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Distributors of America's Finest Plumbing & Heating Supplies

Ultimate seating

Luxury features take toilet comfort to a new level -- for a price

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It's the middle of the night in the dead of winter and nature calls. Reluctantly you crawl out from under your heavy comforter and make your way to the bathroom. But as you go to sit down, instead of making contact with the toilet's cold, hard plastic, your delicate derriere is met with -- believe it - a heated seat.

This isn't just a fantasy. Heated toilets, which are all the rage in Japan, are making their way to the United States as well. Such comfort doesn't come cheap though.



Michelle Henderson, showroom manager for Banner Plumbing and Heating Supplies, demonstrates the Toto brand toilet that has an automatic raising and lowering seat, washing wand with temperature control, a heated seat, deodorizing filter and automatic flushing.

(Jason Brown/Staff Photographer)

The remote control for the \$5000 Toto toilet.

(Jason Brown/Staff Photographer)



A Brondell Breeza model toilet seat with a built in battery powered deodorizing air filter.

(Jason Brown/Staff Photographer)



A in-wall tank toilet.

(Jason Brown/Staff Photographer)

Top of the line

The Mercedes-Benz of the heated toilet is the Neorest 600 model manufactured by the Japanese Company Toto. In addition to heat, Neorest also features a built-in, warm-water bidet (that oscillates and pulsates its way to complete front and rear cleaning), a warm-air dryer, a built-in sensor that automatically raises the seat when a person is approaching, an odor-control fan and automatic flush. It retails for \$5,200 at Banner Plumbing & Heating Supplies at 1020 E. Lake Cook Road in Buffalo Grove.

The Neorest 500, a smaller version of the Neorest 600, has all the same features for about \$3,250.

Rather than purchase the whole toilet, "budget-minded" shoppers may opt to buy just the seat, which can fit onto any style of toilet. Toto's Washlet S300 model is a heated seat with a soft-close lid that provides a bidet, dryer, air deodorizer, and remote-control that mounts on a wall. The S300 retails for about \$1,299 at Banner.

The company Brondell, a competitor of Toto, also offers toilet seats that include bidets, but for more of a "bargain" price. For about \$920, Brondell's Swash 800, a heated seat, offers a remote-control, front- and rear-wash bidet, dryer and slow-close lid.

Putting on airs

Brondell's Breeza doesn't heat the rear, but it does deodorize. This toilet seat has a fan and built-in, battery-powered, deodorizing air filter that fits different scent cartridges. The fan starts sucking odors away automatically when a person sits down, says Michelle Henderson, Banner's showroom manager. Breeza retails for around \$99 at Banner, while scent cartridges, which need to be replaced periodically, sell for about \$15.

A deodorizing toilet is nice for people who have their bathroom right next to their kitchen, Henderson says.

Other toilets on display at Banner offer interesting designs like the Duravit USA 1930 series. The square toilet with clipped corners, made to emulate the art deco styles of the 1930's, retails for \$1,215 at Banner.

Then there is Duravit's 2nd Floor series toilet, a wall-hung, tankless toilet (where the tank is hidden in the wall) which sells for \$1,535 at Banner.

People who want to privately test out a specialty toilet can go to Banner and literally try a sampling of different toilets in the restrooms.

"People are concerned," Henderson says. "There's a lot of bad-flushing toilets out there."