from the marketing department were extremely high. For us, that meant the production process also had to be enhanced. The only way to achieve an optimal result is through close cooperation between all of the internal and external participants,” says Thömmes. The result is astounding: in March 2015, TitanCeram was presented at the ISH trade fair in the form of the Octagon column bathroom sink and the Artis washbasin series.

Thömmes: “We are continuing to work on the material and new premium products are in the planning phase. After all, that is why we developed TitanCeram – as a material with a bright future.”



FROM FIRECLAY TO TITANCERAM

Washbasins in the 18th century took the form of jugs and bowls, large and bulky. They were made from **fireclay**, a coarse material that absorbed water and became porous over time, leading to fine cracks. An aesthetic quality in the art world, but a defect when it comes to ceramic sanitary ware.

The further development of the material led to **fine fireclay**, which offered greater strength, suffered from fewer tension problems and enabled smaller and more elegant shapes. This should not be confused with traditional sanitary porcelain, **vitreous china**, which loses a lot of water and shrinks considerably during the firing process, making it well suited to robust products. These materials were used for many years (indeed, vitreous china is still in use today) and gradually evolved until **VilboPlus** came along.

Villeroy & Boch presented **VilboPlus** in the mid-1980s. An enhancement of the existing fine fireclay with improved strength for more delicate shapes, but also with increased shrinkage during firing and higher material consumption.

Finally, the permanent development and improvement of ceramic materials resulted in the birth of **TitanCeram**. A material that not only experiences little shrinkage during the firing process, but is also extremely strong, making it ideal for the production of particularly delicate washbasins with straight lines – a popular trend in the field of ceramic sanitary ware.



Pasta Passion boasts refined features: A notch on the edge of the pasta plate (left) makes it easy to get the last noodle onto the fork. The two pasta plates as well as the spaghetti plate have a cutlery rest to stop forks and spoons from sliding while serving or clearing up. The spaghetti plate also has an indent that allows the pasta to be twisted easily using one hand, without a spoon.



One plate, three compartments: **BBQ Passion** has separate areas for sauces and dips, salads, and the BBQ food itself.

ENJOYING PASTA AND BBQ

Special pasta and grill plates, noodle bowls and BBQ platters: the Tableware Division has been focusing on stylish and functional standalone items like these since 2015. They are ideal for modern eating habits – including beyond traditional table-based dining – and represent a successful addition to Villeroy & Boch’s existing product portfolio.

Villeroy & Boch presented the BBQ Passion series at the start of 2015. Reflecting the current popularity of BBQ cooking, the items are tailored towards different BBQ dishes. BBQ is popular all over the world, all year round. The range of BBQ specialities is vast, from sausages to vegetable kebabs to steaks – and this variety is reflected in the features the corresponding tableware needs to offer. “A desire to meet these requirements as best as possible was what inspired the development of BBQ Passion,” explains Sandra Ehlen, Tableware Product Manager. The modular product range of the new series encompasses special BBQ tableware in different sizes, with separate compartments for sauces or dips and specific food items. The BBQ Passion serving platters have ridges to help keep meat and vegetable skewers juicy without becoming soggy. The sausage plate is just the right size for a Thuringian bratwurst, while the XL plate can fit a T-bone steak.

“Consumer behaviour was a key element in the development process. Dining traditionally takes place at the table, but nowadays there are many other occasions to eat. Our items need to be flexible in terms of how they are used,” adds Ehlen. The BBQ Passion products certainly fit the bill, whether at the traditional dining table, on the couch or in the garden. And they are enjoying a good response among more than just BBQ enthusiasts: in 2015, BBQ Passion received the Red Dot Design Award for innovative product design [for more information see p. 37].

Villeroy & Boch has also been offering functional standalone items for pasta fans since 2015. Reflecting the different pasta shapes, special shapes were developed for the Pasta Passion series, which consists of two pasta plates, one spaghetti plate and one pasta bowl. All of them have a cutlery rest to stop forks and spoons from sliding while serving or clearing up. “Terms like ‘twisting indent’ and ‘pushing feature’ may sound amusing, but they describe the refined features offered by Pasta Passion,” explains Nina Stoltenberg, who works in Brand Management for Tableware, with a chuckle. The indent means that spaghetti can be

twisted onto the fork easily and gracefully with one hand – without a spoon, just like real Italians. And a notch on the edge of the plate makes it easy to get that last noodle onto your fork or spoon. “Half of all Germans eat pasta once a week. Pasta is popular; a good reason for Villeroy & Boch to develop the Pasta Passion series. The result is standalone items for pasta fans that are not only functional, but also attractive and stylish,” adds Stoltenberg.

For centuries, Villeroy & Boch has identified trends and turned them into new products that are stylish and refined at the same time. Changing lifestyles are leading to growing worldwide demand for individual solutions. Which is precisely what is offered by BBQ Passion and Pasta Passion.



Product Manager **Sandra Ehlen** (left) and Brand Manager **Nina Stoltenberg** discussing **BBQ Passion** and **Pasta Passion**.



Artis combines technical perfection with harmonious colour concepts for the bathroom.

COLOUR IS KEY

The days of restraint are over: colourful ceramic ware is conquering the bathroom and kitchen. A good reason to take a look behind the scenes of colour development at Villeroy & Boch.

The trend in recent years has been towards discreet colours in the bathroom, but this is now changing. Colour accents are in demand, with both pastel and stronger colours enjoying increased popularity,” explains Julia Stuckert, Product Manager for Ceramic Sanitary Ware. “Light blue or rosé may not have been people’s first choice for their bathroom in the previous years, but in combination with other colours and materials, they can open up entirely new design avenues,” Stuckert continues. Danish-German designer Gesa Hansen has developed the colour concept for Villeroy & Boch’s Artis washbasin edition. Artis is white on the inside but colourful on the outside – with no fewer than 15 shades available.

