

SWEDISH CRYSTAL AND GLASS

The Story Behind the Sparkle

The first glass artisans in Sweden were brought in by wealthy noblemen from Italy and Germany in the 1500s to work on their homes. Since Sweden was rich in forests and sand – needed for glassmaking – the art spread throughout Sweden. By the late 1800s, most of the glassmaking enterprises were located in south and central Sweden, especially in Småland.



This area became known as the Glasriket, or the Kingdom of Crystal. The oldest, still operating glassworks are Kosta (1742) and Limmared (1741). Most glassworks were founded on abandoned ironworks sites, since the infrastructure could be adapted and there was cheap labor available from the closed ironworks. Housing was from the ironworks setup – usually one room for a whole family – and child labor was common. Trade unions, as they did in other countries, slowly improved the conditions for workers.

The industrial Revolution brought about pressed glass. While few could afford crystal, the pressed glass was a worldwide export.

In the 20th century, two World Wars cut back on exports, and the Depression markedly decreased the market for glassware. Many of the smaller glassworks closed their doors and others merged. Kosta, Boda and Afors merged in 1976. Orrefors and several other smaller glassworks merged in 1990 with the Kosta group. A higher standard of living during the latter period of the 1900s did increase demand for finer glass. In 2005 the [New Wave](#)

Group of Göteborg, Sweden, which focuses on lifestyle products, bought the Kosta Group and later closed the Orrefors glasswork facilities but retained their design works, shifting production to other facilities.

If you are a collector of Swedish glass and crystal or just want to know the value of a piece you acquired when you were in Sweden in the 1980s the following two websites offer a lot of information about the history of Swedish glass and crystal and very useful links to other sites.

<http://www.glassfromsweden.com/>

<https://www.glasriket.se/en/The-Glassworks>

The Etsy websites below give you an idea as to the spectrum of Swedish glass and crystal designs, color, shape and estimates of current value:

<https://www.etsy.com/market/kosta>

<https://www.etsy.com/market/orrefors>

https://www.etsy.com/market/nybro_art_glass

<https://www.etsy.com/market/strombergshyttan>

EXAMPLES of SWEDISH CRYSTAL and GLASS:



Orrefors - souvenir/commemorative vase for
Vinslöv Missionskyrkan



Orrefors - crystal vase designed by Edvin
Öhrström in the 1940s



Vinslöv boutique glassworks – water pitcher
and creamer



Nybro Glas – Runestone pressed glass



Orrefors – iconic snowball votive candle holders



Kosta – crown bowl



Nybro Glas – Skåne windmill pressed glass
souvenir



Orrefors – One of their most memorable pieces:
Young girl looking at the moon and stars



Orrefors – teardrop bud vase of young girl watching birds



Orrefors – fluted vase – Residence pattern



Orrefors – Leaf pattern dinner and dessert plates



Orrefors – miniature creamer and sugar bowl



Orrefors - small sampling of bud vases



Orrefors – cut crystal bowl



Boda – multi-colored bowl with marsh and waterfowl scene



Strömbergshyttan - small square vase and
Afors small bowl



Boda - small candy bowl



Orrefors - small decorative vase



Orrefors – little girl with crown bud vase



Orrefors – small bowl with etched bows and wheat sheaves

