

Crissy and More Crissy

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I am often asked for MORE, MORE, MORE information about Crissy and her family & friends. The fact is, I *could* write a second volume about her, but my publisher tells me the time is not right for one. Time will tell, right!?

Until then, this is *what* you get. This document will be updated on occasion with new information.

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More history, more information

I am imagining here, that you've already read my book. Then, as a well-read collector (grin) you already know that every single detail and fact cannot be included in one volume. In fact, my very own publisher left a lot of my pages out of my book in order to keep the costs down (heavy sigh).

Let's get down to business then.

Crissy was made from 1969 to 1974 for the first of the original dolls. This does not include the Magic Hair Crissy of 1977. She is a totally different doll.

There were two issues released in 1969, hair to her feet and hair to her bottom. 1969 is THE largest production year. Very early '69 dolls have flossy, wooly hair that *does not* respond to any treatments. If you apply heat, the hair will melt. Exercise extreme caution with your restorative efforts.

The third issue is the straight bodied, hair to her bottom Crissy wearing the turquoise sateen dress set. Please see my book or website for further production information by year.

Cousin *Velvet* was released in 1970. Yes, I know.... Her neck marks say 1969. That simply means that her head sculpt was done in 1969 and copyrighted. Her body is marked 1970, the year that sculpt was finished. I get this question a lot: "Why is the head marked 1969 if she wasn't *made* in 1969?" If she was made in 1969, then her body would also be marked '69, logically speaking. They wouldn't have marked her body 1970 if she was released in 1969. New collectors will gain "collecting logic" as they gain experience in collecting.

Velvet was sold from 1970 until 1974, with remaining stock sold up through 1975 (as was the Crissy doll).

Now about those 1980's re-releases....

Remarkably, there are collectors who do not understand the concept of a re-release. The Ideal Toy Corporation was notorious for them. Please get use to this fact: Ideal used their OLD molds for Velvet to recreate her in 1981. She had different textured foundation hair, it was rather curly, and her skin tone was peachier. Her long ponytail functioned by means of a pullstring, NOT a button and knob like the early 1970's versions. She wore a little white cotton dress trimmed in white lace and pink ribbon. Additionally, Ideal really confuses new collectors and unknowledgeable sellers by using *Velvet* molds to recreate *Crissy*. First, you will see this strange Crissy doll from 1982 as Country Fashion Crissy and again in 1982 and 1983 as Beautiful Crissy (in a white dress with pink ribbon trim) and yet again in 1983 as Country Fashion Crissy, again sporting her 1982 long gingham country style dress and straw hat. Please trust me, this is *not* as some sellers like to claim, a "rare" redheaded Velvet. All of the above mentioned dolls had the pullstring function attached to their ponytails. Their copyright dates are the earlier dates from the 70's even though they were sold in the 80's.

On top of all of this news, you also need to get used to the fact that Baby Crissy was *also* re-released in the early 80's. There are some minor differences in the makeup. The later doll has much brighter makeup but if she is well played with, then it will be faded. In actuality the early doll had bright make up too, but it fades with time and since she is older, it is usually more faded than the newer dolls.

Factoid: Baby Crissy was first sold in 1973 to 1977. Her second issue was from 1981 to 1982.

Factoid 2: Some early dolls have limbs that have hardened and sometimes they stay soft and squishy. Some later dolls experience this same phenomenon. Unstable plasticizers (a product in the vinyl that causes the pigment to bind with the vinyl and also keeps it soft and squishy) cause this to happen. It IS possible to have two naked dolls next to each other, one from each production period and you won't be able to tell which is which. It's nice if they come with their box and issue clothes in this instance.

If you have need of identification by markings of each of the other family members, please purchase my book *Crissy and her friends; guide for collectors*, 1998, Antique Trader Books. It is sold out but copies appear on the internet quite frequently.

My website can also give you ID details to help you.

What ARE those catalog outfits?

If you spend any time at all perusing the Crissy doll listings on eBay you will notice an unusual phenomenon called "catalog outfits." What *ARE* those??? you ask. What you are seeing is probably someone lumping all knock-off outfits under this term when in actuality, the outfit could be an aftermarket outfit made by another doll clothing maker (Premier, Totsy, Shillman). There really aren't that many true catalog outfits but there are hundreds of aftermarket outfits. The correct terminology isn't "catalog outfit" if made by Premier, Totsy, or Shillman. Use "after-market" to appropriately describe them.

