



Made for Swarovski, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Hella Jongerius's crystal and pink-rubber 'Crystal Frock' light. The 'Morgana' chandelier by Paola Navone. Edra's shimmering 'Diamond' sofa. George Baldele's 'Glitter Box' chandelier.



## CRYSTAL GAZING THIS DESIGN HOUSE TWISTS TRADITION TO BRING SPARKLE TO INTERIORS

SOMETHING CURIOUS is happening behind closed doors. Previously discarded in preference for deadly restraint, over-the-topness is creeping back with a vengeance. As the real world outside our front doors becomes increasingly dreary, there is a move to shake it up at home and bring on the razzle-dazzle.

For sensory indulgence, products from Swarovski rank top of the glamour gauge. The Austrian-based family company has led the manufacture of cut crystal for more than 100 years, but the founder's great-great-granddaughter Nadja Swarovski has begun twisting tradition by instigating work with innovators across the jewellery, fashion and interior design industries.

Although the company has two divisions – consumer goods and research and development – it's the second division where ideas are really generated, says Nadja. "This product has been around for 107 years, but we challenge designers to use it in a more modern application."

With several years of New York fashion

PR behind her, Nadja has a sharpened instinct for a good idea. She has initiated creative service centres from where to forge new collaborations and explore the infinite diversity of applications. She has also developed the Swarovski concept annual, forecasting future uses.

Fashion plays a huge influence. Designers are queuing to deliver the ultimate in crystal covers for celebrity bodies. Swarovski has developed new technologies to apply crystal to mesh, nylon, metal, leather, suede, foil, zips and studs, with computer programs allowing for ornate patterns and all-important precision gluing.

Technology developed for fashion is now influencing interiors. A range of bathroom products has been created, and an entirely new vision for chandeliers was presented at the recent Crystal Palace exhibition at London's Design Museum. (The exhibition will make its way to Dedece in Sydney at the end of 2003.) Hot off the press is the combination of

fibre optics with crystal (debuted in a floor panel for the new Bond movie), so we can soon expect interiors that morph colour and sparkle in a new kind of disco deco – a far cry from glitter balls.

It's the crystal lacquer that is most enticing. Currently developed for cars, it has a multitude of potential applications that will soon have us designing our very own crystal palace. A little of the Swarovski magic can now rub off onto the surface of everyday life: furniture, bedroom walls, showers, floors, windows.

In a few short years, Swarovski has become synonymous with glamour, and accomplishes dream territory. It would be fun to be knee-deep in crystal (à la Halle Berry), but you don't have to be a diva to get your hands on some added sparkle. Crystal is the material of transformation, and a little goes a long way. A single pendant gives life to light, animates any space and puts a smile on your face. Right now that is priceless. **CAT MARTIN** Swarovski, enquiries, (02) 8345 7200.