

Is Swarovski the only brand of bead being produced in Austria?

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Austrian beads.....

Written by Deb Lemons, April 16, 2010

I am not sure if Swarovski is the only brand of bead being produced in Austria. I have some strings, older vintage that are tagged with little paper labels that say "made in Austria". There is no doubt in my mind that they are truly Austrian due to the fact of the clean edges and the clarity of the beads. I saw one blog where someone raised this point about Swarovski crystals. .
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But as to where a bead comes from, there are a lot of signs that are easy to see. Beads from India always have bead release in the holes making them look dirty! My hint to everyone is to soak them over night in a batch of good soapy water. Rinse them well then soak over night in a bath of windex diluted with water. A simple pipe cleaner or bead reamer can be used to remove any thing that didn't soak out and it comes out like magic. I am not a big fan of beads made in India, but sometimes you see one that can be made into a nice focal peice.

Although many beads are being produced in China, they are pretty much all the same pattern but different in color. Although some are crystal and shine pretty, if you hold them up to the light, they fail to give that clarity you get from Austrian Crystal, the difference in the lead and other things that are used to color glass I suppose. Also the facets, although somewhat better than in the past, they still aren't as sharp as Austrian either.

I think that Czech fire polish have a bit to offer in the sense that Austrian or Swarovski crystal can be costly for some people. There are many disabled people who love to bead and they live on a pretty tight budget. So for them, throw me in with them, Czech is a fine compromise when you have to budget. Czech beads are a bit finer in detail in color, clarity, and faceting and other traits. They are definitely more consistant in size than Chinese.

But above all else, blind fold me and give me a handful of mixed crystals and I bet you I can sort them with my hand into piles and tell you where each one came from just by touch. LOL, if you get really hard core into beading, you learn to zero in from a room away and know just what you are looking at.

Anyways, thanks for letting me throw my two cents worth in, well make that a half a cent because I am pretty crazy about beads. Anyone else have a room full of them like me??