

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) OVERVIEW

Many collectors are fascinated by the older pieces of Silver Crystal which, can in some cases, look very different from each other, despite actually being the same item and in most cases carrying the same Swarovski code number/s. In the early days of the Swarovski Silver Crystal range some items went through a design change or had a component changed during the production run. Other variations were created when a different component was used on a piece if the original one wasn't available. Then there were also differences which were created purely as a consequence of the hand assembly process, although these are generally considered to issues of "placement" rather than a variation as such. Whatever the reason, the old Variation in Production (VIP) pieces are a fascinating and fun topic. We start with animals and move through the various categories.

BEAR NECESSITIES

As well as VIPs, in the early days in some cases, some pieces were made which were exclusive to either the European or the USA/Canadian market. These days, the distribution tends to be global in virtually all cases. You are probably all familiar with the large, small and mini bears which were part of the silver crystal range for many years, but here are all the family, including all 3 sizes of the USA/Canada exclusive bears (giant, king and mini USA). The family photo below shows the bears in graduating sizes. The bear family gives us a chance to see how hand assembly can completely change the appearance of a piece, and also introduces us to a variation to arguably one of the cutest pieces in the range!



Left to right: Giant (USA), King (USA), large, small, mini and mini (USA) bears.

The USA mini bear is a real cutie, and is just 1 ¼" (32mm) tall. He was introduced in 1985 and retired in 1988. There are 2 known variations of "feet" paws, as per the photo below, although the majority of them have the more pointed paws as per the bear on the left. The USA mini bear is the only bear produced by Swarovski to date, to have pointed paws.



USA mini bears with pointed feet paws and rounded feet paws

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

The mini USA bear's handsome big brothers, the King and Giant Bears were both introduced in 1983 with the Giant bear a shade under 4 1/2" (112mm tall) and weighing in at a cuddly 1lb 3oz, retiring in 1988. The King bear stands at 3 5/8" (92mm) tall and retired in 1987. Always popular with collectors, these bears can be found with various different head angles and paw placements, due to hand assembly, which gives them distinct little personalities of their own. Here are 2 giant bears which look completely different, yet are assembled using identical components.



Giant bears with different body positions

For the more familiar large, small and mini bears, there are even more versions to look out for! Here are a few examples of the small bear and different head placements to be found:



Now for the large bear:



SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

And finally, the (globally available) mini bear. These not only have different head and paw placements, but if you look very closely see that the bear in the middle has more rounded “feet paws” whereas the other 2 have more elongated paws, so at some point, the component used for the feet paws was changed, creating another variation.



BEETLE BOTTLE OPENERS

We class the Beetle Bottle Openers as “Animals” rather than “Functional Items” as we are not sure how successfully they could have been used to open bottles, and we’re certainly not about to try it!

There are 4 distinctly different pieces in this range – 2 come in a gold finish and another 2 with a rhodium finish. All the bottle openers were introduced in 1978 and retired in 1983, and it is not known which order they were produced in.

While it is not obvious, the crystal stones between v1 and v2 are not interchangeable, but the variation really becomes apparent when you look at the metal body just above the legs of the piece. This area can be smooth or rough in appearance and that is the difference. Here at The Crystal Lodge, we refer to the 2 types of beetle as smooth and hairy (or rough) versions! Don’t be put off if you can’t find the old “SC” block logo on the crystal body stone – these are sometimes hidden from view under the metal parts.



Beetle bottle openers in gold with smooth finish and hairy/rough finish



Beetle bottle openers in rhodium with smooth finish and hairy/rough finish

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

BUTTERFLY LARGE

The large butterfly comes in 3 known variations and this is all to do with the antenna and nose of the piece. This butterfly was first introduced into the Silver Crystal range in 1982 and it retired in 2006. The first butterfly issued is referred to as v1 and this had a small rhodium nose and rhodium antenna with black ball tips. This design was replaced by what we call v2 which had a small gold nose and gold rhodium antenna with crystal tips. Last in the series came v3 which is the one that was available for the longest period of time and the one which collectors will be more familiar with. This one has the gold “mask” face and gold antenna which are also topped with crystal stones.



L-R: Butterfly large v1, v2 and v3

BUTTERFLY MINI

The mini butterfly has 2 variations, there are rumours of a third which had the same antenna as the v1 large butterfly, but we are dubious about this as we’ve never seen one. We will concentrate for now, on the ones that we have evidence of. In both cases the mini butterfly has gold antenna with crystal tips. The difference being that v1 has a small gold nose while the v2 has the “mask” face. The most common variation is v2. The design was available from 1986 to 2007, and we believe that the v1 was only available for a very short period of time.



