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Subject: Swarovski Sterling Silver Snow crystal pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Sat, 22 Dec 2012 22:50:00 GMT  
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(Ok, it's not so much that I want this to be featured, but in the It arrived! Guidelines one is pointed here if you want to tell more of a story than just a photo)

So, awhile ago the girl whom I love came up to me and showed me a photo of this pendant she really liked a lot. Being a guy, I of course dutifully remembered which one it was, but when Christmas was coming up I was in for a surprise... it turned out that the pendant wasn't sold anywhere anymore (it was custom made for a single shop and only a limited run had been made years ago). So, after thinking for awhile I decided that this was a perfect problem I could solve through 3D printing.

As I am a very inexperienced blender user myself I went to the "Modeller needed" forum and posted an 'ad' there... and within a day I probably received about 20 reactions (to all modellers I didn't reply to anymore... I am really sorry, I was so overwhelmed by all reactions that once I choose a modeller I didn't write something to the rest of you). Either way, of all the reactions I choose the most expensive and in my humble judgement the most experienced modeller: Kevin Wei. Do allow me to wholeheartedly recommend him, working with him was a real pleasure and his organized way of working allowed me/us to identify a lot of relevant problems before sending it of for printing. For me it was a bit of a gamble choosing somebody who was 3 to 4 times more expensive than the rest, but he was the only one who showed prior experience and all in all I think it was worth the gamble.

So, the first model looked like this:

However, it turned out that the engraving did contain too much detail after all, so in the end I had to print a version without it. (I was planning to have a jeweler do it for me... but it turned out they couldn't do it... \*cry\*... apparently it "didn't fit" (no matter how small or short the text was...))

So, due to the fact that it got rejected once that caused another two day delay, meaning that last thursday (20th of december) it finally arrived (minus the single crystal that's already on this photo):

The packaging was awesome, as it was a huge box, with perfectly in the center in \*lots\* of bubble wrap the pendant... but I guess you guys are already used to that. Either way, the amount of

residue (black 'stuff' inside the gaps and other places that aren't 'touched' from the outside) from the manufacturing process was ridiculous and it took me hours to scrape off most of the black stuff out of the holes with a knife... there might be chemical ways to do it as well, but I couldn't find any on here. I also noticed that when I brushed over the pendant (including areas that looked clean) with cotton, the cotton turned pitch black... I assume that's the same black stuff... but I still find this weird and even slightly worrisome.

Next up was the job of glueing all the swarovski crystals on to it. From the research I had done I found out that E6000 was the best glue to use and I got myself also 'special' crystal placing tweezers (allow me to recommend them), some 'jewel setters' (don't buy those) and of course the 150 swarovski crystals. Glueing all of them on there was a huge job... as in... if there exists something like a 'test of love', this would probably fit right in, because after doing about 10 I already felt like I had worked for hours... not to mention doing 150 of them. Though I guess that when I got halfway through it wasn't too bad anymore once you get some more skill (I will write a few tips at the bottom of this topic).

Last up was packaging it perfectly (as it has to make a trip through half of europe by post), so I used the box in which I bought the silver chain as my basis. I added a black piece of paper to it to make it look far better (originally it was white) and (not on the pic) I added cotton to the lid, to prevent the pendant from moving during transportation.

Oh well, right now it's being transported... so I don't know yet whether she likes it. But honestly, when I send it off... it felt like I was sending a piece of myself... the amount of work and dedication that goes into making this... really made it the most special gift I have ever given somebody.

Tips for adding Swarovski crystals to your designs:

- Don't forget to add a bit of a margin to the diameter of your 'gaps', I went with twice the precision of sterling silver (2 x 0.125mm from the top of my head), but \*slightly\* less would have been enough as well.
- Apply the glue with a pointy tool (I used a pointy knife) and repeatedly tap on the place where you want to place the glue (rather than trying to smear it out straight away)... it takes some skill to get used to, but once you get the hang of it, I was able to do about 9 out of 10 right without any 'mistakes' where the glue got outside of the gap.
- When the glue gets outside of the gap is the only situation where it gets really frustrating. The good news is that you \*can\* get the glue off perfectly... the bad news is that it takes a lot of patience sometimes. I used the tweezers to simply pull off the glue repeatedly till nothing was left... but the glue behaves like a rubber... so sometimes it went off straight away, and sometimes I had to pull it off 20 times before it was too small to notice.
- Cotton might be great to use... but I didn't have enough of it to make sure.

Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [kevinweinewyork](#) on Sat, 22 Dec 2012 23:29:27 GMT  
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Well well, it turned out fantastic! So happy that you're happy.

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Sat, 22 Dec 2012 23:48:49 GMT  
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Was planning on sending you a mail with a link to this topic sometime soon (and some other small stuff), but apparently you already patrol these areas quite actively . But yeah, I am happy with the result , I was kind of worried about everything that could go wrong and when it arrived and I unpackaged it, it really felt perfect (despite lots of flaws, but I didn't see those till later\*)... this might sound pretty cliché, but it's probably in my top 50 most euphoric moments in my life

\* Stuff like the black residue, one of the sides is slightly bend and the gaps are far less 'deep' on that side... as if it got pressed against something whilst still being molten. And two of the arms have some whitish powder on them as well... though it's really light and if you don't know you won't see it (and now that the crystals are on there it's nearly impossible to see either way). Oh well, but those are all details compared to what I was afraid of (a broken wall or stuff like that)

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [natalia](#) on Mon, 24 Dec 2012 04:43:01 GMT  
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Wow!! What an amazing story .. And piece of jewelry!

Please tell us her reaction when she gets it!