However, in the Wards, JC Penney's, and Sears Wishbooks of that time frame, you will find groupings of outfits that were made for Crissy et al, but weren't made by Ideal. They normally are tagged Hong Kong and are of inferior quality. These outfits are true catalog outfits. Some outfits were the same for a couple of years. There were tons of variations in fabric too, so you could amass quite a few different sets if you shop long enough.

What about after-market clothing?

Real after-market clothing by other doll clothes companies still exist. They are neat and different and an interesting addition to a collection. Advanced collectors seem to gravitate to them as much as they do the "catalog outfits" but there are some purists who only collect Ideal issued outfits. That's okay! Every collector needs to find his or her own collecting niche. Just have fun!!

Ideal issued outfits

Well you've gained a little knowledge about catalog clothing and after-market clothing and can appropriately use the correct terminology, but let's take a moment to talk about Ideal's clothing lines.

Firstly, you need to acclimate yourself to two different types of clothing.... issue outfits (that came on the doll) and then the other outfits sold for redressing the doll after she was purchased.

After you've looked through the book to learn which issue outfit goes with each doll, you'll find yourself on eBay picking the sellers' dolls apart!! Really! You will! You will say, "Hey, that Look Around Crissy should NEVER be wearing an orange lace dress.

That doll is put together from pieces." Good for you! A well-educated buyer is the best consumer. The website also will help you ID issue outfits.

Now you will need to learn about the "sold-separately" fashions. Oh my, they were soooooo groovy! I could write several pages just on the outfits. No need to rewrite what was already written. Please see my book. It will tell you which outfits were boxed in the early boxes (1969, 1970), which were sold on the orange cards (1971), which were sold on the lime green cards (1972, 1973) and which were sold in the hard-sider cellphaned-window boxes (1972). Additionally, one will find shoes sold separately on the blister cards.

Accessories, cases, paper products

To round out your collection, you can check with the book again to find out about all of those great additional items that Ideal created to augment a little one's Crissy set. Some of these items are cases (there were quite a few), Miss Crissy, Miss Velvet and Miss Tressy luggage collections, a beauty salon, a soft-capped hair dryer that really works, and a clothing rack/closet set. Also to be considered for your collection is the Beautiful Crissy Hairstyling Set and the four different versions of the Way-Out Wig!

Additionally, you will want to find some of the paper products. Whitman was licensed to create the five paper doll sets, all different from year to year from 1970 on. Ideal created a game called "Velvet & Crissy Shopping Spree." Colorforms created a colorforms set (so so cute!).

Simplicity was licensed to create patterns for 5 years (a new one was created every year from 1969 on). In 1969, it was one size for Crissy only. The following years, the patterns were sold in two sizes, one for the larger girls and one for the smaller girls. Also, McCall's created a pattern in 1969 that "fit" Crissy but wasn't made for her exclusively. Another set of patterns that a collector might be interested in are the Lakin knitting and crochet patterns. There were several. Ms. Virginia Lakin created these and sold them in 1971 and 1972.

Due to size constraints on the website, it is impossible to list and show photos of all of these great items. Please see the book.

eBay rules of the road

Wow! You've learned a lot today by reading this document. That assumes of course, that you don't have a copy of the book already and that you've not had enough time to examine every page on my site (please look at all the links as you may find a picture of the doll you seek to ID-can't tell you how many times people ask for a picture of Kerry or Mia or Cricket or whoever when there is one right there on the site).

You've read here about eBay a few times. Unless you live in a cave, you probably already know about my favorite auction site, eBay. The best part is that a vast majority of the American (if not the world) public know about it and choose it first to post their items that are for sale. That said, please find the listing for Crissy and her family and bookmark it. I'm asked often for a better place to buy. There isn't. Why? Antique store owners think they have found pure gold when they find a Crissy family doll and will price the poor beat up dolly at something like \$35 and up. PLEASE don't

buy it unless she is wearing something that we collectors consider hard to find (notice I didn't say *RARE*).

As of this writing, eBay lists hundreds of dolls for sale, some dressed, some nude. Point is, you can purchase a lot of dolls for \$35 on eBay.

To simplify, I will list some final bid guidelines.

Assume good condition on all dolls, with good makeup and no cheek rubs, no chews, no ink, no haircuts.