*40 years of
experience in colourful
ceramics*

The inspiration for new colours can come from furniture, fashion, or the automotive industry. Often though, an idea does not take shape until designers get involved – such as the Paris-based Gesa Hansen, who has developed four distinct colour concepts for Artis: “Paris seasons” is the theme behind her colour palettes in yellow, rosé, blue and green, accompanied by three more neutral shades. These colour formulations are not the only global première. The innovative application method for Artis, which enables an exceptionally precise separating line between the white and coloured surfaces, has been developed exclusively by Villeroy & Boch.



An eye-catcher in the kitchen: Colourful sinks open up new possibilities for customised kitchen design. The colour concept by designer Gesa Hansen encompasses **Midnight** (top), **Emerald** (bottom), **Coral** and **Sunset**.

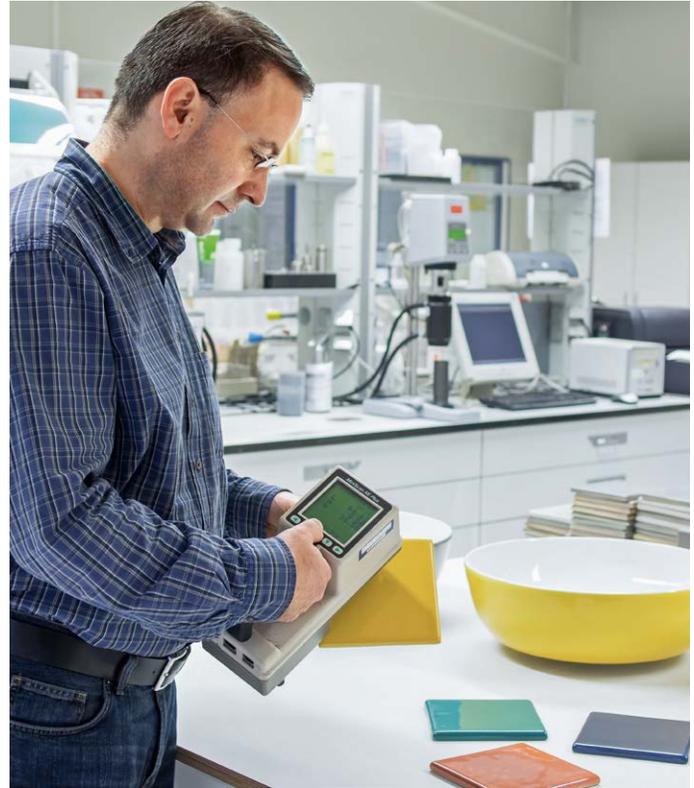
Colourful bathroom ceramics – this is an area where Villeroy & Boch can look back on more than 40 years of experience. “As early as the 1970s, our portfolio encompassed 19 ceramic colours, including creations such as curry, moss green and Bermuda. Today the range of colours numbers around 40,” says Arno Stutz, a ceramic engineer in material development. Glazes, colour formulations and surfaces with a special look or feel are his area of expertise. When it comes to glazing, Stutz has a lot of interesting things to say: about how the ceramic pigments are fired for 22 hours at 1,200 degrees Celsius; the vital role played by product safety and durability; and the strict and uncompromising standards that have to be met, from Germany to Australia.

The biggest challenge when it comes to coloured ceramics is “translating” the colour concept from paper into ceramic pigments. Samples are fired and initially evaluated purely in visual terms. “Based on past experience, we know roughly what pigments we need to mix into the basic glaze to create a certain colour,” explains Stutz. If the result comes very close to the paper sample, it is defined even more closely using colorimeters. These determine the LAB values for both the paper sample and the glaze: L for Lightness, A for the red/green axis and B for the yellow/blue axis. The difference between the individual measurements for the two samples shows which pigments still need to be added to the glaze. Once all of the measurements are correct, the next step takes place at the plant, where the colour glaze for the item is tested and validated for production. Colour formulations and new methods like those being used for Artis are, of course, trade secrets. Arno Stutz: “I don’t like the word ‘secret’, but we are talking about the expertise that sets us apart from the competition.”

Villeroy & Boch is also making a real impression when it comes to kitchen sinks – and compared with its washbasins, the colours here are strong tones named Coral, Sunset, Emerald and Moonlight. Here, too, Gesa Hansen has developed the colour concepts based on the four seasons. “Vibrant colours are becoming increasingly popular in living areas. Colourful ceramic sinks open up additional possibilities for customised kitchen design,” explains Product Manager Fidan Sudzadinowa. “Part of the idea was to develop the right material concepts to accompany the colour concepts, so that interested customers could easily be provided with inspiration on how to harmoniously combine colourful sinks with different materials within their kitchen.”

“Villeroy & Boch has always been a trend-setter!”

After many years of restraint, the kitchen and the bathroom are becoming more colourful places again. And there are likely to be even more new colours and new design ideas in future. Arno Stutz: “When we have a new idea, we do everything to implement it as best as we can. We frequently approach things from a new angle and develop them completely differently. Villeroy & Boch has always been a trend-setter!”



Ceramic engineer **Arno Stutz** uses a colorimeter to check whether the colour on the product matches the paper sample.

COLOURFUL CERAMICS — PAST HIGHLIGHTS



A collection by **Luigi Colani**, 1975: Colour and design reflecting the spirit of the time.



Virginia Flammé: A glaze for the modern kitchen — in the 1970s.



Loop & Friends grabbed the attention at the turn of the millennium with colourful inner surfaces.



THREE QUESTIONS TO DESIGNER GESA HANSEN

Ms Hansen, what was the inspiration behind the colour concepts you have created for Villeroy & Boch?

I was inspired by nature and the four seasons: the fresh green of springtime, the bright summer sun, the rusty-coloured autumn leaves and the coolness of winter. And, of course, Paris — the special flair, the joie de vivre and the culture of the French capital also had an influence on my colours.

You have developed colours for ceramic sinks as well as washbasins. What are the differences?

The colours for the ceramic sinks are stronger than those for the washbasins. They deliberately create a stronger impression in the sink area, making them into an eye-catcher. And the ceramic sinks are fully coloured, while the colourful Artis washbasins have a dual-colour effect with a bright white interior and a colourful exterior. Their design as a surface-mounted washbasin also means they have a different impact.