Natalia

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Mon, 24 Dec 2012 09:20:13 GMT  
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Thanks . I definitely will Though it's still going to take some days before it arrives at her place

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(yep, I wasn't in time for christmas :( ... but I still should be in time for new year )

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [AM3D](#) on Mon, 24 Dec 2012 23:46:54 GMT  
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Hi David. That looks really lovely and a very romantic gesture from you. Even though you didn't design it you put a lot of effort into the stones and packaging. You mentioned a couple of times that it was expensive to have designed for you, to me it seems like a very simple design to make and was wondering... " being a bit cheeky now"... how much the fee was? If you feel like saying you can PM me. Either way, hope she appreciates your effort on this.

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012 15:22:33 GMT  
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Ach, a lot of stuff is expensive for a student which is fine for a normal people O:) , but I will send you a run down of the costs in a PM . Still, just to be fair, a normal wage is about 10 to 25 dollars an hours probably... and for example in my case it already took about 10 mails to get to the point that we were clear on what I wanted exactly... so from that point of view the 'normal' prices most modellers asked (about 20 to 30 dollars) seem to be a bit on the low side. Though a lot of them were students or even one guy from russia who barely spoke english... so that does explain a big. Still... as I said before, no matter how simple a design is, experience is an important thing, because personally I wouldn't be surprised if I could have gotten to the same result with somebody else, but then it would have taken a lot more iterations before it would have gotten accepted for 3D printing and the risk of there being mistakes in the finished product would have been greater (which could be solved by printing first in WFS, but I didn't have time for that).

And as far as me not designing it myself... yeah, I know some basic stuff in blender and have been trying to learn it better for years know... but despite being a pretty good programmer... I just can't get the hang of blender (though since version 2.5 I am starting to finally improve xD ). Still, with this design I would have had no idea how to make sure that all silver printing requirements were met and those kind of things (I don't have the tiniest clue how I would have to measure /any/ distance in blender... and even less how to translate those distances to mm's )

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [stonysmith](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012 18:51:52 GMT

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David, if you know programming, you might look into OpenSCAD  
Even though it is a less complex shape, and still needs some work, the code below took about 5 minutes.

```
$fn=16;
module bar(l){
  cube([l,3,2],center=true);
}
module hole(l){
  for (i=[-l/4+1:+l/4-1])translate([i*2,0,1])cylinder(r=.75,h=.5,c enter=true);
}

difference(){

//main structure
render()union(){
for (i=[0:5])rotate(i*60){
translate([10,0,0])bar(20);
translate([7.5,0,0])rotate([0,0,90])bar(10);
translate([15,2.5,0])rotate([0,0,30])bar(10);
translate([15,-2.5,0])rotate([0,0,-30])bar(10);
}}

//holes
render()union(){
for (i=[0:5])rotate(i*60){
translate([10,0,0])hole(20);
translate([7.5,0,0])rotate([0,0,90])hole(10);
translate([15,2.5,0])rotate([0,0,30])hole(10);
translate([15,-2.5,0])rotate([0,0,-30])hole(10);
}}

}
```

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012 19:54:28 GMT  
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Maybe you're right, I didn't really explore those kind of options. Mostly limited myself to blender and sketchup and never seriously considered using code to do it for me. Actually that's maybe one of the best suggestions I have seen in awhile... hmmm... I still can hardly imagine how one would do certain stuff, but I might dive into OpenSCAD, from my first impressions it's still is pretty hard to do stuff like rounded corners and similar aesthetic things, but at least I can understand it . Thanks .

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [AM3D](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012 23:10:20 GMT  
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Thanks David for the PM. I've sent you a PM back and don't forget to tell us how pleased she will be when she receives this.

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012 23:28:52 GMT  
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@AM3D: I might be mistaken... but I am pretty very sure I didn't receive a PM...

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [AM3D](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012 23:38:25 GMT  
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Corrected. Now sent

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [duann](#) on Wed, 26 Dec 2012 19:38:35 GMT  
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This is a great story, well done.

The effort in making and accomplishing a gift such as this is always so rewarding, and gives value WAY beyond the cost of materials.

Congratulations, I am sure it will be well received.

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [duann](#) on Thu, 27 Dec 2012 22:47:30 GMT  
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I love this story so much, I had to share it on the Shapeways blog.

<http://www.shapeways.com/blog/archives/1850-The-Value-of-a-Custom-Made-Gift-is-Greater-Than-the-Sum-of-its-Parts.html>

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver pendant  
Posted by [miaka618](#) on Fri, 28 Dec 2012 04:34:48 GMT  
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That is so very sweet. I'll send you my husband's email and you can give him a few pointers on thoughtful gifts.

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver Snow crystal pendant  
Posted by [DavidMulder](#) on Tue, 19 Feb 2013 17:57:41 GMT  
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Well, after months of trouble with the postal service\* I was finally able to give it to her. It was a bit of a failure as far as the giving part (I honestly and seriously HATE the actual act of giving somebody something), but once that was dealt with she was quite speechless... so I think that was a good thing (first time I ever saw her speechless ). I probably should ask her to write her own reaction here I dunno I am no good at this stuff

\* It should have been delivered about two days late for christmas, it took another week for the postal office to actually get it there after which they claimed that the address was wrong (which it wasn't was far as I can tell, but I still have to check that sometime later), next I had foolishly forgotten to write a return address on there... so it was waiting somewhere in amsterdam for weeks, but they were only able to ship it back to me once it had gotten to the hague... so that took lots of waiting and about a week ago I finally got it back (after being freaking nervous about losing it forever ).

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Subject: Re: Swarovski Sterling Silver Snow crystal pendant  
Posted by [duann](#) on Wed, 20 Feb 2013 16:19:36 GMT  
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AWESOME,

So glad it was (finally) received.

Bravo...

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