L-R: Butterfly mini v1 and v2

CATS CORNER

Part of the Pets Corner theme group, the mini cat was originally introduced into the Silver Crystal collection in 1982. There was a slight difference in the cat which was available in USA to the one which was for sale elsewhere. This was to do with head replacement. The design was standardised in 2000, and the mini cat was discontinued in USA shortly afterwards, and then reintroduced again globally with a straight rather than floppy tail, before finally being retired in 2007. This has produced several different looking mini cats, all marketed under the same code numbers, but with each version having a unique look.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



Cat mini with floppy and stiffer tails / Cat mini USA style (left) Cat mini global (right)



Cats mini – floppy tail, flexible tail, stiff tail

The tall/large cat (code 010023) introduced in 1977 and retired in 1991 can also be found with different metal tails in floppy and stiff varieties. As if that wasn't enough, there is another cat which was only available in the USA/Canadian markets which was similar to, but smaller than, the large cat and it was known as the medium cat. The medium cat has pointed ears and has the code number 7634NR52. Introduced in 1983 and retired in 1987 and also has similar tail variations.



L-R: Cats tall with metal tails in stiff and floppy versions
Cat medium (USA only) – stiff and floppy tail (smaller than tall cat and has pointed ears)

CHEETAH

Designed by Michael Stamey the cheetah is 4" (102mm) tall and was introduced in 1994 and retired in 2004. The cheetah can be found in 2 variations as there was a major design change applied to the tail because in the original design the cheetah's tail was lying flat on the shelf and then curls upwards to form a point. This was deemed to be causing excessive breakage if collectors placed the piece down on the shelf too hard or tail first, so the design was modified so that it curls upwards straightaway, and is raised so that it doesn't touch the shelf at all.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: Cheetah low tail, Cheetah higher set tail

DACHSHUND LARGE

The Silver Crystal large dachshund is one of the more well-known variation pieces, and again, the difference is all to do with the metal tail. 2 versions of the tail were produced with an articulated and braided metal tail which varies between floppy (which is known as v1) and flexible (v2). The third version is a more springy tail which remains straight on display and this is a coiled metal tail (v3). There is no real evidence to suggest in which order the tails were produced, although the v1 floppy tail appears to be the rarest, with the v2 and v3 being the most common. The design was introduced in 1984 and retired in 1991.



Dachshund large v1 floppy metal tail

Dachshund large v2 flexible metal tail



Dachshund large v3 stiff metal tail

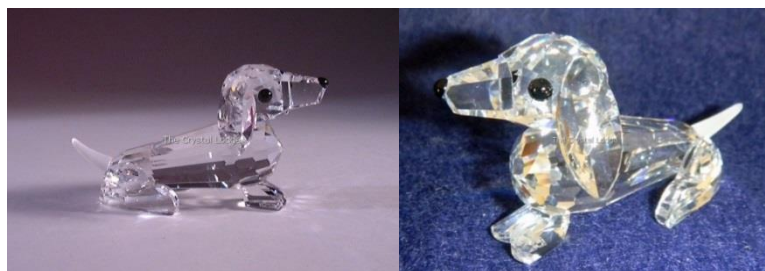
DACHSHUND MINI

One unique point to make about the mini dachshunds is that there were 2 entirely different looking mini dachshunds made by different designers, which were both given the same code number. V1 is the USA only issue, designed by Max Schreck which has a metal articulated/braided tail. This one was only available for a short period during 1985 and 1988. Code number for this is 7672 042 000 or 7672NR42. However, overlapping this, comes the frosted tail mini dachshund also allotted code number 7672 042 000, which was designed by Adi Stocker and available from 1987 to 1995. This design was rolled out globally and also assigned article number 014388.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



USA dachshund mini with metal tail



Dachshund mini with frosted tail

The

FOXY FAMILY

In 1987, the large fox was introduced into the Woodlands Friend category, and for the first year in the USA, no black dot was placed on the nose of the fox. The design always featured a black dotted nose elsewhere. In many cases, you can find different head and tail placements on the large fox and occasionally on the mini foxes.



L-R: Fox large (USA) which doesn't have the black nose and Fox large (global) which does!



Different head and tail placements on fox large

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

FROG PRINCE

In 1984, Swarovski introduced the classic “Prince Frog” and the initial version produced had clear eyes. However, it soon became clear (no pun intended!) that the eyes weren’t really easy to see within the design, so in 1985, the clear eyes were “discontinued” being replaced by 2 black eyes. This black eyed prince frog remained in production until the end of 1991 with no change of code number.



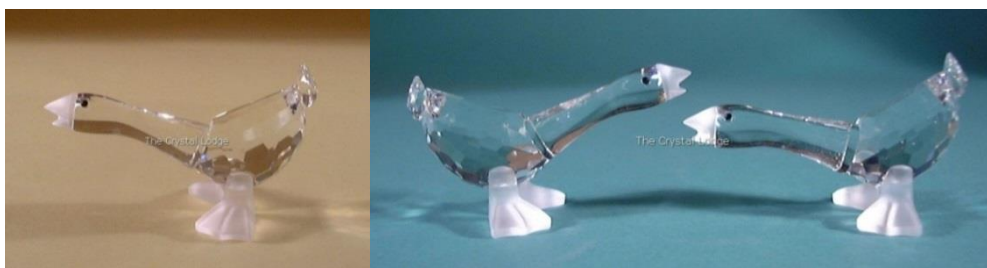
Frog Prince clear and black eyed versions