Do the kitchen and bathroom colours match?

Yes, they do. The same colour family can be used in the kitchen and the bathroom or different colours can be combined. The kitchen and bathroom colours are designed in such a way as to create a harmonious ambience using a single colour concept as well as allowing accentuated designs using different colours. But whichever version you go for, the result is always an interior design with a coherent, expressive colour palette.

“OUR TECHNOLOGY IS SUPERIOR”

Villeroy & Boch has made a big splash with DirectFlush. Insights tells the story of a WC technology that has won over retailers, consumers and project planners alike.



+95%

In 2015, sales of Directflush and HygieneFlush WCs doubled year-on-year to 385,000 units.

The rimless **DirectFlush** WC is a big success. A reason to celebrate for **Andreas Pfeiffer**, Head of the Bathroom and Wellness Division (top right), and **Thomas Kannengießer**, Head of Product Management Projects.

When do you know an innovation will be a success? According to Thomas Kannengießer, Head of Product Management Projects, the answer is very early on. “As soon as we developed the initial ideas for DirectFlush, we were confident that it was going to cause a sensation.” What they had invented was a technology that casts doubt on the good old WC flush, combining optimal flush performance, easy-care hygiene and low water consumption with maximum effectiveness.

DirectFlush is not a miracle of high-tech electronics, but the result of intelligent engineering. The concept for the rimless WC also won over the innovation management team and was quickly green-lighted for final product development – a process “that resembles the Papal conclave in the Sistine Chapel,” says Kannengießer with a chuckle. “The white smoke (purely figurative, of course) appears once the team of marketing, controlling, the development departments and production have found the perfect solution. We have to be satisfied in every respect: with the forecast economic success, the design, the technology, the production methods and, of course, the validity of the figures.”

Nine months passed between the idea and the prototype, before the first DirectFlush WC was presented in Germany in summer 2012. It quickly picked up a head of steam all by itself. Kannengießer talks about the “chip effect”: “The capacity of storage media doubles every year. Our DirectFlush sales are doing the same thing.”

DirectFlush offers the user a number of benefits all at once

This comes as no real surprise, as DirectFlush offers the user a number of benefits all at once. The rimless design makes it not only easier to reach many parts of the WC for cleaning, but the technology is so intelligent that it rinses

the bowl equally thoroughly despite its low water consumption of just 3 or 4.5 litres, thereby minimising the need for cleaning right from the start. Initially designed as a solution for Villeroy & Boch’s project business, with potential uses in hospitals or other public buildings where hygiene is essential and cleaning is an important cost and time factor, end consumers quickly also took an interest in the product and its combination of ideal flush performance, low water consumption and easy cleaning. “With DirectFlush, we have given retailers an innovation that they can talk about and explain. The benefits of the product are visible and easy to understand for the consumer,” explains Andreas Pfeiffer, Head of the Bathroom and Wellness Division.

“The German market has turned around completely”

The DirectFlush family has continued to grow since its launch in 2012. Starting from an initial range of five, it now encompasses 21 different models offering extensive scope when it comes to bathroom design. And there will be even more choice in future: all newly developed WCs will be fitted with DirectFlush technology as standard. At present, existing WC models generally come in one of two variants. In Germany and Scandinavia, DirectFlush is already very well established: “The German market has turned around completely,” notes Pfeiffer. At Gustavsberg in Scandinavia, the HygieneFlush, as the DirectFlush is called there, is already the market leader in its segment. Now DirectFlush is looking to conquer new markets in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. All of which comes as no surprise to Andreas Pfeiffer: “DirectFlush is a superior technology. It is the WC standard of the future.”



INTELLIGENT ENGINEERING

In the rimless DirectFlush WCs, the conventional flushing rim is replaced with an intelligent water flow that rinses the entire interior of the bowl, without over-splashing – this is ensured by the special splash guard on the upper edge of the bowl and the higher positioning of the water jets.

With a water consumption of only 3 or 4.5 litres, DirectFlush maintains a consistently high flushing efficiency. The rimless surface is completely glazed, allowing quick and easy cleaning.



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Villeroy & Boch and Mettlach: A company and a location that have been inseparably linked for more than 200 years. Now a visionary location development project is giving this relationship a new quality.



The redevelopment of the **Abteigarten restaurant** — the first sub-project of Mettlach 2.0 — was completed in summer 2015.

Around 50 percent. That is the share of the built-up area in Mettlach currently occupied by Villeroy & Boch — for now, at least. In just a few years, “Mettlach 2.0” will be a reality. By then, old factories will have been demolished, existing buildings will have been renovated, converted, dismantled or repurposed, and the abbey grounds and surrounding area will have grown together as a green public space. Mettlach 2.0 will provide Villeroy & Boch’s employees with a working environment that is fit for the future — as well as creating new leisure and shopping facilities and discovery space for residents, guests and tourists. This, along with a desire to make better use of the unique features of the Old Abbey site, was the impetus behind the project.

“The former ‘forbidden city’ is opening its doors”

“The former ‘forbidden city’ is opening its doors,” is how CEO Frank Göring sums up the Mettlach 2.0 project. The initial idea was followed by discussions with politicians, leading to design concepts, surveys, land use plans, approvals and subsidy applications. The community and Villeroy & Boch signed a cooperation agreement on the future development of the site and its integration into the local area.



The vision for the company's headquarters.

Open space planning: MESS/Laport; architecture: bochem.schmidt architekten and inhouse; illustration: KULLE | Art Direction

20 million is the other key figure when it comes to the project. This is the amount in euros that Villeroy & Boch will invest in Mettlach 2.0 over the next years. CFO and client representative Dr. Markus Warncke: "It is not an excessive amount when you look at the scale of the task at hand. After all, we are talking about a site of around 60,000 square metres. For us, this project is a vital one from a Group perspective. It represents an investment in the next generation."

