

difference

THE KÄRCHER MAGAZINE

02 | 2018

ON THE GO

Always on the move

EXTREME TRAVELLING

Visiting one of the largest train stations in the world

WHO DOES ALL THE CLEANING?

Behind the scenes of various modes of transport

A SIGN OF RESPECT

What cleanliness means to travellers and hosts



➤ 02 | 2018

Dear readers,

I spend a significant number of my working hours travelling from one business appointment to another. Many of you probably travel a lot for work too. Whether by train or by plane – travelling takes you to places with many people and lots of hustle and bustle. All this can only work when a high degree of cleanliness is maintained across all areas.

In this issue of our customer magazine, **difference**, we take a peek behind the scenes of one of the largest train stations in the world, Shanghai Hongqiao in eastern China, and discover how this is achieved despite the 400,000 daily passengers. We also examine everyday modes of transport and show how a clean travel atmosphere is maintained. And we asked travellers what cleanliness means to them. We are also pleased to present to you this year's new additions to our range: besides machines from the cordless technology and robotics ranges, these also include innovations such as the new Klean!Star iQ gantry car wash. The ways in which our products make people's everyday routines easier is demonstrated in the inspiring short film "Spiros – Rent a Boat", which won the first ever Kärcher "difference Award".

I wish you an exciting and inspiring read.

Hartmut Jenner
Chief Executive Officer and
Chairman of the Board of Management
Alfred Kärcher SE & Co. KG



