



Poodles, prams and violins lovingly rendered as glittering miniatures - these are the images that spring to mind when one thinks of Swarovski crystal.

But Swarovski put another face forward in Sydney - that of ultra-hip design patron.

With lifestyle guru Ilse Crawford, best known for launching Elle Decor, at the helm as creative director, the company's Crystal Palace project showcased the brain fruits of a number of top designers attempting to "reinvent the chandelier".

Currently on a world tour, the leg of the project on display in Sydney and Melbourne featured works by Tom Dixon, Marcel Wanders, Campagna brothers, Paola Navone, Tord Boontje, Nigel Coates and Georg Badele, all arranged in a monumental display within dedece's beautiful showroom settings.

Nobody is more aware of the conservative, extremely classic image of the company than Nadja Swarovski, vice president of communications and fifth-generation family member, who has tasked herself with turning what she calls an 'emotionally driven' approach to product development into a 'design driven' approach.

A design lover at heart, she first made an impact in 1998 when she collaborated with Isabella Blow, eccentric auntie of British fashion talent, to develop a series of pieces with Alexander McQueen, Julien McDonald and Philip Treacy.

The project was such a success that Swarovski quickly added Crawford to her roster as an adviser for the home (to take on the chandelier division) and Vivian Becker to focus on jewellery.

For Wanders, the kitsch connection was part of the enticement of the project. 'Most designers hate kitsch, but I love kitsch', says Wanders. 'Kitsch is a full presentation of things - if it's crystal, it glitters; if it's gold, it shines. Kitsch uses material in the most direct way.'

Wanders' chandelier Pirouette, features 3000 pieces of crystal in constant motion, a work that shows off crystal at its best. The crystals hang from threads attached to a light box, each thread slowly rotating as subtle graphic projections dance Wanders for the job, Swarovski sent the designer a box of crystals to tinker with. By the time he was invited to participate in the project, Wanders was hooked on the material and ready to go to work.



Swarovski had discovered in joint ventures with the fashion world, riding the coat-tails of hot designers is a great way to get an image update and to expose what is, after all, a beautiful material to leagues of designers who might have overlooked it otherwise.

And, says Nadja Swarovski, 'We haven't even scratched the surface of what's possible.'

The publicity doesn't hurt either. Exploitation it is not, however, as Wanders, like his fellow designers, walked away a winner too: 'I wanted to inspire with crystal. Of course it's marketing, but for me it's just a beautiful project'.

Your palace or mine?

Chandeliers move from the ballroom to your room. The crystal chandelier has added a brilliant dimension to interiors for centuries.

Traditional chandeliers are creeping back into our consciousness as we look for more feeling, more fantasy in our interiors. You see them in hotels like the Hudson, on the catwalks of Paul Smith, in the pages of Elle Decoration and Wallpaper.

The world-renowned Austrian family company, Swarovski, has been producing the finest cut crystal since the late 19th century. Throughout the 20th Century, Swarovski worked hand in hand with the most talented innovators in all fields of design.

In recent years, the company has instigated a series of high profile projects aimed at bringing crystal to the forefront of fashion, working with designers such as Julien MacDonald and Alexander McQueen.

Crystal has now become an essential ingredient in cutting edge fashion, and Swarovski has successfully built a strong mutually creative relationship with the fashion community.

Swarovski's crystal chandelier components, introduced in the 1950's, are celebrated worldwide for their superb quality, for their lustre and brilliance.

Now, Swarovski, together with creative consultant Isle Crawford, is launching this challenging new initiative, working with cutting edge designers around the world, to reinvent and revitalise the chandelier. The aim is to break down barriers and preconceptions regarding the role and image of the traditional chandelier, whilst still capturing and perpetuating its fantasy and emotional impact, and to stimulate and entirely new vision for the chandelier, to make it relevant to contemporary lifestyle, an object of desire for today and for the future.







Campana brothers

The brazilain borthers - Humberto and Fernando - mix Sao Paulo street savvy with Milan style.

Their chandelier is a tangle of raffia (from sugar cane) and crystal, and has a life all of its own.

Prived .. a wild work of tangled crystal and raffia.



Tord Boontje

A Dutch product designer who has also worked in the fashion industry designing eyewear for Alexander McQueen.

His company, Transglass, has worked with glass for some time, concentrating on modern objects with a delicate touch.

His mini chandelier, Wednesday, is a cult classic

Blossom..a branch blossoming with crystal, with blooms lit by LEDs.



Marcel Wanders

The acclaimed designer who integrates playfulness and modernity in a uniquely light handed way.

He has recently been described by Business Week, as one of the top 20 most influential people in Europe at the moment.

Marcel Wanders works on the design of innovative new products and ideas together with companies like Cappellini, Moooi, Droog, British Airways, Flos and many others.

Pirouette..a crystal curtain cleverly designed by mixing pattern and crystal.





Georg Baldele: ...

A young and brilliant Austrian designer who studied at the Royal College of Art and is a protégé of Ingo Maurer.

As much an inventor as a designer, he is best known for his hanging candles (as seen in Harry Potter).

This year he has been working with crystal, turning into into a fabric.

Stellar Polare... hanging candles suspended in space

Glitter Box.. lead crystal dining table chandelier (not shown here).



Paola Navone

A multi-talented designer whose work is wide ranging.

She is particularly strong at making connections in design, between east and west, between old and new, and between rational and romantic.

She has worked with many of the great Italian companies from Driade to Armani, Gervasoni to Cappellini.

Paola does not just design furniture, but also installations and her sense of theatre is impeccable.

Morgana .. mirrored metal and crystal combination.



Nigel Coates: ...

Head of the department of architecture at the Royal College of Art and a controversial thinker in the field of architecture and design, Coates revels in the energy and vitality of cities, buildings and objects.

His practice, Branson Coates, has built the extension to the Geffrye Museum, the Body Zone at the infamous Dome and the Pop Museum.

He has also designed many objects including glassware for Alviati and furniture for Lloyd Loom and Hitch Mylius.

Gina ..is a fusion of crystal and Plexiglas® in a pomegranate-like form.





Tom Dixon

Designer of countless cult pieces- Tom has received an O.B.E. in June 2000, for service to the British design community.

He was made Creative Director for Habitat in 2001

He has designed objects and interiors for Terence Conran, Jean Paul Gaultier, Romeo Gigli, Ralph Lauren and Vivien Westwood

He was at the fore front of rotational moulding plastic

Ball Chandelier... is a sphere of floating crystal.

