

## CASE STUDY

For more information, contact  
John O'Reilly  
O'Reilly-DePalma  
815-469-9100  
john.oreilly@oreilly-depalma.com

# Saniflo Gives Hajoca Orlando Timely Solution to Restroom Drainage Problem, Showing Maceration Not Just for Basements

*Hajoca Orlando manager Jim Holtzapple was ready to cut into his concrete floors to install drainage for a new restroom until he learned that above-floor maceration could shrink installation time from 10 days to one, while saving \$1,700. Who says maceration is just for basements?*

BY JOHN O'REILLY

ORLANDO, FLORIDA (JANUARY 2, 2014) — Maceration. Chances are, you've come across this "new" plumbing technology with the strange-sounding name at one time or another in recent years. An innovative alternative to conventional, below-floor drainage — developed in Europe almost 60 years ago — maceration first came to the U.S. market by way of Canada in the late 1990s.

If you are a plumbing wholesaler or contractor based in the Northeast or the Middle Atlantic, macerating systems should be a familiar solution to a variety of plumbing-drainage problems. But if you work in the South or West, you may associate the technology primarily with basement applications. In fact, you may well think that, when it comes to maceration, basements are the only application: And, because there are few homes with basements in your region, you've seldom, if ever, seriously considered maceration a viable option. If so, what a shame.



Manager Jim Holtzapple (left) with Saniflo sales agent Tom McGuire inside the newly remodeled counter area at Hajoca Orlando.

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That's certainly how 36-year plumbing-industry veteran Jim Holtzapple, manager of Hajoca's Orlando branch since 1996, regarded macerating plumbing technology until recently. But then a timely sales visit by Regis Saragosti, CEO of SFA Saniflo, and his local sales agent, Tom McGuire of Florida Sales & Marketing, saved Hajoca a nifty \$1,700 on a branch-expansion project. Today, Holtzapple is not only a true believer, but also a true believer with inventory, as he and his sales staff actively promote the Saniflo line of macerators, grinders and drainage pumps to the trade.



**John Mulvaney of Mulvaney Plumbing Systems with the Sanibest Pro macerating system he installed at Hajoca Orlando. With the Sanibest Pro, Mulvaney had the new customer restroom "up and running in a day," says manager Jim Holtzapple.**

"It can be tough to overcome the basement-only bias," says Holtzapple of his selling efforts in Central Florida. "But once you show plumbers how well the technology works, they immediately begin to think of various uses. There are a lot more options to it than what people think at first."

## No busting through floors

Holtzapple's — and Hajoca Orlando's — conversion to maceration came relatively quickly last summer. The 30,000-square-foot (sf) branch was in the midst of a 2,000 sf expansion, including an enlargement of the counter area, with a new customer restroom nearby.

The chief problem: The new restroom was roughly 100 feet away from the facility's only other washroom and its below-floor drainage lines. Given this reality, Holtzapple was resigned to "busting up the concrete floors to create a 30-foot run of four-inch pipe" to connect the new restroom to the soil stack, which feeds waste to the sewer system in the street. "It would have been a very difficult, time-consuming connection to make," he admits.

Then came the meeting with Saniflo, just a few days before floor-excavation work was set to commence. "Regis and Tom showed me how a macerating system with above-floor piping would eliminate the need to break through our concrete floors and all the problems and costs that entails," says Holtzapple. "I was acquainted with maceration and the Saniflo brand in particular, having sold a system or two in my time. But I had just never thought about it for this particular application."

Installation was done by Hajoca customer John Mulvaney of Mulvaney Plumbing Systems of nearby Apopka, Fla. He requoted the job with a Sanibest Pro system, which resulted in the \$1,700 savings, including labor.

Holtzaple estimates that it might have taken Mulvaney 10 to 15 days to get his facility back to normal in the wake of the headaches and hassles of tearing up the floors. But with the Sanibest Pro, which handles drainage for both a toilet and a sink, Mulvaney had the new restroom “up and running in a day,” reports Holtzaple. The renovation was 100-percent finished in mid-September.

## **Restroom = Showroom**

As other wholesalers who have installed macerating systems in their customer restrooms have happily learned, these facilities make excellent, impromptu “showrooms” for the technology. Rather than hiding the macerator — along with its supply, discharge and vent pipelines — within the wall, Holtzaple had Mulvaney position the lines in full view of anyone using the facility. Seeing and hearing the exposed device in operation inevitably triggers questions from curious plumbers.

“Early on, a number of our customers were shocked to see that the system required only a three-quarter-inch discharge line,” Holtzaple remarks. “They insisted that we should have installed a minimum two-inch line to handle the waste.”