04

ON THE MOVE

Cleanliness on the go:
facts and figures

06

SHANGHAI HONGQIAO

The rhythm of a million people

12

PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

The feel-good factor
when travelling

18

NEW ADDITIONS

Current highlights of the Kärcher range

23

WELL-EQUIPPED

The right equipment for impressive
cleaning endeavours

24

A SIGN OF RESPECT

Travellers and hosts tell their stories

28

IN FOCUS

The different perceptions
of cleanliness

32

SPIROS, AN EVERYDAY HERO

Premiere of the difference
Award-winning short film

34

SOMEWHERE TO COME HOME TO

SOS Children's Villages
provide a new home

35

IMPRINT

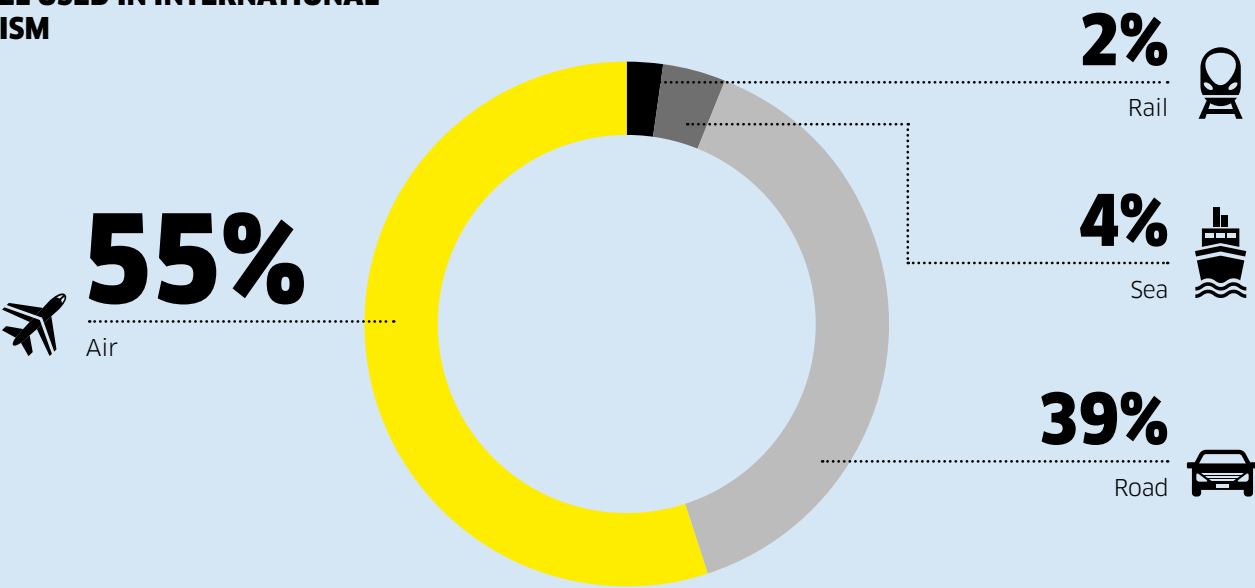
02
03

02 | 2018
difference

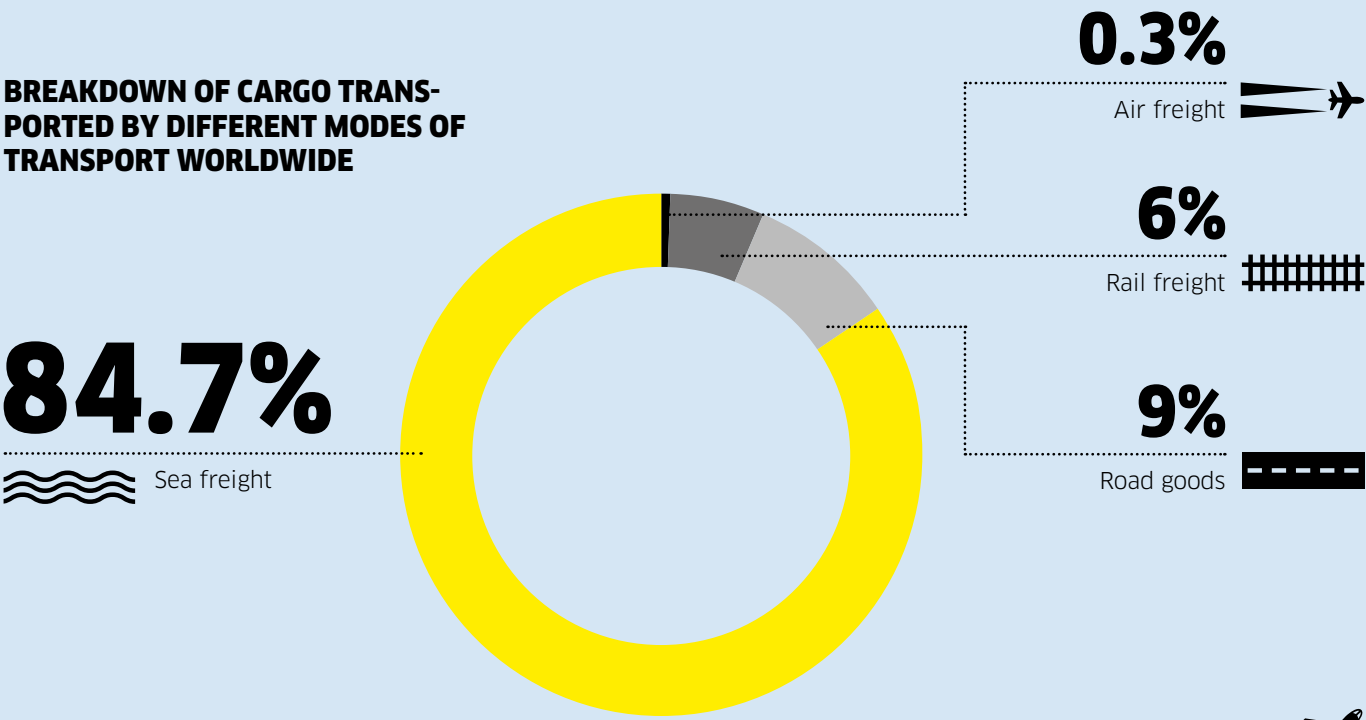
ON THE MOVE

We take the car to work and the plane to go on holiday. What we need to live our lives reaches us by sea or rail. People and goods are on the move more today than ever before.

BREAKDOWN OF THE MEANS OF TRAVEL USED IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM



BREAKDOWN OF CARGO TRANSPORTED BY DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORT WORLDWIDE



8 WEEKS

It takes eight weeks to travel from Hamburg to Buenos Aires in a container ship. Cargo ship cruises are enjoying a surge in popularity. Comfort is in short supply: due to a lack of service personnel, guests are often left to clean their cabins themselves.

20 MINUTES

On average, housekeeping personnel have about 20 minutes to clean a hotel room, regardless of what state they find it in.

76 PER CENT

A survey conducted in 2017 found that the cleanliness of the hotel room was by far the most frequently cited reason for a positive hotel experience.

15 CARS

A modern gantry car wash cleans up to 15 cars an hour. This means that car-cleaning capacity has almost doubled since the start of this century, even though wider cars and new vehicle contours complicate the task.

400 METRES 20 TIMES

Roughly every 25 years, railway ballast needs to be cleaned and moved into a position that guarantees that rainwater can run off, while ensuring stability. A gigantic 400-metre-long special train is deployed to do this.

The air in a plane is renewed roughly 20 times an hour, with roughly 40 per cent of the cabin air being mixed with fresh air which has been filtered to remove harmful substances and, in particular, bacteria, viruses and fungal spores.

Extreme travelling

VISITING ONE OF THE LARGEST TRAIN STATIONS IN THE WORLD

06
07

difference 02 | 2018

With around 219 million passengers every year, the Shanghai Hongqiao train station in eastern China is one of the largest train stations in the world. It resembles a labyrinth, the secrets of which only a few people know – Zhu Hongyan is one of them.



» If it's clean, the passengers feel good. «

Zhu Hongyan



Her job is actually to clean, but Zhu helps travellers where she can.

There are ten minutes left before the express train to Beijing leaves the station when a young woman rushes up to Zhu Hongyan. The train is scheduled to leave from platform eight and the enormous hall has disoriented the woman. Zhu explains where she needs to go and accompanies her a few metres in the right direction. With her suitcase in hand, the woman races off towards the ticket barrier and only just makes it before the doors close.

Zhu Hongyan is actually the deputy head of the Shanghai Hongqiao train station cleaning team. But her job often requires her to improvise. She shows passengers where to go. She helps them when they have lost their mobile phones or even when they need medical attention. Her job title may say she's a manager, but she's invisible to most. Yet at the same time, at a train station that is considered to be one of the biggest in the world, she is indispensable.

Up to 45 hours on the train

Every day, the Shanghai Hongqiao train station welcomes around 400,000 travellers. They come from all over China and speak 300 different languages, as well as local dialects. From here, passengers

400,000
PEOPLE
BEGIN OR END THEIR JOURNEYS
AT SHANGHAI HONGQIAO EVERY DAY.

travel all over the country. A train journey to Kunming, which is roughly 2,500 kilometres away, takes up to 36 hours. A trip to Ürümqi, 4,000 kilometres away, takes 45 hours.

For this reason, many travellers bring enough food for several days with them, packed in plastic bags. Stands offer local delicacies: tofu marinated in tea, roasted chilli peanuts and dried plums. Plus sweetened green tea and cola. Sometimes train tickets are sold out days in advance. Passengers arrive early so they don't miss their train and then like to sleep for a few hours before heading off, often with their heads resting on suitcases amidst the bustle.

Cleanliness is a number one priority
"It's always full here," says Zhu. The 40-year-old wears a white shirt and blue trousers. Her hair is precisely pinned up. She has been working at the train station in the west of the megacity for five years. To start with, she saw it as just another job. Today, she sees it as a special privilege. Although many travellers barely notice her or her colleagues, Zhu sees this as a sign that

she's doing her job well. "If it's clean, the passengers feel good," she says. This is another reason why cleanliness is a number one priority.

The train station is a complex system, the rhythm of which Zhu understands. She moves through the chaos with purpose. In her team, which is responsible for the second and third floors of the three-storey building, there are 30 colleagues per shift. In the past, Zhu might have walked up to 50,000 steps a day. This year, her employer Huatie Lüfu started using cleaning machines from Kärcher. This has made work significantly easier for Zhu and her team. Thus, the step count has gone down to only 10,000 a day. She spends the rest of the time on the B 250 R, a ride-on scrubber drier, and does her rounds through the endless train station.



FIVE FACTS ABOUT SHANGHAI

- With more than 23 million inhabitants, Shanghai is the third-largest city in the world.
- Numerous universities, museums and research institutes make the metropolis an important cultural and educational centre.
- As a direct-controlled municipality, Shanghai has the status of a province directly subordinate to the Chinese central government.
- Its harbour is the largest container handling port in the world.
- The city's excellent transport links have significantly contributed to its great economic success.



.....
In a train station of this scale, it is crucial for work there to be well-organised.



» For the Spring Festival, up to 700 million people travel to their home towns – and most of them take the train.«

THE TRAIN STATION'S FLEET

A total of 27 ride-on scrubber driers from Kärcher are in action at the Shanghai Hongqiao train station. Among them, the BD 50/70 R Bp Pack Classic, which is especially suited to the smaller, awkward spaces of the train station thanks to its small turning radius, and the B 250 R Bp, which is designed to clean large spaces. The fleet of ride-on machines is supplemented by a few walk-behind scrubber driers, a universal cleaning machine and an escalator cleaner.

