

Hilton Palacio: Conserving Vital Water Resources for San Antonio

Hilton: conserving millions of gallons of water at the touch of a button

Case Study Highlights

Company: Hilton Palacio del Rio
San Antonio, Texas

Problems:

- Monthly water costs were too high
- Staff time required to fix toilet issues
- Guest complaints for bathroom problems were too high

Solution: 470 Caroma
Sydney 305 Elongated
High Efficiency Toilets

Benefits:

- 35% average water savings per month (6 million gallons of water saved in 8 months)
- Greater than 80% reduction in maintenance calls
- Guest complaints dropped more than 90%



The Hilton Palacio del Rio hotel is located on the famous River Walk in beautiful downtown San Antonio, Texas and is surrounded by cultural and historic attractions. With more than 480 guest rooms, the hotel provides an enjoyable experience, whether traveling for business or pleasure.

As with most businesses in the hospitality industry, water provides a vital resource for maintaining a company's existence. Many cities and states have water restrictions, and finding ways to conserve water has become critical. The City of San Antonio and the surrounding areas are no different. They have an ongoing housing boom and year-round water restrictions. Combining these with the continuing low rainfall creates a burden on the water resources.

The Hilton Palacio realizes the need to conserve water for both environmental benefits and cost savings. The San Antonio Water System (SAWS) approached Hilton with an opportunity to help conserve water. SAWS is a public utility owned by the City of San Antonio serving more than 1 million customers. Their goal is to help customers and communities flourish with plentiful, quality, affordable water service while conserving water as much as possible. Each year, SAWS chooses an industry to focus on to reduce water usage. The hospitality industry in San Antonio is the second largest water user, so during 2006, SAWS chose the Hilton Palacio as the first hotel trial because many of the toilets currently installed were not water-conserving.

The choice is Caroma

Brandon Leister, Conservation Planner for SAWS, approached the Hilton Palacio with a High Efficiency Toilet (HET) retrofit package. The goal was to replace the five gallon single flush toilets with high efficiency toilets. SAWS has chosen the Sydney range from Caroma as their industry standard option for water-conserving toilets.

The Sydney two piece toilets are two button dual flush. This allows for considerably less water consumption per flush than a single flush 1.6 gallon toilet. The two buttons give the user the choice of 1.6 gallons for solid waste or 0.8 gallons for liquid and paper waste. The Sydney range also has large trapways, virtually eliminating blockages. Additionally, all Sydney toilets are WaterSense-approved. As of May 2008, 36 Caroma toilets (more than any other manufacturer) have been approved for the EPA's WaterSense labeling through rigorous third-party tests for performance and efficiency.

Leister explains, "After reviewing several options for high efficiency dual flush toilets, we have chosen the Caroma Sydney range. We've been installing them for more than one year, and the Hilton Palacio was one of our first installs." SAWS presented the Hilton with compelling, calculated savings. Included in the savings were a reduction in water consumption and staff time to fix toilet problems (blocking, overflow, etc.), ultimately keeping more rooms available for occupation.

Wayne Russell, Assistant Director of Property Operations at Hilton Palacio, reviewed the SAWS proposal for the High Efficiency Toilets and knew it was the way to go. "Considerably reduced monthly water costs and less staff hours needed to fix problems was what we wanted, and to be able to do this while helping with the drought situation for our area was a great bonus."

Because the Hilton was a commercial installation, SAWS chose the Caroma Sydney 305 Elongated HET. The Sydney 305, along with all Caroma toilets, are high efficiency toilets. With its two button dual flush feature, the Sydney 305 uses an average of just 0.96 gallons per flush (other Caroma toilets and urinals use even less).