Crissy, all issues, nude, \$10

Kerry, Brandi, nude, \$15

Tressy, nude, \$25 - 35 (don't know why she fetches more, she is very common)

Velvet, all issues, nude, \$10

Mia, Dina, nude, \$10-15

Cricket, nude, \$25 - 75 (don't know why she fetches more, she too is very common)

Tara, nude, \$75+ (the only "black only" issue, enjoyed short production run, only appears once a month or so on ebay)

Velvet's Little Sister or Cinnamon, nude, \$10

Baby Crissy, all issues, nude, \$15-25

If a doll is wearing real Ideal shoes, add \$10. If she is wearing real Ideal issue clothes that you can ID and "need" for your collection, only add what you are willing to pay. Remember another will come along just like it. Always does! Trust me here.

Boxed dolls (mint in the box, played with in the box, or dolls with factory hair wrappings) all go for higher prices. Interestingly, I cannot give you a value since it's such a crapshoot on final prices realized. Sometimes, they are sky high! (No need for that... If there is one, there is another, so bid on the next one.) Sometimes they are so cheap that they are less than a loose doll!

The black versions obviously sell for higher prices.

Bottom line: Take into careful consideration the condition of ANY doll that you are interested in buying. Condition is everything.

Some things to help you along the eBay road:

Don't bid too soon, wait it out, see how high it goes first. The item may go too high to even bother with anyway.

Remember it's an auction. If you see a friend bidding too, all is fair in love, war, and eBay. Share that thought with your friends. It will save you a lot of worry and fret later.

Bid very close to the end. Bid too early and you'll just be outbid. Why bother???

Sometimes sellers or "other persons" email you through the eBay email system after seeing you bid on certain kinds of items to see if you will buy THEIR stuff, bypassing eBay altogether. Don't bite. I've seen it way too many times where buyers get taken for a ride. Either they pay the money and they don't get the promised item or they get nothing but junk.

Remember: Sniping happens. This is where someone outbids you during the last 15 seconds so that you don't have time to rebid.

Bid what you are willing to pay close to the end. Remember, if you think that you can outbid anyone by posting a *One Thousand Dollar Bid*, someone else might be thinking that too. If they do, one of you will be stuck with a One Thousand Dollar Visa card bill. eBay bidding is a contract and you are committed to buy. I've seen this happen oh so many times. I can't imagine doing that kind of damage to my Visa card. Yikes.

eBay only bids the next highest increment, not your literal bid, when you put your bid in. So if you bid \$100 to outbid an existing \$7.50 bid, the next increment is \$8 (the increments get larger, the higher the existing bid amount). \$8 is your new bid. Every time someone tries to outbid you, eBay will act as your proxy and bid the next increment. Now you could be outbid at \$100, if it is a desirable item. So be prepared!

And remember, if there is *one*, there is *another*. Don't put yourself in the poorhouse trying to get stuff at extreme prices. It really isn't necessary! I've been collecting for nearly two decades and I don't have it all. If I did, where would the thrill of the hunt be? I still find things here and there that can round out my collection. That is the fun of eBay. I'm not bankrupt as a result of my bidding. You shouldn't be either. 'Nuff said.

Production information

I am asked quite often ... "Just how many Crissy dolls *ARE* there!?" That is a very good question. eBay sellers would have you believe they are *RARE!* Truth is, they aren't. They are everywhere. At any given time, there are around 400 active internet auctions running for this doll and her family. A writer of books about antiques once said to me, "Something is considered

rare if you are lucky enough to see one example *in your lifetime*" (italics mine).

Simply put, if you've been to my website and seen the hundreds of dolls that are pictured there, then you've seen more than one example. The "rare" connotation just does not apply here. These dolls were mass-produced in every sense of the word.

So, as you've seen, there are thousands of these dolls around. How many were made? Well, there were never any production numbers released nor are any printed in any documentation that I own for any of this doll family. Historically, there were less made of the black versions. That is the same with all dolls, like one particularly famous 11.5 inch fashion doll. There just never was the demand for them.

If one were to just browse eBay for a week or two, you will find that we are not short of dolls by any means. If there were thousands upon thousands of them made commencing from 1969, then rest assured, there are still thousands of them in existence. Please keep that in mind when buying on-line or placing internet auction bids. The laws of supply and demand apply here. Save yourself some money!