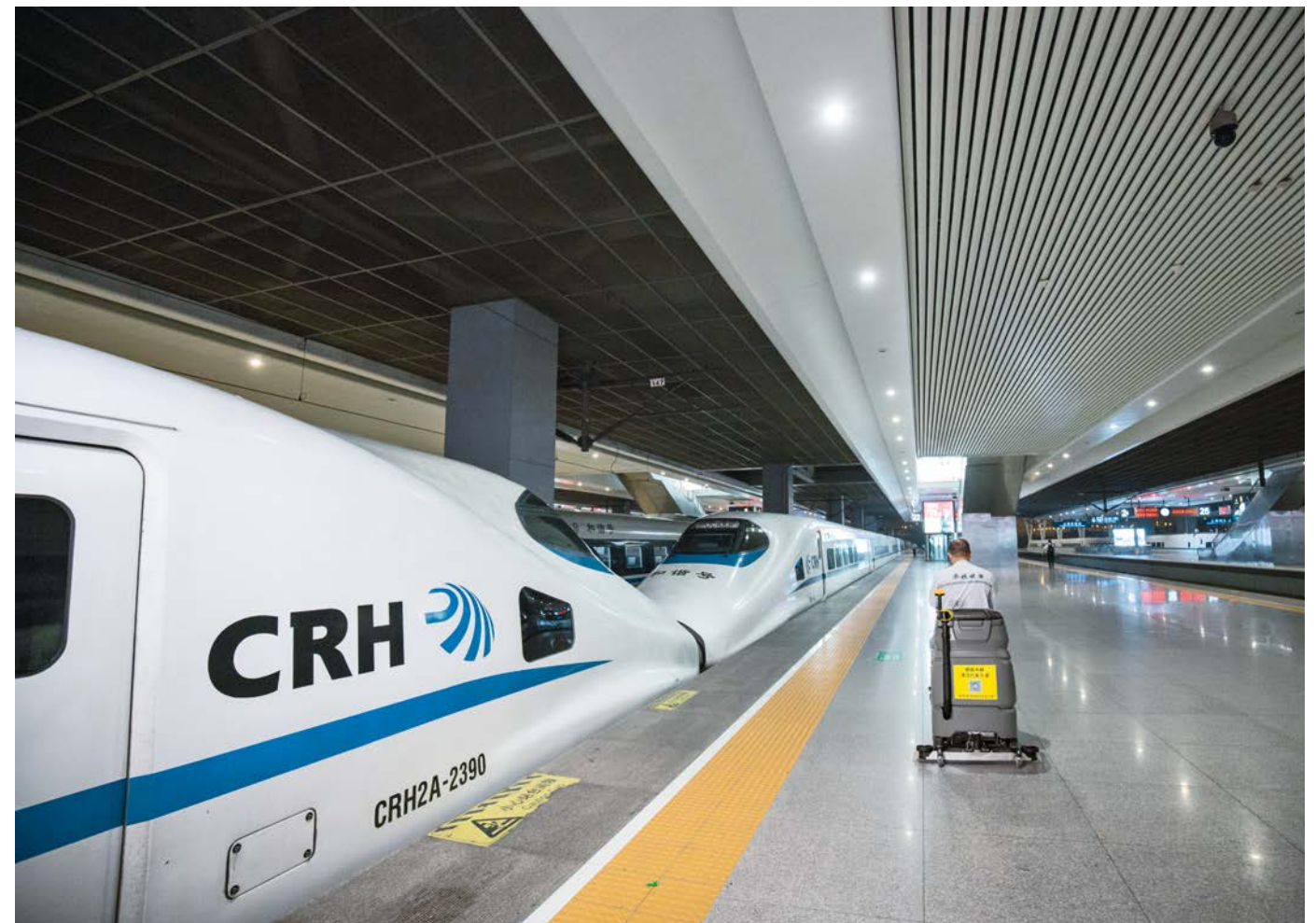
Machines ensure safety

Almost all travellers carry flasks for tea, which they can fill up with hot water in the toilets and on trains. Many passengers with long journeys ahead of them also have a quick bite to eat before they get going. If there are spillages, Zhu and her team used to have to drag out a bucket and mop. “But the surfaces dry too slowly,” she says. Passengers had to be kept away from the area to minimise the risk of accidents. Now they can drive over dirty areas with their machines, leaving them dry and safe to walk on straight away.

The team communicate via walkie-talkies to coordinate where they are needed. As of this year, more than 50 Kärcher machines are in use here. They are stored at various assembly points around the building. The small machines are manufactured in China; the large ones are imported from

Germany. Zhu has never been there, but she is familiar with the country now that she uses its many high-quality products. Germany isn’t known as the “land of virtue” in Chinese for nothing.

Another secret that only Zhu knows about is her office. The way there evokes a sense of the Harry Potter novels, in which only wizards know about the hidden platform 9¾. To get to Zhu’s office, visitors need to go through a toy shop where Chinese childhood heroes are piled high on the shelves. Behind the till, there is an almost invisible door with a small silver keyhole. The right key opens the door to a room that, judging from the outside, you would never think existed. Inside there is a sofa, a desk, a fridge and a microwave. It is a little oasis of calm where staff can have their lunch, discuss work plans and spend their break.



The largest migration of people in the world

The most stressful time of year comprises the days around the Spring Festival. The Chinese New Year is celebrated

53
KÄRCHER MACHINES
ARE IN USE AT THE ENORMOUS
TRAIN STATION.

brated in late January or February every year. For the celebration, up to 700 million people travel to their home towns – and most of them take the train. The Festival involves the largest mass human migration in the world.

Travellers are laden with presents. Those who can afford it bring their parents a mobile phone from the city. Farmers bring their families their juiciest fruit. Whole pigs are packaged up and swung onto shoulders.

For Zhu, this time can be tough. The 40-year-old has lived in Shanghai for more than ten years. Together with her husband, she works for the state-owned enterprise. Her home town is in Anhui, a province a few hundred kilometres away. It is difficult for people who were not born in Shanghai to register their children at schools in the city.

For this reason, her daughter lives with her grandparents. “She often used to ask me why all the other parents came to the Spring Festival but not me,” she tells us. Zhu’s voice trembles slightly at the memory. “But I was able to help other children see their parents,” she

says today. That this also makes her proud is clear from the way her posture straightens. She nods decisively. This too is simply part of her job. She can also take time off once the Spring Festival is over and things have calmed down again. Then Zhu boards the train home with her husband – from the Shanghai Hongqiao train station, of course. ■



One day with Zhu; the video:
www.kaercher.com/difference



Planes, trains and automobiles

FEELING GOOD WHILE ON THE MOVE – BUT WHO CLEANS UP AFTER?

When you plan a big holiday, many personal factors play a part in the decisions regarding the right destination and the preferred means of transport. However, we rarely think about the many people in the background who make sure that the process is seamless. Cleanliness is a crucial aspect because it creates the all-important feel-good factor. **difference** has run through a model journey that uses various means of transport, from bicycles to cruise ships, and taken a look behind the scenes at the cleaning work being done at each stage.

