

AUTOMOTIVE

BMW, Swarovski partner with ZKW for 'Iconic Glow' headlights on BMW i7

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BMW i7 Iconic Glow Kristallscheinwerfer. Image credit: BMW

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

BMW's new electric model, BMW i7, now features glittering headlights from Austrian crystals and jewelry maker Swarovski.

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ZKW, an Austrian lighting company, brought the two companies' arts together thanks to its expertise in the technical nature of the project. On both sides of the resulting "Iconic Glow" headlights are four crystals, complete with LEDs behind them to provide illumination.

"The innovative lighting system opens up new dimensions that no longer have anything in common with classic spotlights," said Wilhelm Steger, CEO of the ZKW Group, in a statement.

"With the crystal light, we have created a completely new kind of lighting effect for a premium automobile," he said.

The new addition to the vehicle brings a sparkle similar to that of **Swarovski** crystals, adding the element of beauty to functional aspects such as the indicator lights. The glowing effect is especially visible during the "Welcome and Goodbye light staging" points of use.

Crystal clear

The collaboration took a major effort on the part of Swarovski, **BMW** and ZKW due to the complications of the desired look.

Hoping to avoid making the crystals look like car jewelry, the naturally-sprouting crystal was what the team was tasked with creating. This presented a unique challenge to the engineers and craftspeople.

"The challenge was, in addition to developing the unmistakable design with BMW Group, to fix the large glass crystals stably and permanently in the headlamp," said Peter Widmann, senior vice president and managing director of Swarovski Mobility, in a statement.

"The main focus was on perfecting the crystal cut," he said.

The crystals providing the gleaming light were sourced from Austria and produced in the country in Wieselburg.

Later, they were worked on in Krusovce, Slovakia.

Courtesy of Swarovski's efforts, they are heat and UV resistant, and durable against acid and physical damage such as scratches.

New technology also had to be created to enable the effects of the "Iconic Glow," including the flashing and glittering effects. It also required expert glass design and processing, as well as matrix LED technology for the low- and high-beam headlights themselves.

The model also features main beams, obscured below the car, that allow for no glare, using **ZKW** advanced technology and the BMW Selective Beam.

"A special challenge in the development of the main headlamp together with the BMW design team was to make it as inconspicuous as possible in order to particularly emphasize the crystal light above it," said Thomas Edletzberger, project manager of ZKW, in a statement.

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