The first Mettlach 2.0 sub-project was completed in summer 2015 with the redevelopment of the employee restaurant Abteigarten. The changing working environment, which is increasingly characterised by project structures and interdisciplinary, international teams, is reflected in a new workplace concept: 2017 will see the completion of a new office and conference centre with open structures and a wide range of meeting places intended to promote communication and cooperation between all

employees. And future development will not be limited to indoors: Outside working spaces in the park will add further variety to the working environment. Plans also include the transformation of Keravision, the Tableware exhibition, the museum, the Bathroom and Wellness information centre and an outlet store functioning as a new brand discovery centre, thereby adding a further highlight to the booming field of industrial and shopping tourism. Additional buildings will be developed in the following years for the construction of new working areas, as well as retail space for product ranges that fit the Villeroy & Boch brand. The grounds, car parks and thoroughfares will also be newly designed so that the Old Abbey, the park and Mettlach town centre can grow together – more attractively than ever before.

Mettlach 2.0 combines opportunities for the company and the community alike, as Frank Göring explains: "Villeroy & Boch is providing

young talents and professionals with a groundbreaking, modern place to work while Mettlach offers a pleasant working and living environment. This represents an investment in our competitive advantages." Strolling and shopping, relaxing and working, a high-quality place to live and work, and the unique experience of the Villeroy & Boch brand – all of this will give the location a new quality.



Frank Göring,
Chairman of the
Management Board



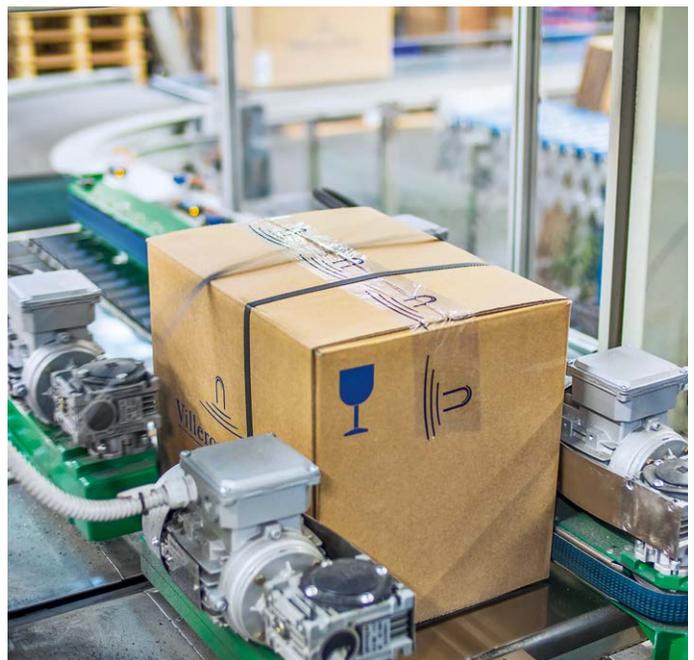
Dr Markus Warncke,
CFO and client
representative



An automated storage and retrieval system removes the containers with the ordered items.



Break-proof packaging is particularly important when shipping porcelain.



Automatic strapping takes place just before the package is dispatched. On peak days, more than 3,000 packages leave the central warehouse in Merzig.

FROM THE HIGH-BAY WAREHOUSE TO THE DINING ROOM

One last click, and the message appears on the screen: “Your order has been placed.” For customers, this is the last step in ordering from the Villeroy & Boch online shop. But for the company, it is only the beginning of the delivery process. It takes around 48 hours for an order to be delivered – but what exactly happens behind the scenes during this time? We accompany a product on its journey to the customer.

ORDER ACCEPTANCE

“The first steps after an order is placed are entirely digital,” explains Marius Kettenbaum, Supply Chain Process Manager for Villeroy & Boch’s Tableware Division. As the customer receives an automated order confirmation immediately after making their purchase, the order is fed into the goods management system, which tracks the goods flows in their entirety. The system generates a delivery order and automatically removes the ordered items from the quantities available in the online shop. To ensure that the right items are packaged in the depot, the warehouse management system automatically generates a picking request containing all of the relevant data on the items ordered (including the item number, order quantity and storage location).

ORDER PICKING

The picking request kicks off the physical part of the delivery process. The warehouse management system automatically sends the order to the automatic storage and retrieval system (ASRS) based on the information contained in the order. The ASRS removes the containers with the ordered items from the high-bay warehouse before a conveyor system transports

them to a picking station, where an employee puts together the customer’s entire order in a designated container. The goods are then taken into temporary storage until a packaging station is available.

PACKAGING

The conveyor belt automatically transports the goods to a packaging station as soon as one becomes available. “At this point, the delivery note is printed and a final check of the goods takes place before they are packaged,” explains Kettenbaum. One particularly important aspect: to ensure that porcelain is not damaged in transit, the packaging must be break-proof. The parcel is then automatically strapped and weighed before the shipping label is applied.

DISPATCH

Now the last stage of the product journey begins. Securely packaged and labelled with the customer’s address, the parcel is collected by the parcel service. As part of the goods issue posting, the customer automatically receives a shipping confirmation via e-mail. The parcel is then transported to its destination via various distribution centres. The deliverer rings the customer’s doorbell and the order is

complete, having successfully made its way from the high-bay warehouse to the customer’s dining room.



Marius Kettenbaum,
Supply Chain Process Manager

THE TABLEWARE PLANT IN TORGAU: A PORTRAIT

It is one of the many tales shaped by the separation of Germany following the Second World War: the story of Villeroy & Boch in Torgau.

Formed in 1925 as a Villeroy & Boch earthenware factory, the plant became a “state-owned enterprise of the German Democratic Republic” in 1948. Ownership of the plant finally returned to the founders in 1990, thereby closing the circle for Villeroy & Boch at the Torgau site. In summer 2015, Torgau celebrated the 25th anniversary of its return to the Villeroy & Boch fold. A good opportunity to take a closer look at the history and development of the plant. There were persuasive arguments behind Villeroy & Boch’s decision to establish an earthenware factory in Torgau, a small town on the Elbe River, back in 1925: the proximity to important raw materials and sales regions; the Elbe itself as a key waterway leading to Hamburg, thereby opening the door to global exports; and the fact that the building and site of a former steel foundry was available at a good price. The plant began producing earthenware dishes in 1927, followed by ceramic sanitary ware three years later. By 1933, the Torgau plant employed more than 1,200 people and had become an important and state-of-the-art earthenware factory in the heart of Europe. Like Villeroy & Boch’s other locations, the site also set an example in terms of its approach to social welfare: the plant had its own doctor and nurse, small single-family homes were constructed for master craftsmen and foremen, and garden plots and sports pitches were built in the neighbourhood.