Off we go:

CYCLING TO THE TRAIN STATION

14
15

difference 02 | 2018

Let's assume our journey starts off nice and relaxed. The luggage has already been sent to the harbour from which the cruise ship is due to leave.

➤ To get to the train station, we decide to hire a bicycle. This trend is currently booming all over the world. There are many providers currently on the market. One of them is nextbike, whose bicycles are available in more than 150 cities around the globe. The company has high standards with regard to maintaining and cleaning the bicycles.

How does it work?

In large cities, there are permanent service teams which are on the go in three shifts around the clock to check, maintain and redistribute the bicycles. A service app shows each employee which stations are to be visited first. They have cleaning cloths and spray as well as chain guards and tools to whip the bikes into shape. In addition, nextbike works with station-based systems which involve the bicycles being fixed to a floor panel with a bike stand in order to carry out more thorough cleaning and maintenance work. This is where high-pressure cleaners are deployed to free the stations from weeds, moss and oil. General reconditioning of all bicycles takes place once a year at the end of the high season. In regions with a mild climate, the bikes largely stay outside in winter and are thus available. In harsh weather conditions, they are stored away.

THE TRAIN STARTS MOVING: JAPANESE CLEANING

The usual bustle greets us as we arrive at the train station. Just before the express train rolls in, increasing numbers of waiting passengers arrive at the platform, but so too does a team of cleaners. Their task: to clean the train double quick while the passengers are leaving and boarding so that it is in reasonable shape again before continuing its journey.

How does it work?

When it comes to cleaning work in scheduled train traffic, what matters most is perfect organisation and speed. The visual cleaning part of the operation follows the principles of so-called "Japanese cleaning". This means that an employee waits at each door of the arriving train, gets in when it stops, cleans the section up to the next door and leaves the train again. The carpets are cleaned with cordless electric brooms and any rubbish is collected. At night, when the trains are stationary, more thorough work can be done. Stains on the upholstery are removed using spray extraction machines; when there is a lot of dirt, seats need to be taken out and cleaned with dry ice – in this way, they don't get wet and can be quickly refitted in the train. Sanitary facilities are cleaned using a mop and a wet and dry vacuum cleaner.

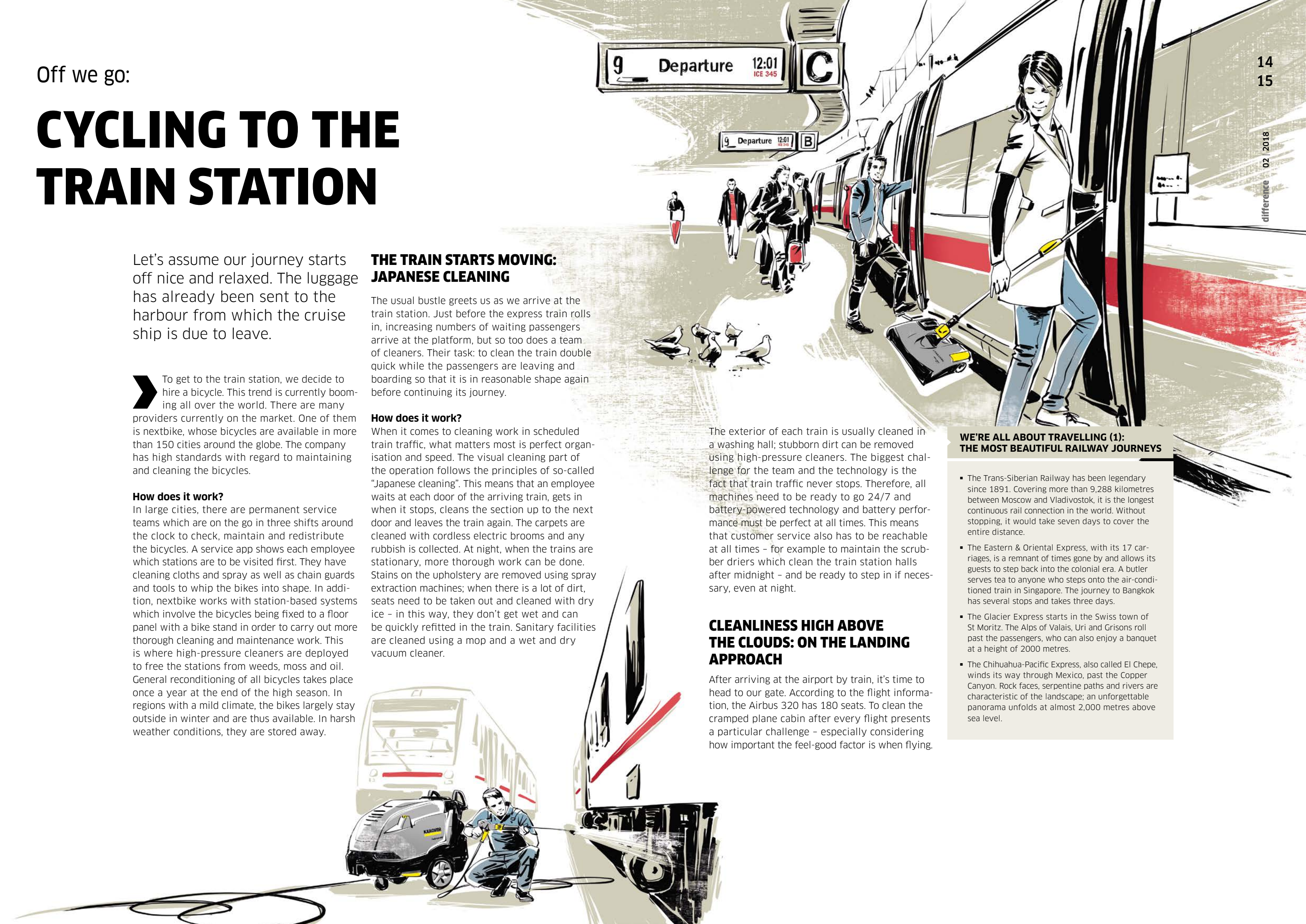
The exterior of each train is usually cleaned in a washing hall; stubborn dirt can be removed using high-pressure cleaners. The biggest challenge for the team and the technology is the fact that train traffic never stops. Therefore, all machines need to be ready to go 24/7 and battery-powered technology and battery performance must be perfect at all times. This means that customer service also has to be reachable at all times – for example to maintain the scrubber driers which clean the train station halls after midnight – and be ready to step in if necessary, even at night.