HARRY GOSLING

Another Silver Crystal variation piece is Harry Gosling. Harry, his brothers Tom and Dick, plus their Mum, known as Mother Goose were introduced globally into the “Barnyard Friends” category in 1993. The whole family retired in 1999. Harry is the only variation piece in this set. To tell them apart, Mother Goose is larger, but if you can’t tell from a photo – she is also the only one to have a closed beak – presumably because she can’t get a word in with those 3 noisy open-beaked offspring! Tom is the Gosling looking forward and has his neck upright and is the only one to have a raised foot, Dick is looking backwards and Harry is leaning forward. Harry is the variation piece as the neck replacement can mean that, in some cases his neck is only around ½” (12 mm) off the shelf and almost parallel to it, or in various poses to around ¾” (19mm).



Goose mother, Goslings Dick and Tom



Gosling Harry – different styles of neck placement

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

HEDGEHOGS ON PARADE

A complicated extended family. We are concentrating here on the Silver Crystal Hedgehogs and explaining the differences that can be found. Many of you will be familiar with the cute Replica Hedgehog which has been produced in clear, AB, golden shadow, dark green crystal and as a set of 3 pale yellow, blue and pink hedgehogs, but are you also aware of the previous issues of Hedgehogs? All the retired hedgehogs shown here were designed by Max Schreck.

The first hedgehogs were fairly round in shape and had silver whiskers. The family comprised 4 original sizes of hedgehog, 2 of which were available globally and the other 2 only being available in the USA market giving them a choice of 4. Within this group, there were a few design changes involving the shape of the spines, and there can be eye placement differences which can make them look slightly different too. Within this particular group, only the replica hedgehog which was produced later has faceted quills/spines. But that's not the end of the story.



L-R: Round hedgehogs with silver whiskers: King (USA), Large, Medium, Small/Tiny (USA) and Replica hedgehogs

On retirement, these were replaced by the also now retired oval shaped whisker-less hedgehogs in 3 sizes. These all have pointed quills/spines.



L-R: Oval hedgehogs with no whiskers, large, medium and small/mini

In the photo below we feature 7 retired hedgehogs as if they are lined up on the starting grid for the Hedgehog Grand Prix. This is a great photo which shows the different shapes and sizes available in the original hedgehog family groups.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



Left column top to bottom: King, large, medium, tiny hedgehogs (whiskers)
Right column top to bottom: Large, medium, small hedgehogs (no whiskers)

First we have the King Hedgehog who has a body stone of 60mm in diameter, next is the Large Hedgehog, which has a 50mm diameter body stone. Then we have the medium (40mm diameter) and finally the tiny hedgehog (30mm diameter). The king and tiny hedgehogs were only ever available for sale in Canada and the USA. This led to a situation where confusingly, the medium (40mm) was often referred to as “small” in Europe, while the “tiny” (30mm) hedgehog was called “small” in USA!



Two King Hedgehogs which look very different

If that wasn't enough hedgehogs for you, another variety of the whiskered medium hedgehog can be found with faceted black eyes instead of the smooth eyes that are normally found on hedgehogs. This one has pointed spines.

The whiskered variety of hedgehogs were the first to be released, and shortly after their retirement, a new whisker-less, more sculptured, and some might even say, more “aerodynamic” hedgehog trio was introduced. These are shown on the right hand side of the main photograph. From top to bottom these are the large, medium and small oval hedgehogs. All the whisker-less hedgehogs can have close set or wide apart eyes and for the large hedgehog, some have a spine set in between the eyes, some don't! The large hedgehog has approximately 57 quill stones and is 70mm long, the medium has approximately 48 quill stones and is 54mm long and the small hedgehog has approximately 44 quill stones and is 38mm long.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

And there's more the first hedgehog ever released was very different! It is extremely rare and is an early version of the medium sized hedgehog with whiskers. However, the big difference is that its quills are faceted and almost egg shaped, rather than straight and pointed like the other hedgehogs. This one came in special blue packaging with a drawing of a hedgehog on the side of the box. It is this design that the "replica hedgehog" which was introduced much later was based on, and you can see the similarities below:



L-R: The original hedgehog (note the faceted spines) / the special box for the hedgehog / replica hedgehog / replica hedgehog original box (later changed for standard packaging).

If you now look back at the replica hedgehog – he has some traits from the earlier pieces in his design. Faceted quills and eyes just like that earlier variation piece, although they are different sizes and cannot be mistaken for each other. All the other hedgehogs in the family have pointed quills and round eyes (except the very rare one). Originally the replica hedgehog had a special box, also pictured, and if you look closely you will see a picture of the hedgehog on it, that doesn't look too dissimilar to that drawing on the original old blue box for that very special hedgehog. So, as far as hedgehogs are concerned, the design seemed to go full circle before the hedgehogs were all retired.