But there were bad times too. After the end of the Second World War, dismantling began at the site, with 75 percent of the plant being shipped to Russia. In 1946, reconstruction began with a team of around 100 employees under the former factory management. Two new kilns were built and production was ultimately restarted. However, almost all of the ceramic sanitary ware ended up in Russia as reparations, while most of the tableware was seized. Expropriation without compensation followed in 1948,

and the Villeroy & Boch plant became a state-owned enterprise of the GDR, “VEB Steingutwerk Torgau”.

Torgau’s second life began in 1990 when Villeroy & Boch took over the factory once again. “We did everything in our power to bring Villeroy & Boch back to Torgau. We had no doubt in our minds that we wanted to invest in making the Torgau plant fit for the future,” recalls Wendelin von Boch, formerly responsible for the Tableware Division and now the Chairman of the Supervisory Board, regarding the events surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall. At that time, employees were retrained and taught new skills, biscuit porcelain – fired but not yet glazed – was produced for Luxembourg and Mettlach, and an initial renovation project put the site in the position to produce vitreous porcelain. Things quickly progressed from there: just two years later, the Torgau plant was already producing around four million units. In 1999, the site switched to pressure casting, becoming one of the world’s most state-of-the-art and specialised plants for tableware products. The centrepiece of its operations today is the

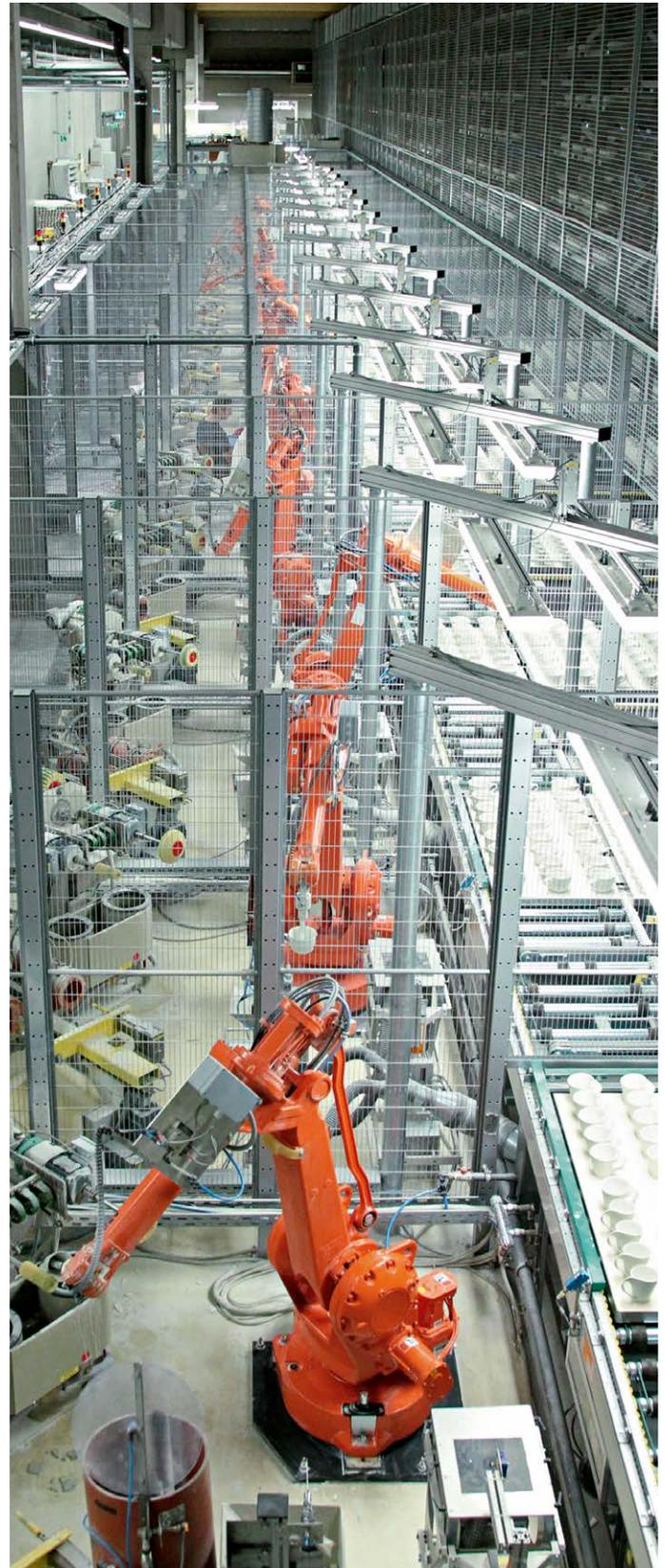
fully automated production of symmetrical and asymmetrical cups. The team of some 160 employees headed by plant manager **Randolf Maaß** broke through a magical barrier in 2013, producing more than 10 million cups, plates and related items for the first time. And development at Torgau is showing no signs of slowing down: in 2014, for example, a new glazing line was established to increase capacity through the use of even more powerful technologies. “The development of the Torgau site since the turn of the millennium is a true success story,” summarises **Nicolas Luc Villeroy**, Management Board member responsible for Tableware. As this success story continues, the plant with its remarkable history can look forward to a no less remarkable future.



Delighted by the location’s success story: **Nicolas Luc Villeroy**, Head of the Tableware Division, **Andrea Staude**, Mayor of Torgau, **Wendelin von Boch**, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, and **Randolf Maaß**, Plant Manager (from left to right) in June 2015.