CLEANLINESS HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS: ON THE LANDING APPROACH

After arriving at the airport by train, it's time to head to our gate. According to the flight information, the Airbus 320 has 180 seats. To clean the cramped plane cabin after every flight presents a particular challenge – especially considering how important the feel-good factor is when flying.

WE'RE ALL ABOUT TRAVELLING (1): THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RAILWAY JOURNEYS

- The Trans-Siberian Railway has been legendary since 1891. Covering more than 9,288 kilometres between Moscow and Vladivostok, it is the longest continuous rail connection in the world. Without stopping, it would take seven days to cover the entire distance.
- The Eastern & Oriental Express, with its 17 carriages, is a remnant of times gone by and allows its guests to step back into the colonial era. A butler serves tea to anyone who steps onto the air-conditioned train in Singapore. The journey to Bangkok has several stops and takes three days.
- The Glacier Express starts in the Swiss town of St Moritz. The Alps of Valais, Uri and Grisons roll past the passengers, who can also enjoy a banquet at a height of 2000 metres.
- The Chihuahua-Pacific Express, also called El Chepe, winds its way through Mexico, past the Copper Canyon. Rock faces, serpentine paths and rivers are characteristic of the landscape; an unforgettable panorama unfolds at almost 2,000 metres above sea level.





How does it work?

When a plane has been released for cleaning, it becomes an athletic task for the airport cleaning team. And that's the case for the team from Losch Airport Service Stuttgart GmbH. Six employees board the Airbus 320 via the rear entrance. Four of them prepare the rubbish in the passenger cabin for collection and place the belts on the seats. In the meantime, one person cleans the kitchen and one cleans the rear toilets. Once these jobs are done, one employee takes on vacuuming with a cordless vacuum cleaner, two wipe down the tables, one collects the rubbish and one cleans the toilets at the front. All this has to be finished in 15 minutes – if they lag behind, they have to finish up in parallel with the catering team or the crew doing their jobs. Additional tasks, such as restocking the toilets or in-flight magazines in the seat pockets, also need to be completed in this time.

At night, when the planes are not about to leave, work is a little less hectic. Then again, here the side panels, windows and hand luggage racks also need to be cleaned. It is important to prepare the planes for exterior cleaning – multiple connections need to be taped over or locked so that no water can get in. Then foam seals the dirt's fate, just like in a car wash, either in a wash hall or in individual wash bays.

AT LONG LAST: THE GLISTENING CRUISE SHIP

The fully booked cruise ship is in the harbour, ready and waiting for its 3,000 passengers. There are innumerable cleaning tasks on board a floating hotel such as this – but the hull also needs care.

How does it work?

To free the ship's hull plating from signs of weathering and other dirt, manual spray units can be used. However, this is a time-consuming and costly task. For this reason, WOMA – the specialist in high and ultra high-pressure applications – developed the Magnet Lizard. It works at

3,000 bar with a maximum of 45 l/min. In comparison, the pressure at a depth of 10,000 metres below sea level is 1,000 bar. Special precleaning beams can also be used to help remove algae or incrustations. The trick is that, despite the high recoil force, no vacuum system is required to keep the Magnet Lizard in position – eight high-performance magnets do it instead. Thus cleaning the hull is effortless and fast. The Magnet Lizard does the work of up to four manual spray units; this makes constructing a scaffold unnecessary.

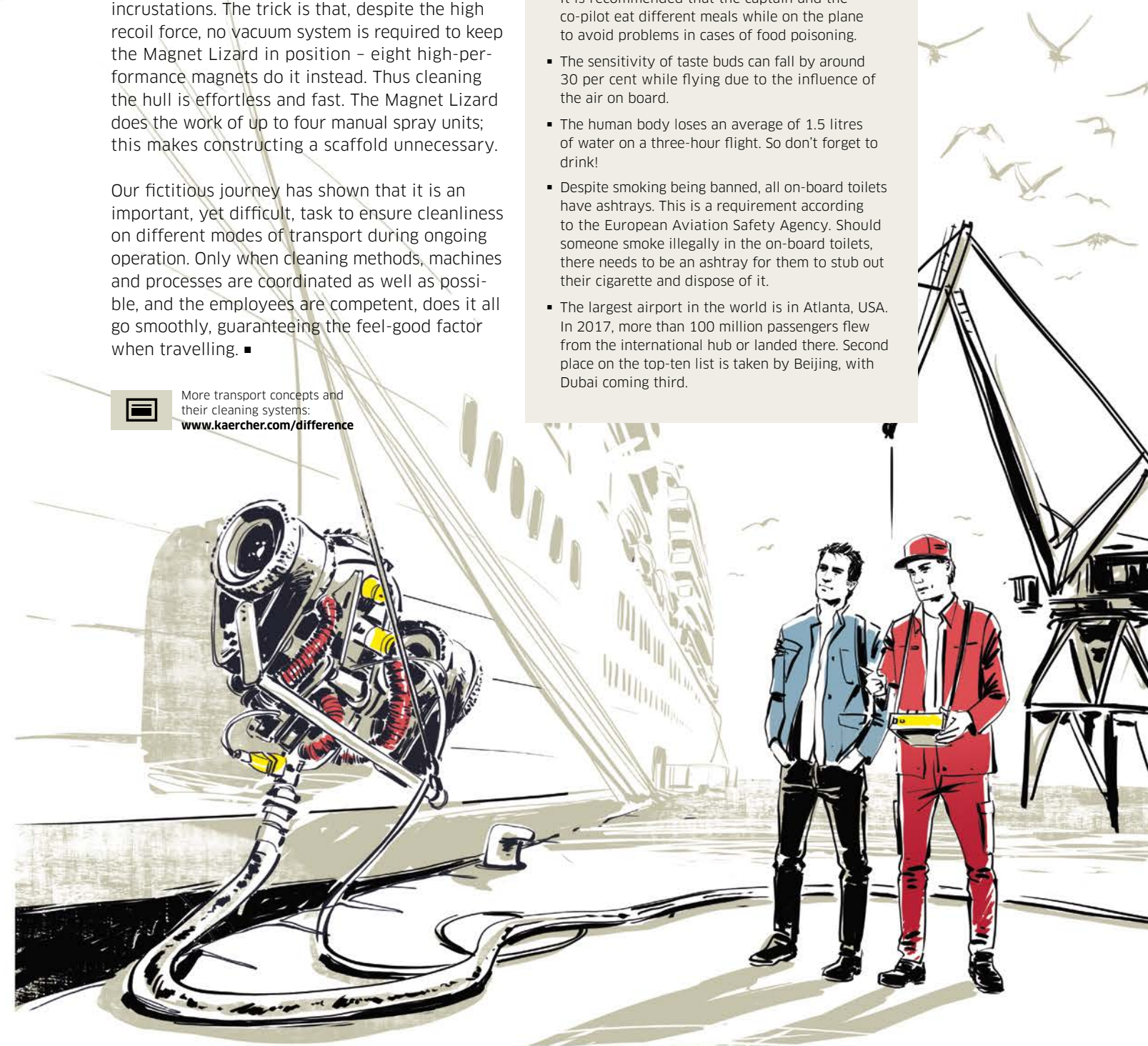
Our fictitious journey has shown that it is an important, yet difficult, task to ensure cleanliness on different modes of transport during ongoing operation. Only when cleaning methods, machines and processes are coordinated as well as possible, and the employees are competent, does it all go smoothly, guaranteeing the feel-good factor when travelling. ■