KIWI

Part of the Endangered Species theme group, the Kiwi is a cute little Silver Crystal piece which was only available from 1991 in 1996. Here at The Crystal Lodge, we have noticed that there is a variation in the design of the beak. It is our opinion that the thicker beak was the original beak, and then it underwent a design enhancement to produce a more sculpted, sleeker beak.



Kiwi on left of photos has thicker beak, kiwi on right has more slender beak

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

KOALAS LARGE AND SMALL

The earliest koalas produced were called large and small. The large standing at around 1 3/4" (44mm) tall was introduced in 1987, retiring in 2004 with the small at 1 1/8" (29mm) tall, introduced in 1989 and retired in 2000. This is an unusual variation, in that the pieces were assembled differently for the USA market for a time, compared to the rest of the world.

The large koala globally (excluding USA) was assembled to face left, but up until 1993 large koalas in the USA were assembled facing right! Similarly, the small koala in the USA faced left, but the global edition faced right! The 2 different USA koalas continued in production until 1993, when they were replaced by the global koalas and remained in this format until the pieces retired.



L-R: Koalas mini (USA), large (USA), large (global), mini (global)

MALLARD (LARGE DUCK)

In 1986, the Mallard duck was introduced to the Beauties of the Lake theme group and the base of the design was completely flat. However, 3 little hemi-spheres were added to the bottom of the design to raise it from the shelf to protect the body from damage. These variations are generally known as "with feet" or "without feet", but they are definitely not feet as we know them! This Max Schreck design was retired in 1994.



MOUSE MATTERS

Another complicated family with USA exclusives and variations! Just as Disney say it all started with a mouse, Swarovski can claim the same as that's where Silver Crystal started. If you don't know the story of the original mouse – here's an abridged version.

By 1976 Swarovski's business expanded from that of a cutting, manufacturing, and jewellery production facility to a business committed to silver crystal as an end product for figurines and collectibles. All apparently due to four crystal chandelier parts being glued together just for fun, creating the first member of Swarovski's full cut crystal animal menagerie: the mouse.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

This mouse was designed by the late, great Max Schreck and the Swarovski Silver Crystal range that we know and love was born! Jet (black) stones were added for the eyes and nose, metal whiskers painstakingly cut to size and added, and finally the leather tail was carefully cut by hand. It is believed that 1,000 of these mice were made (which still had holes in the ear stones due to their original purpose, ie being chandelier parts). They were sold to Swarovski employees and were a huge hit. The mouse that went into full production was slightly different, having the more familiar metal spring tail, the ears were smaller and they didn't have the holes in them as they were specially produced stones rather than chandelier parts!



L-R: Original mouse (leather tail), box for the mouse, close up to show the hole in the ears, the medium mouse that went into full production (metal tail and no holes in ears)

Now back to the family tree ... 4 mice which were on bases went into production in the early days of Silver Crystal – and as per the hedgehogs, 2 of them were exclusive to the USA and 2 were available globally. These are the King Mouse USA (60mm diameter body stone and 50mm long ears), Large Mouse USA (50mm body and 40mm long ears), Medium Mouse (40mm body with 30mm ears), Small Mouse (30mm body and 25mm ears). There was also a mini mouse although this didn't have a base. The small mouse has an octagonal base and the others have a diamond shaped base. Apart from differences in eye placements which can make them look very different, there were variations to the stiffness of the tails, going from very floppy to stiff. There are even some differences to the ways the ears are faceted. Later, as per hedgehogs, a replica mouse was produced which had the leather tail of the original but was significantly smaller.



L-R: King Mouse (USA), Large Mouse (USA), Medium Mouse, Small Mouse, Replica Mouse

Confusingly, the medium mouse was often referred to as the large mouse in Europe as there were only 2 sizes available! Here's an example of different tails and eye and ear placements which can make the mice look very different – this one is the medium mouse:

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



A variety of wide and close set eyes and ears, plus different levels of tail stiffness.



Here we have the small mouse, again with different ears, eyes and tails

Other variations noted are the numbers of facet cuts on the ear stones, and as you can see above, the placement of the body stone can show the mice looking forward or slightly downwards! These differences seem to occur in all the different sizes of the mice.

Initially the replica mouse came in the same special packaging as the replica hedgehog and replica cat, but this was later changed to the traditional blue packaging. For a time, the 3 replica pieces could be purchased together in one larger box with same design as below and came with a display mirror which had painted images of the 3 replica pieces.



L-R: Replica mouse with special packaging, starter set with special mirror, starter set special packaging

While this is not intended to be a definitive guide to all the variations ever produced, we hope it gives you plenty of ideas of what to look out for when purchasing the “vintage” Silver Crystal pieces. These days, variations don’t really occur as components tend to be bespoke and assembly is more tightly controlled. Additionally, these days, if a piece undergoes a re-design, it is normally retired, and then the new design is re-issued under an entirely different code number and it is treated as a brand new piece.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

OWLS

We have noticed that the colour of the eyes can vary sometimes on the older owls. Here's an example using the Giant Owl to show the difference.