Simply demonstrating the system in the restroom proved the critics wrong, of course, according to Holtzaple. “But by raising these doubts and questions, the washroom gives us an excellent opportunity to sell the product. It’s been a very positive experience that has spurred our customers to think of different problem applications where maceration could readily provide the solution.”

Like so many macerating projects, the Hajoca Orlando installation is “scalable” to accommodate further expansion. “One of the great options with this system is our ability to add a third fixture,” Holtzaple explains. “For example, if we wanted to install a urinal inside the restroom or attach a drinking fountain or a laundry sink to an outside wall, the same macerator could handle the new fixture as well as the existing toilet and lav.”

In the aftermath of the renovation, Hajoca Orlando began stocking Saniflo product in earnest. At first, Holtzaple confined his inventory to macerators, but he soon expanded the offering to include grinders for commercial and whole-house applications, as well as drainage pumps for kitchen and laundry room projects, as well as condensate pumps for HVAC applications.

Tom McGuire of Florida Sales & Marketing, which was awarded the Saniflo line in mid-2013, insists “there are a lot of renovation-type applications beyond the basement for this product.” Two are especially promising in his territory:

- **High-rise buildings, including office towers and multi-family dwellings:** These projects typically involve tenant-finishing jobs that require additional plumbing lines; e.g., a coffee area, a wet bar, a laundry room, etc. If the property is residential, below-floor drainage lines are likely prohibited. But whether residential or commercial, if the structure is made of pre-stressed concrete with tension cables in the slab, core-drilling can be an expensive risk: Hit one of those cables, and the building’s structure integrity can be seriously compromised.

Comments McGuire: “Above-floor maceration is a perfect solution in these cases, avoiding both the expense of pounding through concrete, as well as the need for the contractor to x-ray the floors to avoid hitting a cable.”

- **Commercial gray water applications:** Florida enjoys a very active gray water drainage market, McGuire notes. These include not only residential projects (laundry tubs, half baths, summer kitchens), but also numerous commercial jobs. These applications usually call for drainage pumps that do not include a macerating or grinding function, because there is no solid waste.

“Not long ago, all the Taco Bell restaurants in Orlando moved their soda fountains from behind the counter into the dining area,” says McGuire, citing a typical application. “But these existing buildings had no provision for drainage, so every one of these soda fountains now has a gray water pump underneath, pushing the waste to the nearby sewer system.”

Hajoca Orlando’s two-person, outside sales team of Chris Corbin and Bob Foget share a combined 60 years in the plumbing industry. In getting up to speed with maceration, its uses and operation, they quickly grasped its potential and versatility. Not surprisingly, their biggest challenge has been overcoming their market’s basement-only bias. “That’s just the way people think right now,” says Holtzaple, “but we’re working hard to change all that.

“At this point, we’re in the education and training phase with most of our customers,” he continues, explaining that Saniflo has worked closely with his branch to keep stock levels and turnover at healthy levels. “But as the trade learns what this product is really all about and its potential, and once they see what we have in stock, I’m very confident the sales will come.”

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## Contacts:

### Distributor:

Jim Holtzapple, manager  
Hajoca Orlando  
T: 407-822-3560  
E: [jholtzapple@hajoca.com](mailto:jholtzapple@hajoca.com)

### Manufacturers Rep:

Tom McGuire, territory manager  
Florida Sales & Marketing  
T: 407-470-3029  
E: [tom@mcguiregroupsales.com](mailto:tom@mcguiregroupsales.com)

### Installing Contractor:

John Mulvaney  
Mulvaney Plumbing Systems Inc.  
1718 Yvonne St.  
Apopka, Florida 32712  
T: 407-814-3116  
Fax: 407-814-3145  
Cell: 407-459-6466  
E: [john@mulvaneyplumbing.net](mailto:john@mulvaneyplumbing.net)

### Photo Credits:

Roberto Gonzalez

**SFA SANIFLO U.S.A.** — whose parent company originated macerating plumbing technology — offers a complete line of up flush toilets and gray water pumping systems for residential and commercial applications. Saniflo developed its innovative, “above-floor plumbing” technology more than a half-century ago and has led its commercialization worldwide. Today, the company markets macerating technology through 22 subsidiaries in 50 countries and has sold more than six million units worldwide since 1958. Saniflo markets through independent sales agents throughout North America, and the product line is currently available at distributor and dealer locations throughout the United States and Canada.

For more information, contact Saniflo at 1-800-571-8191. Or visit the Saniflo website at [www.saniflo.com](http://www.saniflo.com).

For editorial assistance, including photography, contact John O'Reilly c/o O'Reilly-DePalma: 815-469-9100 or [john.oreilly@oreilly-depalma.com](mailto:john.oreilly@oreilly-depalma.com).

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