More transport concepts and their cleaning systems:
www.kaercher.com/difference

WE'RE ALL ABOUT TRAVELLING (2): REMARKABLE FACTS ABOUT FLIGHTS

- It is recommended that the captain and the co-pilot eat different meals while on the plane to avoid problems in cases of food poisoning.
- The sensitivity of taste buds can fall by around 30 per cent while flying due to the influence of the air on board.
- The human body loses an average of 1.5 litres of water on a three-hour flight. So don't forget to drink!
- Despite smoking being banned, all on-board toilets have ashtrays. This is a requirement according to the European Aviation Safety Agency. Should someone smoke illegally in the on-board toilets, there needs to be an ashtray for them to stub out their cigarette and dispose of it.
- The largest airport in the world is in Atlanta, USA. In 2017, more than 100 million passengers flew from the international hub or landed there. Second place on the top-ten list is taken by Beijing, with Dubai coming third.



» It is an important, yet difficult, task to ensure cleanliness on different modes of transport during ongoing operation. «

Current highlights
of the Kärcher range

NEW ADDITIONS

Robotics is revolutionising everyday life, both at home and in the commercial and industrial sectors. Advanced batteries are opening up new opportunities and ergonomic product design prevents damage to health. Kärcher technology is setting standards both for private users and for professionals.

Professional

KIRA B 50

Autonomous scrubber drier
cleans floors efficiently



Home & Garden

SC 2 DELUXE EasyFix PREMIUM

Newly designed
steam cleaner



Home & Garden

RC 3

New robotic vacuum cleaner
gives you more free time



Professional

HV 1/1 Bp

Battery-powered handheld vacuum cleaner
with strong performance



Home & Garden



STYLE MEETS FUNCTION:
SC 2 DELUXE EasyFix PREMIUM



- High-performance steam cleaner with special design features.
- An LED display integrated into the device provides information on the operating status.
- Its low weight allows the device to be carried conveniently and the compact design means it takes up minimal space while being stored.
- The cord, steam hose and floor nozzle can be stored directly on the device. The remaining accessories can be stowed in an extra-long accessory bag.
- One full tank alone can achieve excellent cleaning results over up to 75 square metres.

Professional



INDEPENDENT PARTNER:
KIRA B 50



- The first robot model in the "KIRA" (Kärcher Intelligent Robotic Applications) product range.
- Autonomously floor cleaning; efficient even in small areas.
- Moves to the docking station independently to drain the dirty water, clean its tank, collect fresh water and charge its batteries.
- Independently calculates the most efficient route through a space.
- Flexible and needs-oriented; appropriate cleaning parameters are set for a variety of hygiene zones.

Home & Garden

RLM 4

The robotic lawn mower makes garden maintenance simpler



Professional

NT 22/1 Ap Te L

Mobile entry-level class wet and dry vacuum cleaner



Professional



COMPACT, STRONG AND CORDLESS:
1/1 Bp



- Thanks to its compact and light-weight design, the vacuum cleaner can be used for a wide range of applications.
- One battery charge supplies enough power for approx. 20 minutes of cleaning.
- In the energy-saving ecoefficiency mode, the runtime increases to over 30 minutes, while the operating noise is also reduced.
- The efficient turbine ensures high suction power.
- The vacuum cleaner is available in three versions: with the appropriate accessories for tradesmen, building service contractors and vehicle cleaning.

Home & Garden



ALL-ROUND RESULTS:
RC 3



- Takes on the task of vacuuming your home all by itself.
- A laser navigation system measures out each room and determines the perfect route.
- A side brush ensures that even corners are cleaned.
- An app enables a variety of settings and provides information about cleaning progress.
- The timer function allows you to determine when you want the robot to vacuum.

Professional

Klean!Star iQ

New wash system for discerning customers



Home & Garden

FC 3 CORDLESS

Practical and cordless floor cleaner





SIMPLE AND EXCELLENT FOR BOTH WET AND DRY APPLICATIONS: NT 22/1 Ap Te L



- Lightweight with compact dimensions.
- Semi-automatic filter cleaning preserves the high suction power.
- The moisture-resistant PES cartridge filter lets you switch between wet and dry applications easily.
- Thanks to the new bayonet and clip connections, all accessory parts can be connected simply and securely.
- The Te model has a socket for power tools.



MOWS THE LAWN AND GIVES YOU MORE FREE TIME: RLM 4



- Fully automated lawn mowing.
- Manages inclines up to 45 per cent.
- Cuts grass precisely and evenly with a four-blade system.
- Suitable for lawns up to 500 square metres in size.
- The cutting height can be freely selected between 25 and 55 mm.



ALWAYS FRESHLY WIPED DOWN: FC 3 CORDLESS



- Two quickly rotating microfibre rollers, continuously fed with a detergent solution, loosen the dirt and pick it up from the floor.
- The picked-up dirt is brushed off the rollers by a wiping edge and collected in a separate tank.
- Simple to manoeuvre thanks to its flexible joint, slim design and low weight.
- No cord to get in your way thanks to the lithium-ion battery.
- Suitable for all hard floors.



SOPHISTICATED WASHING AND DRYING TECHNOLOGY: Klean!Star iQ



- The unique "KI!Brush iQ" side brush fully adapts to the shape of the vehicle and cleans it thoroughly.
- New "KI!Planet iQ" wheel-washing system reaches even large rims.
- The "KI!Dry iQ" high-performance dryer achieves excellent results in just one pass, even with tricky vehicle contours.
- The "KI!Adjust" roof brush can be adjusted to three different levels in order to cover three wash heights with just one steel frame height.
- A variety of high-pressure options can be selected, as well as a selection of efficient cleaning agents from the "Klear!Line" range.



EQUIPMENT LIST

- 1 Protective work suit
- 2 Full-face respiratory mask
- 3 First aid kit
- 4 Work gloves
- 5 Helmet with visor, hearing protection, light and headset
- 6 Rope
- 7 Carabiner
- 8 Safety boots
- 9 Safety goggles
- 10 Hearing protection
- 11 Multifunction tool
- 12 EASY!Force Advanced high-pressure gun with spray lance
- 13 Advanced dry ice jet gun
- 14 Dry ice pellets
- 15 Passport
- 16 Radio
- 17 Mobile phone
- 18 Double connection element with integrated shock absorber
- 19 Safety harness

WELL-EQUIPPED

In over 140 impressive cleaning projects to date, the Kärcher Cultural Sponsorship team has strikingly demonstrated its expertise in cleaning technology.