PARTRIDGE

One of those “variations” that you can’t actually see on display, the partridge has been found with a different body stone, one has a completely flat base, while the other is divided into 3 flat surfaces and this one has a more defined tail.

A third version of this piece has been documented as having a Crystal Cal base, however, we remain dubious about this one as it is usual for a Cal (or any applied colour coating to the base of items, such as paperweights) to be protected with a layer of felt as the coating is easily scratched. The partridge was designed by Adi Stocker in 1988 and retired in 1990, and we believe that the version with more defined tail was the later of the 2.



PENGUIN MINI

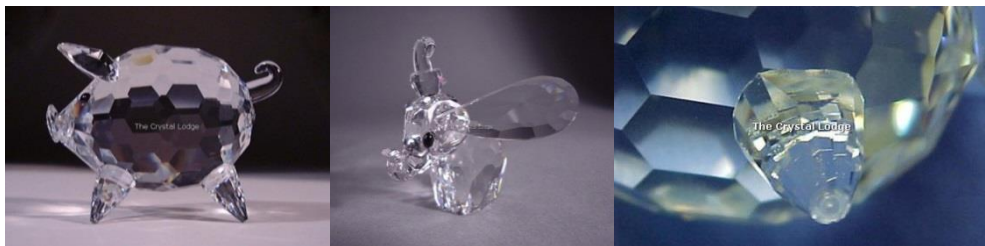
A little known variation, where the mini penguins eyes can be found either faceted to a point, or just faceted around the edge leaving them flat.



SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

PIG LARGE

Early information about the large pig, code 011846, suggested that it had a round disc tail. We've never seen one like that. The only examples we have seen are the ones with the curly tail (as shown below), the component for the tail being the same as the top of the hat of the 1990 Dumbo. We have seen slightly different cuts to the leg of the large pig though which most being fully faceted, but occasionally they have a flat part to them, as per the photo on the right.



L-R: Pig large, Dumbo 1990 (same component for hat as pig's tail), flat cut leg on some pigs

PIG MEDIUM

The medium pig, code 010031 has one notable variation, which is the tail. Early examples had a disc shaped tail (which was identical to the stone used for the nose, without the nostrils of course!) and then the tail was changed to a metal tail. We have also noted slightly different sized body stones on the metal tailed medium pigs.



Left: Medium pig with crystal disc tail, Right: Medium pig with wire tail.

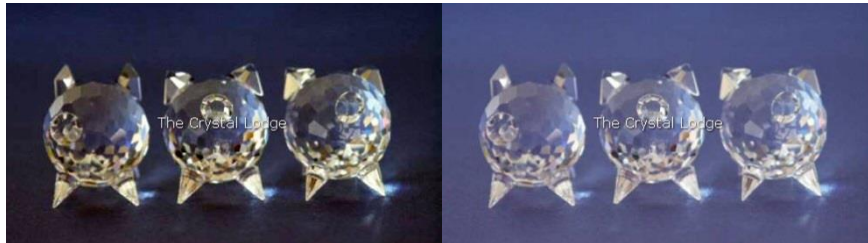
PIG MINI

There are 3 versions of the mini pig. The first introduced in the European market had a chaton (diamond shaped) tail, while over in the US/Canadian market it had a disc shaped tail. Both these designs were replaced by the wired tailed version. The chaton tailed pig is the most rare as this was only available for a short time.



L-R: Pig mini with chaton tail (Euro), disc tail (USA) and wire tail (global)

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



Different tail positions and ear placements on mini USA pig

POLAR BEAR

The polar bear can be found with different types of facet cuts on the body which can either be hexagonal or square in shape.



OODLES OF POODLES

On its introduction to the collection in 1992, some of the standing poodles, code 167571 had a frosted tail. This was very quickly replaced by one with a completely clear tail. The frosted tailed poodles are believed to be very rare. We do believe this is a genuine piece as they were shown in Swarovski literature at the time of their launch, notably the “Make a Wish” publication which was circulated to SCS members and gave an overview of all products currently available in store.



L-R: Standing poodles with frosted and clear tails

RABBIT MINI

The mini rabbit, code 010012 can be found with different ear placements which are almost parallel or they are set in a V shape.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: mini rabbit with parallel ears and V shaped set ears

SEAL OF APPROVAL

In 1985 the large seal, designed by Max Schreck was introduced as part of the “Kingdom of Ice and Snow” theme group. This continued in production until 1995, but was produced in 3 different styles. Originally, it is believed that the (now called variation 1) seal which has a black button style nose and no whiskers was available in the European market. In the USA, however, their large seal was different (now called variation 2). This one has silver whiskers and his tail fins are splayed. The date of introduction of the more familiar black whiskered large seal (mostly commonly in variation 4) is also given as 1985, and this is the one which appeared worldwide following the discontinuation of the other 2 styles of seals. However, due to differing head placements on this piece, we have variation 3 (looking straight forward, also having splayed tail fins as per variation 2), variation 4 (looking towards the left) and the more rare one, variation 5 (looking to the right)! Quite a family! All the large seals share the same code numbers (012 261 / 7646 085 000 or 7646NR85 in USA) and they are 3 1/2” (89mm) in length.