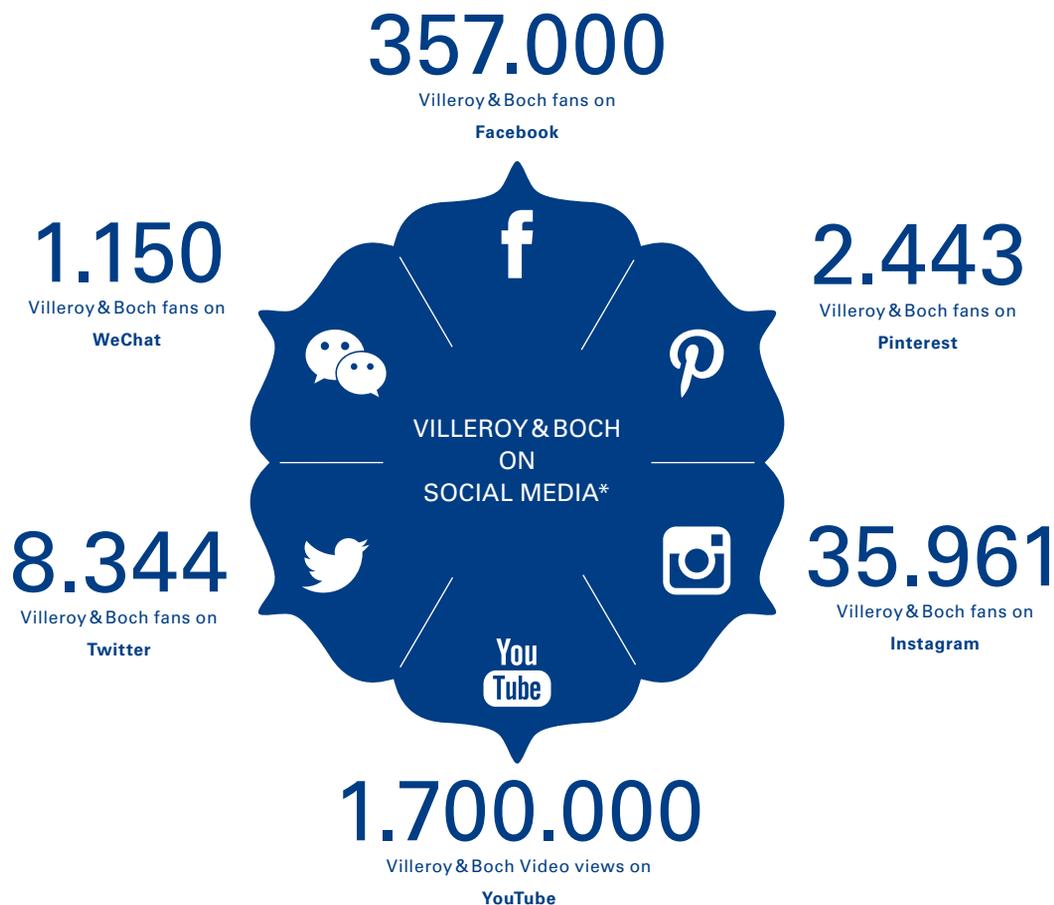
The state-of-the-art plant in Torgau. The centrepiece of operations at the factory in Saxony is the fully automated production of cups. However, the human eye remains indispensable when it comes to precision work like quality control.



SOCIAL MEDIA @VILLEROY&BOCH

Around three billion people worldwide are online – and every day, one in two of them uses Facebook, one in three uses YouTube and one in eight uses Instagram.

Social media channels are booming. And they provide an excellent platform for companies, brands and products to present themselves. For Villeroy & Boch, the social web is one of the main ways of reaching a target group that includes young international users and encouraging interaction.



Growth rate 2015 compared with 2014: Facebook 86 %, Pinterest 73 %, Instagram 578 %, YouTube 41 %, Twitter 13 %, WeChat 38 %.

* This graph shows a selection of social media channels important for Villeroy & Boch as at January 2016.



The videos for the “**Bathroom Poetry**” campaign, featuring interviews with supermodel Tatjana Patitz, the designers of Kaviar Gauche and designer Kilian Kerner, can be viewed using this QR code.

Rudi Bedy is the Head of Social Media Marketing at Villeroy & Boch. Together with his team, he designs the company’s social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others.



This QR code links to the “**In 60 seconds**” videos, in which product managers explain the uses, benefits and new features of selected Bathroom and Wellness products

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest and WeChat: Amongst others Villeroy & Boch is present on those of the world’s most popular social media channels so that it can actively engage with its large international fan community. Depending on which campaigns are in progress, a total of around 100 pieces of Villeroy & Boch content are published every week, reaching a potential audience of some 990,000 persons and receiving around 18,000 likes, shares or comments on average. A big community that enjoys engaging with Villeroy & Boch and that wants to be kept up-to-date about new developments, photos of the company’s top collections and informative videos.

Villeroy & Boch’s social media presence is intended to inspire and enthuse new fans – and, above all, to encourage online communication with the company. “Our aim is to prompt people to enter into a dialogue with us. On the World Wide Web, content is spread and multiplied extremely quickly,” explains Rudi Bedy, Head of Social Media Marketing at Villeroy & Boch. What drives the platforms and makes them something special is the viral spread of content and direct and open dialogue between the company and its fans – all in real time. “Our target response time is no more than 24 hours. Posts and questions are answered within this timeframe, and usually sooner – even at the weekend,” adds Bedy.

Every social platform uses different forms of presentation and communication: “It always depends on the content we are presenting, what we are trying to achieve and the target groups we want to reach. And it is important for us to select the right channels for the respective marketing

and communication strategies,” Bedy notes. For the “Bathroom Poetry” online campaign, which was launched by the Bathroom and Wellness Division in 2015, the ideal social media platform was clear from the start: YouTube. Villeroy & Boch used its own channel on the world’s largest video portal to present videos on different collections and styles, including interviews with supermodel Tatjana Patitz, the designers of Kaviar Gauche and designer Kilian Kerner. The campaign achieved its goal of reaching and inspiring as many YouTube users as possible: in total, the Bathroom Poetry videos had around 871,000 views.



Jessika Rauch is responsible for blogger relations in her role as Global PR Manager in the Tableware Division.