To this end, the Kärcher specialists are active throughout the entire world for over half the year. Besides the correct cleaning method, the thorough planning process also determines access methods. In most cases, they work on a scaffold, but some projects require rope access technology. For example, to clean the Space Needle in 2008, where the surfaces on the underside of the platform were accessed horizontally via a free-hanging rope 150 metres from the ground. The right equipment plays a decisive role when an iconic tower in the US, a historic bridge in Japan or a German cultural monument is to be cleaned. The photo above shows a selection of the equipment which is deployed for these tasks. ■



Safety at work plays an important role when selecting equipment.

What cleanliness means
to travellers and hosts

A SIGN OF RESPECT

After a long flight or tiring car journey, we look forward to our destination – no matter whether it's a hotel room, campsite or holiday home. But besides the view, the leisure activities on offer and the weather, how important is a tidy and clean environment? We asked the people who ought to know: representatives from the hospitality sector and people who travel a lot for work report their experiences.

Expectations between New York and Miami

On the one hand, cleanliness is a basic service in the hotel sector; on the other, it has a massive impact on the entire travel experience. For this reason, we have for a long time focused on the topic of cleaning. The fact is that if everything works out, cleanliness is seen as normal, but if something isn't right, this can have dire consequences for our guests' satisfaction. We understand that and therefore work to avoid this situation as much as we can.

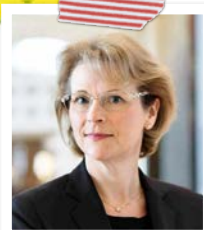
The cabin must be 100 per cent perfect because this is where our guests spend their time, the bed and bathroom being particularly important. Hygiene in the spa area also matters greatly. Together with Kärcher, we have created a cleaning concept that enables us to do two things: for one, we can complete our tasks to a very high standard thanks to sophisticated technology. For another, we are significantly faster, which means our employees have more time to look after our guests. Our guests are also becoming increasingly concerned with ecological aspects. For this reason, we have reduced the amount of chemical cleaning agents we use, without sacrificing our high hygiene standards.

Perhaps one more interesting observation to finish on: there are definitely different expectations of cleanliness among our guests, which presumably have to do with differing cultural backgrounds. For example, when I was travelling on our ships, I noticed that guests from northern Europe appeared to value different things to people from southern Europe – cleanliness is important to everyone but not always in the same respects.

ZOLTAN GOGH, Senior Manager Housekeeping
at AIDA Cruises



difference 02 | 2018



Cleanliness as a key factor

Cleanliness is a key factor for the entire travel experience. When you decide on a certain hotel, you are often influenced by hotel reviews on rating portals or recommendations from family and friends. If someone is dissatisfied with the cleanliness of their accommodation, you have lost them as a customer – and the bad reviews they leave may lose you more.

In the Grand Hyatt Dubai, where I lead the house-keeping team, we therefore ensure that guests can say nothing but “wow” when they see their room. In this respect, it’s not only about the apparent cleanliness but also hygiene – we must prevent diseases from spreading. With a constantly growing international travel industry, this is now very important.

To guarantee all this, we provide continual staff training. All employees must know which surface is cleaned with which cleaning machine, which cleaning agent they need and which method should be applied. It is also important to have a suitable cleaning schedule so that every part of the hotel is clean at all times.

Once a day, we check both the rooms and the public areas. In this way, we know that our standards are being applied and our employees know that we see and appreciate their work. In my view, motivation is fundamental for ensuring that everything functions perfectly. For this reason, we share positive feedback with our cleaning team because if our guests are satisfied then this is in no small part down to each and every employee.

TATJANA AHMED, housekeeping manager at the Grand Hyatt Dubai and chairwoman of the UAE Professional Housekeepers Group

A dirty room is a bad start

When you’re travelling, you spend short or long periods in places where other people have stayed before. Therefore it’s not a nice feeling to arrive in a dirty room – a bad start for any trip. Obviously you don’t spend most of your time in the hotel or the holiday apartment, but cleanliness is still very important. In my view, it’s a sign of respect for the guest, or, looking at it the other way round: if I arrive at a place that is not clean, I don’t feel that I’m valued as a guest.

At the same time, not everything is equally important to me personally. Although a stain on the wall is not pretty, it’s bearable. To me, the most important things are the bed and the bathroom – I want to find the places where I sleep or wash to be well-maintained. This is usually the case, but not always. I once entered a hotel room and couldn’t believe the state it was in: hairs, dead insects and stains on the bed sheets, empty cans and plastic rubbish on the floor. I called the reception and informed them that my room had not been cleaned. Ten minutes later, they claimed that the room was ready. The rubbish had been cleared away, but the bed was in the same state as before. So I called the manager, who asked me in all seriousness what was wrong. Since I had booked into a four-star hotel, I was surprised that these conditions were deemed acceptable. After some effort on my part to convince the manager, they apologised to me and arranged for the room to be cleaned accordingly.

ALEXANDER WALTNER, travel expert and author of the blog swedishnomad.com



First impressions matter

If you have a Swabian background, you already have a high affinity to the subject of cleaning. When flying, for example, cleanliness, alongside safety, is a top priority for me. It is also important for a hotel to appear well kept because, along with the airport or train station, it leaves a lasting impression of the entire city or region. I am away travelling for work for roughly half of the year. These trips are in no way about luxury since you spend very little time in the hotel room but, along with the bed being of a certain quality, cleanliness is essential.

In my view, another interesting aspect is that there are high standards all over the world, no matter whether you’re in India, the Persian Gulf, Ethiopia or Bangladesh. However, once, I did have a rather strange experience on a business trip. The hotel I was booked into was in the medium price range. My room was located on the eighth floor and there was no lift and no towels; you had to organise those yourself. The carpet was – thankfully – already a dark brown colour, there was mould in the bathroom and the bath was tinged red, presumably from ferrous water. The bed sheet had a few stains so I picked the corner which looked the best to sleep on. A generator the size of a steam locomotive was located downstairs directly below my room and switched itself on every hour. Not an especially pleasant experience, but I now realise why our export manager always has a sleeping bag with him when travelling in this region.

AXEL STOLZ, Executive Vice President Export Sales at Kärcher



More impressions regarding cleanliness on the go:
www.kaercher.com/difference

CLEANLINESS IN FOCUS

A clean home is very important to everyone, regardless of where in the world they are. The way cleanliness is interpreted, however, can vary widely depending on region.



