

# Diamonds for everyone

Industry icon, **MARIAN NEWMAN**, spills the dazzling tale of her trip to Swarovski HQ – supplier of nail art crystals and so much more...



Marian poses next to a portrait of Daniel Swarovski, holding his cane that he used every day in his later life

**I love my job and, over the years, I have been very fortunate to experience some amazing things that I will remember forever. Recently, I spent 48 hours in a place that is now 'up there' with one of the most inspirational experiences of a lifetime. I left Swarovski HQ in Austria with so many ideas, a revisited love of crystals and almost a reverence for a totally amazing company that I previously had known very little about. Now, I'm keen to share my visit as, for nail professionals, I believe it's a story worth telling.**

I spent time with staff from various different departments at the Swarovski HQ in Wattens and, admittedly, wasn't initially sure of the main purpose of the visit. I was happy that Hannah, the brand's key account manager – who is based in the UK but responsible for a much wider territory – was at the premises as I had met her previously. I discovered that Gina Sylvestro from the US would be there also. Gina has been working with the US division for a while which has The Swarovski Crystal Beauty Academy, providing certificated courses for nail professionals. Her Swarovski collaborators from the US division were also in the visiting group.

As part of its business plans, the Swarovski company has recognised how important its crystals are to the nail industry globally and decided to produce some 'nail specific' crystals. This started with the launch of Swarovski Crystal Pixie Edge and Petite. One of the main purposes of the gathering was to discuss what is good, not so good and what the future holds for the company's nail focus.

With a full schedule of meetings, workshops and filming, we arrived at the HQ from our hotel in Innsbruck. My jaw dropped and

I don't think it went back to normal for the entire trip! I paired with Gina and we made for a very good team as she is very focused on the nail pro. I, although a nail pro with many textbooks under my belt, have a presence in the media and consumer markets. Some of the results of our meet will be revealed in the coming months, and what I learnt throughout the gathering served as incredible inspiration.

**The Swarovski story**  
I was educated on the Swarovski story, learning that founder, Daniel Swarovski was born in 1862 in Bohemia, part of the Austrian Empire that is now the Czech Republic. His father was a glasscutter and Daniel too learnt the trade. However, he was an inventor, and when he experienced electricity for the first time, he set his mind to creating a machine that used electricity for grinding. Before long, he had invented a machine that cut crystal more accurately than ever before.

To keep his invention away from the other glasscutters in the area and to also take advantage of new hydroelectric power, he moved his business and family to Wattens in Austria in 1895 and the Swarovski brand was founded. It is still there today and takes up a large part of what was once a very small town.

Daniel had created crystals that imitated diamonds but were affordable for the middle classes. He never pretended that his stones were anything other than glass and even created a specific method of glass making to make them even better.

The formula and method of cutting are two of the best kept secrets in the company and only few know the full story!

The quality of the crystals were perfect for the excitement of the 1920's era and flapper dresses across the

**FACT FILE**  
Swarovski employs 32,000 workers – 70% of whom are female.



A Swarovski crystal mouse



Marian lost in crystals



The meeting room

**FACT FILE**  
In 2017, Swarovski's revenue was recorded as €3.36 billion.



An original Cinderella dress featuring Swarovski embellishments found in the corporate archive

globe were soon dripping in these imitation diamonds. Many of the iconic films of the 20<sup>th</sup> century featured Swarovski crystals, including *Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. In 1962, Marilyn Monroe sang 'Happy Birthday' to JFK in a dress encrusted in Swarovski crystals that was auctioned in 1999 for \$1.26 million!

Daniel and his wife, Marie, had three sons; Fritz, Alfred and Wilhelm, and the company is still entirely family owned by descendants of the three sons. In the 1950's, Daniel's grandson, Manfred, collaborated with Christian Dior and created AB (aurora borealis) crystals that kicked popularity up a gear.

A couple of lovely stories were told to us by the company's archivist who showed us around the Swarovski corporate archive. The family was very considerate of its employees and, at the beginning, Marie would cook lunch for staff so they would eat well. There is still 'Marie's Canteen' on site for all the employees, and there is also Daniel's Restaurant in the grounds which is open to the public. The Company has a division, Swarovski Optic, founded in 1947 that produces some of the world's highest quality optics such as binoculars. This was founded because one of Daniel's sons was fascinated with astronomy and would spend time studying the stars and planets. To encourage this obsession, he invented the optics for this for his son who then ran the division. His descendant still runs it today.

Following Daniel and Marie's strongly held beliefs, there is a powerful corporate social responsibility in place. The company is as 'green' as it can possibly be with responsible, ethical and ecological stands. This is so evident when visiting the HQ and Swarovski Crystal Worlds, which is open to the public. Also, in honour of Daniel's philanthropic spirit, the *Swarovski Foundation* was founded in

2013 to support charitable initiatives around the world. Its aim: Give, Support, Inspire.

Can you now understand why I was so inspired? Not only by the crystals (and, believe me, the drawers and displays of crystals are some of the most beautiful things I have set eyes on) but also by the HQ, Crystal Worlds, the corporate archive, the employees and the story of the founder, his family and their ethics.

*"Diamonds are for royalty. I wanted to create a diamond for everyone."*  
Daniel Swarovski

What does it mean to us nail pros? Well, you'll have to wait and see – but I believe that Swarovski crystals offer a finish that is incomparable. The crystals for nails are available to the consumer but as we

know, home application is never as effective as a good professional technique!

Every time you apply a genuine Swarovski crystal, think of Daniel, his vision, his family and his care for our planet and its people.

Swarovski nail products are available from a number of distributors nationwide.  
[www.swarovski-professional.com](http://www.swarovski-professional.com)  
/SWAROVSKI.UK  
@swarovski  
@swarovski

**FACT FILE**  
Swarovski products are sold in around 170 countries.



The entrance to Swarovski HQ