Alongside consumers, plumbers, architects and designers are an important target group for Villeroy & Boch. The Bathroom and Wellness Division therefore also used the company’s YouTube channel to present the “In 60 seconds” videos, for example, in which product managers explain the uses, benefits and new features of selected products in German and English in just 60 seconds.

Social platforms are also home to bloggers, many of whom can boast follower numbers in the six digits. “Bloggers are increasingly becoming the opinion leaders worldwide. Their fans are stylish and trend-conscious – and an important target group for the Villeroy & Boch brand. We work in cooperation with popular blogs dedicated to food, interiors, design and gift ideas to bring our brand and our new products to a younger, trend-aware and style-conscious audience. Bloggers are brand ambassadors with the ability to shape the views of those who literally ‘follow’ them,” explains Jessika Rauch, who is responsible for blogger relations in her role as Global PR-Manager in the Tableware Division.



The cooperation between companies and successful international bloggers is flourishing, taking in blog carnivals where numerous bloggers write about the same topic, blog partnerships with product presentations in picture and written form, meetings with successful interior design bloggers, and blogger events at which specific products are presented.

One particular success in 2015 was the global blogger campaign “Festive Table Styles Around the World”, which took place during the festive season from October to December. The five participating bloggers from Germany, the UK, the USA, Australia and Dubai were given the task of designing a table for a festive dinner with friends and family using Villeroy & Boch tableware. During the campaign, they challenged their readers and their around 765,000 (!) Instagram followers to arrange a festive dinner of their own and post pictures using the hashtag #inspiredbyVB, which was also the aim of the engagement campaign: to motivate as many people as possible to participate and interact by commenting and liking. The hashtag also directly addressed the around 36,000 people who follow Villeroy & Boch on Instagram. More than 11,000 people accepted the challenge and visited the website that was specially designed for the campaign. The online campaign was accompanied by festive decorations, tables and shop windows at House of Villeroy & Boch stores.

“Instagram is a rapidly growing platform with more than 400 million users worldwide. While Facebook combines text and images and Twitter uses short text messages, Instagram is all about the visual impact of the image. Telling stories creatively in picture form and stirring up emotions is one of the defining features of the platform, and one of the reasons why we used Instagram for our ‘Festive Table Styles’ campaign”, explains Bedy.



VILLEROY & BOCH IN AN INTERVIEW WITH AMANDA SAIONTZ GLUCK FROM FASHIONABLE HOSTESS

The American Amanda Saiontz Gluck is an internationally successful blogger. The blog FashionableHostess.com of the Decor Expert, Party Stylist, and Lifestyle Blogger is read by 26,000 fans per month, 64,000 follow her on Instagram. She knows not only the world of bloggers; she also has a special relationship to the brand of Villeroy & Boch through her participation in the Festive Table Styles Around the World campaign.

When working together with brands, what is most important to you for a good cooperation?

I am always sure to partner with brands I love, whether it's aesthetic, style, or price, I always take these all into account! What I particularly like about Villeroy & Boch is the high quality and unique design of the collections – La Classica Contura was ideal for my festive dinner at the table styles campaign: a stylish, elegant décor with fine lines.

What did you like about the Festive Table Styles campaign from Villeroy & Boch?

I love that it allows a glimpse into people's homes around the world. I am always taking in new ideas and inspirations, so this has been a fun way to see endless gorgeous tables.

Who reads your blog?

Women who love to entertain in their home for family and friends. They are predominately newlyweds and new mothers.

Here you find the presences of Amanda:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/fashionablehostess/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/fashionablehost/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/FashionableHostesscom/217659204934517>

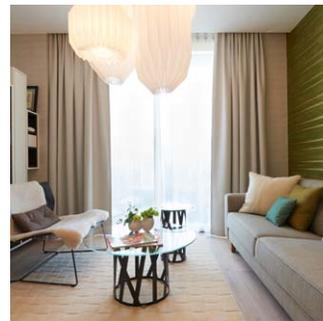
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FashionableHost>





PROJECT BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

From hotels and restaurants to public institutions and residential construction, project business is a key factor in Villeroy & Boch's success. Architects and planners, companies and organisations around the world are keen to harness the expertise and charisma of a strong brand for their projects. Insights presents selected highlights from 2015.



HOTEL SUITE COMFORT

“Natural Bliss” is a newly designed comfort suite at the renovated Radisson Blu hotel in Cologne that is designed to provide maximum relaxation – and Villeroy & Boch has its part to play.

The interior design of the suite features bright colours, textile structures and natural materials like wood, wicker and leather. The bathroom keeps up the atmosphere of cosiness and high-end comfort. The My Nature washbasin sits on a Legato cabinet whose counter top appears to float in mid-air – an effect accentuated by the integrated LED lighting. The generous My Nature bathtub is accompanied by Cult fittings, which are also used in the shower, while the Subway 2.0 ViClean DirectFlush WC ensures optimum hygiene. The walls use Moonlight stoneware tiles, while the mosaic floor has a natural stone design from the Astoria porcelain stoneware series.

Villeroy & Boch was also called upon to demonstrate its outdoor expertise, with chairs from the Torino series providing comfortable and stylish seating on the suite's private roof terrace.



INDIAN CULTURE MEETS CERAMIC EXPERTISE FROM METTLACH

Importing and interpreting the traditional cuisine and authentic atmosphere of India is the goal of the trendy new restaurant eatDOORI in the heart of Frankfurt. The interior is a bright design patchwork of materials, surfaces and colours. The restaurant features products from both Villeroy & Boch divisions.

The highlight in the middle of the guest area is a light installation made of copper tubes leading to an Octagon pedestal washbasin. In India, washing your hands before and after eating is a sign of good manners as well as a ritual in itself, so the washbasin for diners is extremely important. Food is also served on Villeroy & Boch products, with items from the Artesano Professionale and Artesano Barista collections and the Corpo professional series as well as Oscar cutlery ensuring stylish enjoyment.

