

ECCO LEATHER REVOLUTIONISES THE INDUSTRY WITH WATER SAVING TANNING TECHNOLOGY

The Netherlands, 12 September 2018

ECCO Leather unveils the game-changing DriTan™ technology internationally through a special commemorative edition of ECCO's classic Soft 8 sneaker at the World Water Congress 2018 in Tokyo.

The first solid step towards waterfree leather manufacturing

The history of the tanning industry goes back 10,000 years – and the process was always thought to be impossible without the use of large amounts of water. ECCO Leather's new DriTan™ technology breaks the paradigm and is now set to revolutionise the entire leather industry. DriTan™ by ECCO Leather is one of more steps in the tanning process, and it uses the moisture already present in the hides. The result is indistinguishable from traditionally tanned leather in terms of quality, characteristics, stability and lead-time. Besides saving huge amounts of water, the technology also considerably minimises the discharge of waste water and the use of chemicals. At its tannery in the Netherlands alone, ECCO Leather will eliminate 600 tons of sludge per year, translating into 40 truckloads of sludge deposited in landfills per year.

"This process only involves what you already have at hand," says Thomas Gøgsig, Head of Applied Research at ECCO. "You don't have to invest in new equipment. You don't have to look for new exotic chemicals. You just use what is already available at the tannery, only in a different way."

Re-inventing one of the world's oldest industries

ECCO Leather tans 1.25 million hides per year to supply leather goods and shoes to over 2,200 ECCO shops and more than 14,000 sales points worldwide. Also external customers, including some of the world's iconic luxury brands, source materials from ECCO Leather. With DriTan™, ECCO Leather at its tannery in the

Netherlands saves 20 litres of water per hide, equal to 25 million litres of water annually - enough water to keep more than 9,000 people hydrated for 1 year according to [WHO figures](#).

Now consider the potential savings if DriTan™ by ECCO Leather is applied to tanneries worldwide. The Leather Working Group estimates that the total water consumption worldwide in bovine leather making is 400 bn litres per year.

“Covering both tanning and shoemaking, ECCO is in the perfect position to make the first step in developing a more sustainable tanning process. Our starting point was the very fundamental question: How can we tan without water in a world of increasing water scarcity, and is it even possible?” says Thomas Gøgsig.

Five years of research and development later, ECCO has the proof that it is possible to minimise the amount of water considerably. “It took a lot of research, investment and manpower – a strong cocktail of science, know-how and traditional craft. But the biggest challenge was in opening our eyes. Tanning is a very old and traditional industry, so people tend to forget to ask: Can it be done differently?”

Sneaker made from DriTan™ leather sold exclusively at *ECCO Ginza, Tokyo

In celebration of the sustainable breakthrough in tanning, ECCO will be re-launching its iconic ECCO Soft 8 sneaker using DriTan™ leather. The shoe will be sold exclusively at ECCO's flagship store in Ginza, Tokyo, during the IWA World Water Congress 2018.

The [IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition](#) runs from 16 to 21 September 2018 in Tokyo. The event brings together 5,500 water, environment and related

professionals from over 100 countries to present pioneering science that can help shape future water conservation and management.

Scaling breakthrough technology

ECCO Leather is currently scaling the technology internally to their tanning operations. “We hope to find ways to share the new technology with our partners and the industry worldwide. But first, we must learn from how it unrolls in-house,” says Thomas Gøgsig. “In fact, DriTan™ is just the first step in our ambitious scheme to make the entire leather manufacturing process waterfree.”

For more information on the DriTan™ technology and its possibilities, contact:

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Press kit incl. photos and interviews available at ECCO's website under [Media Bank](#).

Event details:

Monday 17 September at 13:30, Thomas Gøgsig, Head of Applied Research, and Liam Maher, VP Creative Director, will be presenting ECCO's DriTan™ technology at the IWA Pavilion in the presence of the President of IWA, Diane d'Arras and the Executive Director, Prof. Kala Vairavamoorthy.

ECCO Ginza

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Japan

Find more information at

DriTan™ video: <https://youtu.be/cb021Sv8pEQ>

Group.ecco.com

Leather.ecco.com