The variety of different noses/whiskers did not just apply to the large seal. Three variations of the very cute mini seal also exist. Variation 1 with a black button nose and no whiskers (believed to be exclusive to Europe), Variation 2 with silver whiskers which was a USA exclusive and Variation 3, the more widely known one which has black whiskers and was available globally. The mini seals were designed by Adi Stocker and are 1 1/2” (38mm) long and introduced in 1986. The button nose and silver whiskered mini seals were discontinued to be replaced globally by the black whiskered mini seal, which was retired in 2005.



Back row: Large seal v1 (button nose), v2 (USA silver whiskers and splayed tail fins), v3 (black whiskers, splayed tail fins), v4 (black whiskers – common variety), v5 (black whiskers looking right)
Front row: Mini seal v1 (button nose), v2 (silver whiskers/USA), v3 (black whiskers)

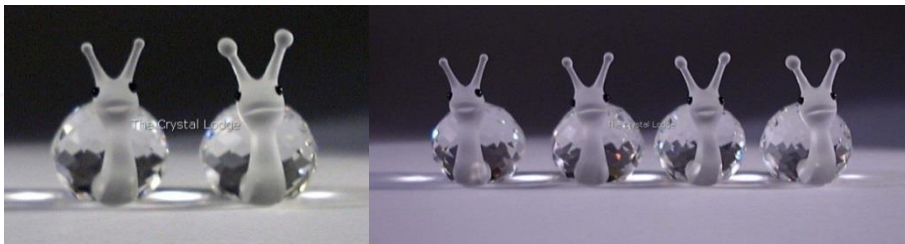
SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



Seals large and mini L-R: v2, v3, v1

SNAILS

Here's a variation that would appear to have been created due to variations in the moulding process for the crystal component which makes up the neck and head of the snail. When looking at this snail code 012725 there are 2 things to check which are the size of the antenna and the width of the smile of the snail.



Snails with different antenna (thin and thick) and different smiles - smaller and wider

SQUIRREL

The squirrel, code 011871 has a slightly different background story. Here in the UK, we have our indigenous red squirrel with its long fluffy red ears, but we have all heard the tales of how the "introduced" grey squirrel (native to USA) has taken over most of their habitat. So presumably because of global variations in "real" squirrels, when Swarovski introduced their mini squirrel in 1985, it produced 2 different varieties of squirrel which were available according to continent. The only difference being the size of the ears. The squirrel with larger ears was initially only available in the European market to represent the red squirrel, but from 1994 onwards it became available globally. Prior to that, a version with smaller ears to represent the grey squirrel was produced for the USA market only. Both are exceptionally cute! The squirrel with smaller ears was discontinued in 1994 when the one with larger ears went "global". So, at least the red squirrel won that battle and achieved world domination as far as crystal squirrels go, before the design was retired in 2012. Just as an aside, rumours abounded for a while about the existence of a USA squirrel which carried a black nut in its paws, instead of a clear one. The explanation given was that it was a factory error and was very rare. However, we remain highly dubious about this piece as it has never been documented by Swarovski, and if you look at the photos of the Frog Princes earlier in this article, you can see how this variation might have been created!

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: European (later global) squirrel, USA squirrel, USA squirrel with black nut which was originally believed to be a factory error, but more commonly believed to be a fake!

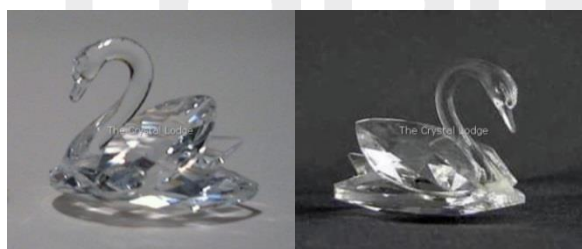
SWAN SONG

The original swans from the Silver Crystal range in large (010005), medium (010006), small (015152) and mini (010021) sizes can all be found with slight differences. Tail placement can be short or long, best illustrated as shown in the photos below of the large swan, code 010005 and medium swans code 010006.



L-R: Large swan (long and short tails), Medium swan (long and short tails)

Additionally, there can be different thicknesses of the neck stones of the swans, the best example of which can be seen below in the photos of the mini swan:



L-R: Mini swan with thick neck stone, mini swan with thin more sculptured neck stone

SMILEY WHALES

Often known as the “Smiley” whale – this whale, code 014483 can be found with different thicknesses of smiles!

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



Smiley whales with different thickness of smiles.

1988 WOODPECKERS

Probably the best known variation piece of all – The Woodpeckers “Sharing”. During 1988 (the year that the Woodpeckers were the Swarovski annual edition piece). Swarovski changed their logo for SCS pieces from the Edelweiss flower motif to the more well-known Swan logo. This means that the Woodpeckers can be found with either logo, and of course, the packaging and mirror can also be found in either format. To be an authentic set, everything should match.