The most common doll found is Crissy herself, with Velvet right behind her. The other dolls enjoyed high production numbers too, but not as many were made as Crissy and Velvet. Posin' Cricket and the two different Tressy dolls were Sears catalog exclusives. Their production numbers were about half of secondary dolls like Kerry, Mia, Brandi, and Dina.

Harder to find still is Tara, the aforementioned "black only" doll from 1976. Her production numbers fall behind Tressy and Posin' Cricket.

Very common and easy to find is Velvet's Little Sister from 1972. She gained her own name in 1973 and 1974. She was then 'Cinnamon with a Hairdoodler' and 'Cinnamon with the new Curly Ribbons,' respectively.

Other dolls with Crissy's body

Believe it or not, there are dolls out there with Crissy's body! Ideal leased their molds to several other companies. Clodrey in Canada is one such company. They made this "fashion" doll with Crissy's body, arms and legs. She didn't grow hair. Her head mold was completely different, very "dolly" -like and cutesy. She definitely isn't popular with mainstream collectors but advanced collectors do seem to bring these dolls into the collection. She is sort of dressed like Little Bo Peep in deep yellow/gold velvet. Her hair is either brunette or blonde and is set in ringlets. Even her shoes are white versions of Crissy's bow-flats. She is wearing hose, pantaloons, a large crinoline, her dress, a lace up vest and a flat hat.

In the United Kingdom, a doll was created called Sheena. She was 18" like Crissy and made by Palitoy. Palitoy was often licensed to use Ideal's molds for their own dolls. She came dressed in a lavender pants suit with lavender flats. Sometimes you will find those flats made in the style of Crissy's bow-flats in lavender! Very cool looking! She had several fashions that could be sold separately. Her body, grow hair mech, and arms are Ideal's. Her head and legs are different and styled by Palitoy.

Note: Ideal sold dolls in the UK under their own name. So, you can find Crissy and most of the collection, not all (like Sears Tressy and Cricket and not all of the clothing line), on auction sites in Ireland, England, Australia, and Canada. They differ somewhat from the American dolls in color of vinyl, hair quality, paint quality and function.

Another doll that one will find on occasion is Horsman's Pert 'N' Pretty doll. She was made in 1987 and 1988 and wearing a different outfit both years. This doll was made with molds left behind in the former Hong Kong Ideal factory. The body, grow hair mechanism, arms, legs and shoes are all made from Ideal's molds. It is questionable that the molds were used with permission. Perhaps that is why they didn't use Crissy's head mold, to keep her from being so identifiable. It was thought that perhaps they didn't have the head mold, but that isn't the case at all. There are two 'known' Pert 'N' Pretty prototypes in existence (one being in my personal collection) made with the Crissy head mold. Both dolls are very pale like the final version of P'N'P, have the same eyes as the P'N'P, and have the same facial paint tones. Crissy was never reissued with her original 18" molds and the Pert 'N' Pretty prototypes were the closest we've ever come to seeing one.

Will Crissy *ever* be reissued???

Probably not. She is currently owned by Mattel, Inc. Mattel purchased all of Ideal's intellectual property, including existing molds, likenesses, and trademarks in 1998. They have indicated on numerous times that they have no plans to reissue her.

They did however issue a license to Danbury Mint recently to recreate a smaller, porcelain version of Crissy. Many of these

dolls did not function and were returned to the factory. Since growing hair is Crissy's claim to fame, the returned dolls were destroyed and future production plans were halted. There are very few of these dolls in collections now.

Tips!

How about some tips... I have a lot of them as a result of collecting for so many years!

You will find white mold oftentimes on Crissy family doll eyes. Chip it off with a toothpick, outdoors, away from the other dolls. It's contagious. No kidding. The mold feeds on the little bit of adhesive behind the eye. After you chip it off, brush it away with a dry toothbrush. You will have to do this several times before it finally and completely goes away. Have patience and keep at it.

Can't get your doll's hand through her sleeves? Clip the corner off of a sandwich bag, put it over her hand, and then slip her hand into her sleeve. Works every time.

The directions that came with Crissy say to use a couple of drops of baby oil to keep her hair in condition. Do yourself a favor and don't. Baby oil, which is a petroleum distillate and is also known as mineral oil, gets gummy with age. It will not wash out.