The restrooms blend allusions to Indian train compartments with the luxury of the legendary Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. They feature striking washbasins from the Architectura series, Subway 2.0 WCs with DirectFlush and extra flat SlimSeats, and Villeroy & Boch Subway suction urinals.



Groningen, The Netherlands

HYGIENE AND EFFICIENCY ON A GRAND SCALE



The University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG) is a “city within a city”. The facility has 1,300 inpatient beds, is frequented by 18,000 outpatients and visitors every day, and is the workplace of 12,000 employees and around 3,500 students.

These dimensions make the modernisation of 2,000 WCs during operation into a challenging, multi-stage task that has been in progress since 2014. The use of CeramicPlus and DirectFlush technology means the new WCs, urinals and washbasins from the Memento and Omnia Architectura series meet the highest standards in terms of hygiene; with 2,000 toilets and around 150 flushes every hour, the controlled, low water consumption of 3 or 4.5 litres is a further argument in favour of efficient redevelopment.

Eastern & Oriental Express, Southeast Asia

TRAVELLING IN LUXURY, EATING IN STYLE

Since 2014, Villeroy & Boch's Tableware Division has been the preferred supplier of the Belmond Group, meaning it supplies new products and line extensions for the Group's luxury trains, cruise liners and hotels around the world. Following on from the legendary Venice Simplon-Orient-Express (2012), this partnership saw another highlight in 2015 in the form of the luxury Eastern & Oriental Express, which serves Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

The crockery that has been exclusively designed for the train is based on premium bone porcelain from the Stella Hotel series, while the décor in gold and pine green, the colours of the Eastern & Oriental Express, ensure a unified interior design aesthetic. It features the unmistakable initials and discreetly includes the tiger that adorns the train's logo, representing power, strength and dynamism. The tableware is used in both restaurant cars as well as for serving breakfast to guests directly in their cabins.





DESIGNED AND MADE IN LUXEMBOURG

Traditional handcraft and modern design – the results of the “Design Challenge” show how well these two aspects can go together. The competition in Luxembourg was organised by Villeroy & Boch in cooperation with Luxinnovation, the National Agency for Innovation and Research. The result were three unusual ceramic objects that Villeroy & Boch has produced at the workshop of its porcelain manufacturing plant in Rollingergrund as a limited collector’s edition.

What the items have in common is that they are all evocative of Luxembourg. Christophe de la Fontaine designed the “Old Luxembourg in Motion” coffeepot, an impressive reinterpretation of Villeroy & Boch’s classic décor; Anne Kieffer created a storage box that depicts four major geographical symbols of Luxembourg; and Trixie Weis designed a sculptured jewellery box with small drawers that draws its inspiration from the Mullerthal region.

“We are impressed by the creativity of the objects that were originated for the Design Challenge. We are delighted to have been able to organise this event in Luxembourg, a place that has a long association with our company,” commented Laurent Turmes, Managing Director of Villeroy & Boch Luxembourg. The Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Luxembourg were also impressed by the creativity on show when they met the artists at Septfontaines Castle in June 2015 to get a personal impression of the results of the Design Challenge.



A film providing more information on the project and the origins of the unusual objects can be accessed via **QR code**.



The ceramic objects originated for the Design Challenge met with an enthusiastic response from the **Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Luxembourg** (above) as well as from **Laurent Turmes**, Managing Director of Villeroy & Boch Luxembourg (left).

DESIGN AWARDS 2015

The design competence of Villeroy & Boch received awards in 2015 as well. Three pricewinning products are the washbasin Octagon, the whirlpool Just Silence and the Tableware series BBQ Passion.

JUST SILENCE

Simplicity is one of the reasons why the Just Silence outdoor whirlpool excels. It has been an award-winner since February 2015. A jury of 50 design experts selected the whirlpool as a winner of the iF Design Award early in the year. In addition to its minimalist colours and different lying positions, the 2.13m by 2.24m pool impressed thanks to its innovative seating concept, which places up to five people across from one another in a staggered formation without sacrificing legroom.





OCTAGON

The Octagon premium pedestal washbasin received the GOOD DESIGN™ Award from the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Design and Architecture and the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies. The inside of the unusual basin resembles a polished octagonal crystal. Its highly precise edges, angles and facets were made possible by TitanCeram, the new material developed by Villeroy & Boch. But that is not the only extraordinary feature: the placement of the basin on a pedestal finished in leather, real wood veneer, or stone veneer make the free-standing washbasin into a true design highlight in the bathroom.



BBQ PASSION

Every year, a jury of 38 experts selects the innovative product designs that will take home the Red Dot Design Award. One of the winners in 2015 was BBQ Passion. With special BBQ skewer platters and plates with separate compartments for meat, salads and sauces, BBQ Passion combines multi-functionality with a modern design.

2015 IN NUMBERS

13,400,000

people visited Villeroy & Boch Tableware stores around the world in 2015. They were inspired by the in-store product presentations, received expert advice and shopped for new tableware items. December is traditionally the month with the strongest footfall.

385,000

DirectFlush WCs were sold in 2015, meaning that sales of the rimless WC doubled compared with the previous year.

82,000

visitors were welcomed at Villeroy & Boch's stand at the ISH trade fair last year. A total of around 200,000 people visited the world's leading trade fair for innovative bathroom design, energy-efficient heating and air conditioning technology and renewable energies in Frankfurt.

2,500

plates were used to decorate the ceramic Christmas tree in Mettlach town centre, which has become an established institution at the home of Villeroy & Boch for three years now. The already remarkable nine-metre Christmas tree was made all the more special by the fact that around one-third of the plates were painted by children at the Villeroy & Boch Discovery Centre.

284

customer groups from all around the world were welcomed at the company's headquarters in Mettlach in 2015. They came from more than 50 different countries and took the opportunity to get an impression of the brand, participate in product training, or visit the production facilities. September was the busiest month, with no fewer than 48 groups of visitors.





PUBLICATION DETAILS

The “Insights” magazine is part of the Villeroy & Boch Annual Report 2015. You can find a digital version of the report here: <http://www.villeroyboch-group.com/de/investor-relations/online-geschaeftsbericht-2015.html>

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Villeroy & Boch

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