However, that is not the end of the story because there was a design variation as well. The more common version of the Swarovski Woodpeckers has a frosted base to the tree trunk that the mother and baby Woodpeckers are sitting on. However, the first version of the piece had a clear base (as per the top of the tree trunk on the piece). Originally the Woodpecker trunk bases were polished after they had been treated to make them frosted. After a while, it is believed that the practice was questioned – after all, why bother to spend time polishing the bases if no-one would ever see them? So it is commonly believed that the practice stopped for that reason. Therefore if you should find a clear based set of Woodpeckers, you have found yourself a rare piece!



L-R: 1988 Woodpeckers with frosted base, clear base (rare)



Swan logo and Edelweiss logos on box

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

BAROQUE CANDLEHOLDER 121

Probably the most famous of the VIPs in terms of candleholders, the 121 or Baroque candleholder can be found with 3 different cuts to the base of the candleholder. These are diamond cut (version 1), honeycomb (version 2) and triangular (version 3). There is no documentation to support any theory about which order these were produced in. They were only available for a short time between 1983 and 1986.



L-R: 121 v1 (diamond cut), v2 (honeycomb cut), v3 (triangular cut)

CANDLEHOLDERS 127 (USA)

This candleholder can be found with either a rounded or sculpted holder as shown below.



CANDLEHOLDERS 131

The set of candleholder called 131 were produced in Europe as a set of 6, and there are 2 known base variations. One more pointed in comparison to the other one which has the same base as used for the mini owl, which is more rounded/flower shaped.



L-R: 131 candleholder with more pointed base and the rounded/flower shaped base.

CANDLEHOLDER 135

The global or ball candleholder in the King size (60mm diameter) can be found with 2 slightly different looking tops to the candleholder, which can be either rounded or more sculpted. Hard to see on the photos below, but there is a difference – honest!

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: 135 Global/ball candleholder with rounded and more sculpted tops.

LARGE STAR CANDLEHOLDER 143

Another one which can be found with faceted or unfaceted ends to the “spines” – impossible to photograph, but they are quite different if you look at both versions together!



Large star candleholder 143 with faceted end cuts

CANDLEHOLDER WATERLILY LARGE

This candleholder was originally produced for the USA market with much smaller leaves on the base giving it a diameter at widest point of 4 ½”, whereas the globally available design which replaced it looks much wider as the bottom leaves are longer and gives a diameter of 5 ¼”.



L-R: Globally available version / version originally available in USA / and finally don't try this at home, the large, medium and small waterlilies in a stack!

THE GRAPE ESCAPE

Aside from the different grapes produced for USA market, which are documented in our Europe / USA factsheet, there are many differences documented on the European grapes, including some bunches of grapes which have 23 grapes while others have 24. There are differences between the gold and rhodium finishes on the underside of the stalks as well including texture, but the main difference is that for a short time, a completely rhodium version of grapes was available in Europe.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: Grapes (Europe) gold and rhodium



L-R: Grapes (Europe) gold and rhodium to show leaf detail



L-R: 24 grapes in bunch, 23 grapes in bunch



L-R: Smooth finish on underside of rhodium and gold grapes

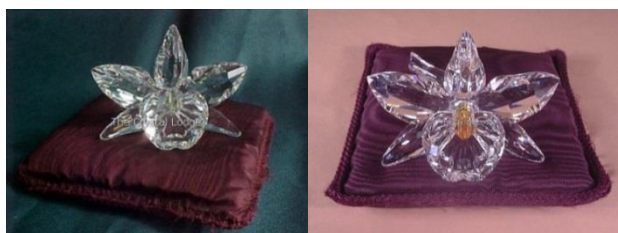
ORCHIDS PINK AND YELLOW

Introduced in 1996, the pink and yellow orchids came with a satin-effect pillow for display. The centre stones were very light indeed and were difficult to see on display. A quick design change introduced much darker central stones, we believe the pink orchid comes in 3 different colours, known as ultra-light, light and dark, whereas the yellow has 2 different colourways, light yellow and a dark, bordering on amber yellow.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: Ultra-light, light and dark centre pink orchids



L-R: Light yellow and dark yellow orchid

PINEAPPLES GIANT GOLD

Produced under one code number, the giant gold pineapple underwent a design change at some point during its early lifespan to become less rounded and more sculpted at the top of the pineapple. This made a slight difference to the height as well as the overall look of the piece.



L-R: Giant pineapple slender 6 ¼" to top of crystal and rounded 6" to top of crystal

PINEAPPLES LARGE GOLD

All produced under one code number, the large pineapple also underwent a design change at some point during its early lifespan to become less rounded and more sculpted – particularly noticeable at the top of the pineapple. Additionally, the pineapple can be found with hammered leaves (the more common variety) or smooth leaves which are the rarer version.



L-R: Pineapple large gold rounded and slender/sculpted version. Comparison of the hammered leaves and smooth leaves from above.

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

PINEAPPLES LARGE RHODIUM

Both versions of the large rhodium pineapple carry the same code number and come with leaves which have either smooth or hammered finish.