The variety in understandings of cleanliness is also demonstrated by the three international photographers who were asked by **difference** to submit an image that captured this subject. The variety of chosen motifs was as great as the scope of interpretations. A German photographer sees the subject in rectilinear architecture in the USA, an American photographer found his picture at a fish market in Japan and a runway in Hong Kong became the backdrop for the Italian photographer's image.



GLOUCESTER

CHRISTIAN MADER, GLOUCESTER, USA: cleanliness and accuracy in every detail can be found in the coastal towns of Massachusetts. The houses are resplendent and always look freshly painted – a host of invisible helpers remove all the dirt, even from the paths. The gardens are painstakingly well kept. The whole scene resembles a picture book. Even a simple hotel like the Atlantis Oceanfront Inn in Gloucester, MA, achieves this level of cleanliness.



BEN WELLER, NAGOYA, JAPAN: for me, cleanliness means freshness and nothing represents freshness as clearly as Japanese fish. The Yanagibashi Central Market in Nagoya offers high-quality fish for local restaurants. And everything is constantly being cleaned: the lorries which deliver the fish, the knives with which they are filleted and the boxes in which they are packed.



»» For me, cleanliness means freshness and nothing represents freshness as clearly as Japanese fish. ««

Ben Weller, photographer in Nagoya, Japan



GIULIO DI STURCO, HONG KONG: from the outside, Cathay City appears to be a quiet commercial complex. Once inside, the energy swallows you straight away. The Cathay Pacific airline, one of the largest in Asia, has its headquarters directly next to Hong Kong airport. More than 3,000 employees work at the site, which truly is a city of its own. Seemingly unimpressed by the rush and time pressure of the business bustle, an employee cleans a jet engine on the runway.



HONG KONG



.....
A Greek zest for life despite the hard work: students at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in Germany visited Spiros Bardis in Corfu.



Spiros, an everyday hero

SIGA, SIGA: TAKE IT EASY

Hiring out boats, fishing, bonfires on the beach: with a great love for life's small pleasures, Spiros Bardis lives and works in Corfu. This is shown by the inspiring short film "Spiros - Rent a Boat" which won the "difference Award".

➤ Happily, Spiros steers his motorboat over the deep blue water of the Greek island Corfu's Agios Georgios bay. "I hire out boats to tourists. I'm on the beach all day – it is beautiful with the sun and the sea." His laugh is infectious. Every now and then, the gap between his teeth shows through as he tells us about his home.

Together with his wife Jana and daughter Polixeny, the 58-year-old hires out boats in the north-west of the Ionian island. When the quiet winter months are over, spring begins with lots of work to do: "I need to get all the boats out of the garage to clean and repair them," he says. Tourists start to arrive promptly for the start of the high season in April. Spiros wants everything to look nice for them.

Using a high-pressure cleaner, Spiros sprays down the bow of a boat. He is glad to have the right equipment for the job. It allows him to get the job done quickly and spend more time on the water. To him, going for a spin on his boat is the ideal form of relaxation. So is taking his rod out to sea with him: "I love fishing." And, despite all the work, he loves hiring out boats. "I still want to be doing this when I am old."

When he isn't on the water, he sits on the beach, chats with tourists or grills his freshly caught fish. Day in, day out. Keeping to the motto, "Siga, siga – take it easy". Far away from the fast-paced world. Far away from social pressures. Spiros' serenity is infectious.

Three students from the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg joined him in Corfu and produced the short film "Spiros – Rent a Boat". The atmospheric moments they captured evoke a deep yearning to get away from it all. The young filmmakers were awarded the first ever "difference Award" from Kärcher for their work.

The film "Posters – the mother of all adverts" from the Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film in Munich also made it to the final round. That film tells of a small family business which puts up posters on the Munich underground at night. The jury was also impressed by the "Rock 'n' roll" concept submitted by the Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, which was about a young building service contractor in Berlin who ensures cleanliness at a live music club. ■

More information on the "difference Award":
www.kaercher.com/difference

DIFFERENCE AWARD

With the "difference Award", Kärcher supports students at the three big German universities that specialise in film: Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf and the Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film in Munich. Their task: create aesthetic as well as personal profiles of Kärcher everyday heroes. One team at each university is given permission to create a film based on the concept they previously submitted. The winner receives a prize of 5,000 euros. The award ceremony took place on 11 June 2018 in Ludwigsburg.



DIFFERENCE AWARD

Der Kärcher Kurzfilmpreis



.....
Advertising posters and rock 'n' roll: finalists from Munich and Babelsberg also put everyday heroes centre stage.



.....
(From left) Anna, Marina,
Miroslav and Niko* in
the SOS Children's Village
have every reason to
smile.



SOMEWHERE TO COME HOME TO

SOS Children's Villages provide children and young people with new homes and a structured daily routine, which also includes cleaning.

The children's names are Marina, Anna and Miroslav* and they laugh happily. Happy laughter is frequently heard at the SOS Children's Village in Lekenik, Croatia. But this is not a given. That the boys and girls here are well and happy is down to the countless supporters around the world, as well as the many aid workers employed on-site, who supply aid wherever it is needed with great commitment. There are two SOS Children's Villages in the Balkan country. They take in young people who have already encountered much hardship during their lives. Some children are orphans; others were living in such precarious conditions that they were not able to remain with their families.

Lekenik is a rural community with around 2,000 inhabitants located about 24 kilometres south-east of Zagreb. The SOS Children's Village was constructed next to the local schools. The support provided to families and children in the region takes a wide variety of forms: the SOS social centre organises a whole host of activities. Experts organise diverse leisure activities such as workshops, sports events and cooking courses. Many local children enjoy spending time here and experience joy-filled moments.

The SOS Children's Village in Lekenik provides new homes for up to 100 children. It may not replace their real family home, but it does provide them with the opportunity to come home to an organised daily routine and a calm and safe environment. Playing, homework, meals together and day trips – all this is part and parcel of that. Including cleaning. Not really the most popular task with the employees and young residents, just like in any other family. And yet there is a huge amount of cleaning to do in the 16 family homes and various other buildings. Thankfully, everyone gets stuck in. Modern cleaning machines are used in the village – from vacuum cleaners to high-pressure cleaners. This makes the work much easier and faster, leaving more time for the children to play together.

The SOS Children's Village facilities currently take care of and support around 1.5 million people around the world, mostly children, young people and families. With more than 2,500 projects and facilities, SOS Children's Villages are active in 135 countries across all continents. As a long-term partner, Kärcher has been supporting facilities all over the world with cleaning technology, expertise and financial aid since 2011. ■

* Names have been changed by the editorial team.

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Page 4 - 5

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Page 12 - 17

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