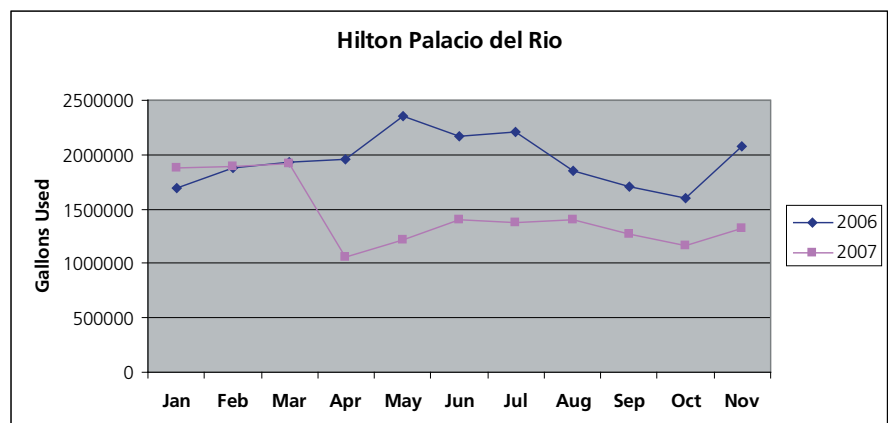
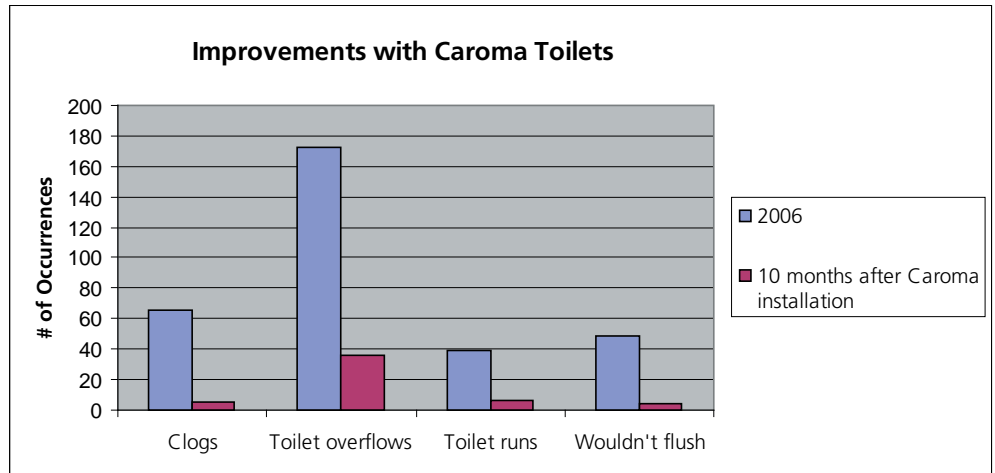


Chart 1: Overall water usage in 2006 and 2007

"The Sydney toilets have large trapways and are virtually unblockable," states Leister. "I also like that it does not have a flapper. Toilets that contain flappers that wear out or crack are often difficult to repair and more importantly, can leak, causing unnecessary water usage. The Sydney doesn't have this problem."



Results achieved

The Sydney dual flush toilets were installed in March 2007. "They were so easy to install. During the retrofit project, the Hilton did not lose any room nights because of installation. It was fast, easy, and we continued with our great customer service," adds Russell.

Water savings have been significant. During the first eight months after the toilets were installed, the Hilton Palacio had saved nearly six million gallons of water compared to the same months one year earlier. Chart 1 shows the overall water usage between 2006 and 2007. Approximately 35% less water is being used each month! During peak occupancy periods, the water savings can be more than 45%.

In addition to the water savings, guest complaints about toilet problems have dropped more than 90%, explains Russell. "During 2006, we had 66 clogs and 173 overflows. During the ten months we've been using the Caroma toilets, we've only had 5 clogs and 36 overflows (chart 2). The clogs, however, have been caused by foreign objects being dropped into the toilet - a writing pen, a cell phone, a comb, among other things. The reduction in maintenance calls for toilets has freed up my time and the staff to work on other projects in the hotel."

Chart 2: Significantly less maintenance after installation

Note: clogs that have occurred were from foreign objects dropped into the toilet

Because of results like these, SAWS is continuing to supply Caroma toilets for commercial and residential customers to conserve water throughout San Antonio. According to Leister, "Everyone is lovin' it. Save water, save money, save the environment. It's a great combination, and Caroma is leading the way." The Hilton Palacio is also helping lead the way in conserving water by installing Caroma toilets. According to Russell, "they are easy to install, easy to maintain. The time and effort to replace parts compared to a conventional toilet is like comparing a Pinto to a Corvette. There's no comparison – Caroma is the toilet of choice for water savings."

"The Caroma toilets are easy to install, easy to maintain...There's no comparison - Caroma is the toilet of choice for water savings."

*Wayne Russell
Assistant Director, Property Operations
Hilton Palacio*

Sydney 305 Elongated



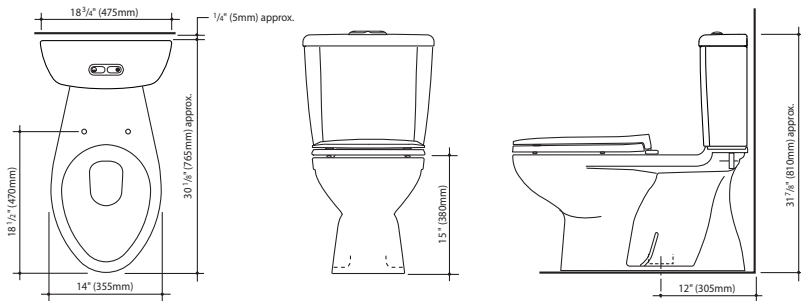
Contemporary style, advanced performance

- High efficiency toilet (HET) - 1.6/0.8 gallons (6/3 liters) per flush
- Two piece, two button dual flush toilet
- Elongated bowl
- Large fully concealed trapway
- Virtually unblockable
- 12" rough-in
- WaterSense-approved

Dimensions

30 1/8" L x 18 3/4" W x 31 7/8" H (bowl height = 15")

Sydney 305 also available in Round Front Plus



Additional information available

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