L-R: Pineapple large rhodium hammered and smooth leaves. Comparison of the smooth and hammered leaves from above.

PINEAPPLE RHODIUM SMALL

In a similar way to the gold large pineapple, there was a design change to make this pineapple less rounded and more sculpted.



L-R: Rounded version of small rhodium pineapple, more sculpted version

KRIS BEAR WITH SKIS

Originally, the Kris Bear with skis did not come with the rounded base. We understand that very quickly it was modified to include a small round base for stability. It is believed that very few of the Kris Bears without base were ever sold.



L-R: Kris bear with skis (v1) no base, Kris Bear with skis (v2) with base

AEROPLANE

The aeroplane or airplane as it is sometimes known, this piece was designed by Adi Stocker and was in production from 1990 to 1999. A red wooden stand was also available for a time which has slots for the wheels to sit in. The aeroplane has been documented as being available with the

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES

propeller blade's bevelled edge either facing towards the plane or away from it. All down to the hand assembly process, of course and not strictly a variation, but something to look out for!



L-R: Aeroplane with bevelled edge outside and inside

OLD TIMER AUTOMOBILE / VINTAGE CAR

The old timer vintage car is a great favourite. Some examples can be found with the swan logo and word "Swarovski" imprinted onto the steering wheel, others just have the swan logo. Designed by Gabriele Stamey, the Old timer was in production from 1989 to 1995. Like the aeroplane, a red wooden stand was produced to go with the car, and this has slots for the wheels to sit in.



The Old timer automobile on its stand

SILVER CRYSTAL EXPRESS PASSENGER CAR

All the parts of the larger Silver Crystal train were designed by Gabriele Stamey. Originally, the train comprised just 3 pieces, a locomotive, a tender car and a passenger carriage. The first 3 components were available from 1988. Again, there was a red wooden stand on which the 3-piece train set could sit, with slots for the wheels. The train proved to be highly popular with collectors, and further carriages were produced to make it even longer, a petrol wagon with 3 little cylindrical tanks, a tipping wagon which actually does rotate – try it (gently) and finally a tank (or tanker) wagon, and of course that meant a new wooden stand was required to accommodate the additional carriages.

The only documented variation on the train pieces is the passenger carriage, and this is all to do with the placement of the windows – so, again its not strictly a variation as no different components were used as the difference is caused by the hand assembly process. The carriage can be found in 3 formats - windows spaced equally apart, in pairs or in "extreme" pairs (ie very close together pairs).

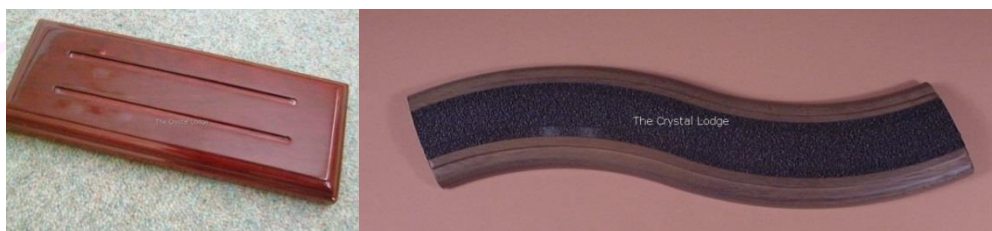
SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



L-R: Train passenger carriage evenly spaced windows, paired windows, extreme paired windows



The full train set (locomotive, tender car, passenger car, petrol wagon, tipping wagon and petrol wagon)



L-R: Train track (for 3 carriages), Train track (for 6 carriages)

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT 1991

The very first of the annual Christmas ornament series was produced in 1991. This ornament has 2 varieties which are slightly different due to the type of metal hanger used in the European and USA markets. The packaging was also very different, with the traditional triangular packaging available to Europe, but the USA version was presented in a square box. The only thing that was identical was the crystal itself!



L-R: The European ornament with gold textured hanger and traditional triangular box and certificate. The USA and European ornaments side by side

SWAROVSKI VARIATION IN PRODUCTION (VIP) PIECES



The USA ornament with silver smooth hanger and the square box and certificate.

**CIGARETTE HOLDERS, LIGHTERS AND ASHTRAYS
GOLD POLISHED AND RHODIUM POLISHED AND BRUSHED**

For the final part of this factsheet, we're going right back to the beginning and taking a look at vintage smoking accessories, these items can be found in both gold and rhodium finishes, plus there were polished and brushed finishes on the rhodium items.



L-R: Gold polished cigarette holder, lighter and ashtray / Rhodium polished cigarette holder (2 part), cigarette lighter (2 part) and ashtray



L-R: Cigarette holder in rhodium brushed finish and lighter in rhodium polished finish.

CIGARETTE LIGHTER CLEAR

The clear crystal cigarette lighter made from faceted clear crystal with a rhodium top has 2 different metal tops as illustrated below. It is believed the bevelled design was the second one to be produced.



L-R: Cigarette lighter in clear crystal with 2 different metal tops v1 on the left and the more bevelled v2 on the right.