Human hair products are meant for human hair. Hair made of nylon fibers cannot absorb the conditioning ingredients because nylon hair doesn't have a cuticle layer like human hair does. All it will do is sit there on top of the fiber and attract dust, dirt, and other environmental junk. Try Snuggle or Downy fabric softener instead. It is made for fibers and will work wonders for you. Washing the hair is easy... just use a little dish washing

detergent. The detergents are a terrific cleaner. It will strip out most built-up skin oils (yes some little one left his or her skin oils on YOUR doll's head...yuck), clinging dirt and dust, and pretty much any other goo that may be found on your doll's head. Rinse and follow up with fabric softener.

Be careful when washing vintage clothes. Dry cleaning is best for taffeta, velvet, lame', and other "dress-up" fabrics. Cold water and Woolite work well for others. If the fabric is deeply pigmented, it would be best to put some ice cubes in the water to keep the garment from fading. Press out excess water on clean white towels, hang it up on a dolly hanger, and put it in front of a fan to dry quickly, to reduce the chance of color run.

The doll itself can be cleansed well with a little *Resolve* carpet cleaner on a clean washcloth. Wipe the cleaner off with another clean cloth. *Resolve* is a wonderful cleaner and degreaser.

Stains on a doll are a real sticky-wicket. Sometimes it is just easier to change out an ink-stained limb. If you find makeup stains or ink on the face, try Oxy-10 cream (yes the zit treatment). Place it directly on the stain, full strength, and cover with a small square of plastic wrap. This will keep it from drying out too fast. Change the product daily. In 2 to 4 weeks, the stain will be gone. It does indeed take that long. Keep in mind that the stain has been there for decades, so 2 to 4 weeks is nothing. The stain has bonded to the vinyl because of the plasticizer. One of the purposes of this substance is to bond pigment with the vinyl formulation. Therefore, you can see why stains are so hard to remove. Have faith though! It can be done!

A synthetic "feather" duster, made of nylon fibers is great for dusting! These static dusters are wonderful and they won't

"rearrange" your dolls' hairstyles or mess up their clothes. Just take it outside between dustings and shake it!

Customizations

Everyone is doing it! Since Barbie doll collectors started customizing and rerooting new hair into their beater dolls, everyone has jumped onto the customization bandwagon. Rerooting doll hair is hard *and* it's easy. Some of us having been doing it for years and can breeze right through it. There are as many ways to reroot as there are artists that do it. It would be best to research the internet to find the method that suits you.

Repainting is covered in the book and on my website.

Many people are happy to just restore their dolls in original hair colors and paint colors. However, I'm sure that you've seen the hundreds of new and different ideas out there. Fantasy colors for both hair and makeup are fun. Changing your beat-up doll totally with a new and unexpected color is a nice departure from the same ole redhead Crissy or the usual blonde Velvet. Be sure to use a Sharpie pen to sign the back of your artwork with your name and date. After all, you will want credit for your work in 50 years when another collector owns *your* dolls!

A word about eye swapping... it used to be said that factory errors were fairly common on any mass produced doll. Unfortunately, you won't be finding such a factory error on a Crissy family doll. There are way too many people swapping out eyes now, diluting the factory-error doll market into non-existence. This collector prefers that dolls with damaged eyes receive eyes of the correct color. But, since that isn't always likely to happen, please sign your doll on her back if you tamper

with her in any way. All dolls in my collection that have changed eyes are signed to indicate that they aren't factory original.

So-called rarities NOT!

Okay, remember, there are no true rarities in the Crissy world. Yes, you are right, other books say there are but really, they do not exist.

Velvet dolls with green eyes, pink eyes, gray eyes, one eye one color and the other eye another color, are not factory errors. Velvet's purple eyes tend to oxidize when exposed to the environment and they turn colors.

What factory in their right mind, with a very good quality control department would actually put one pink eye in a doll and one purple eye in the other socket? Ideal would not have done this.

Kerry's eyes oxidize to a hazel color in the center with green edges. This is not factory.

Mia's eyes change to green on some occasions. The harder to find, blue eyed Posin' Cricket from Sears has Mia's eyes. She can oxidize to green too.

Sears Gorgeous Tressy and their Posin' Tressy also oxidize. Their blue eyes can get muddled over time and look downright spooky in turquoise.

The bottom line is that eyes for each of the dolls were very consistent and production records note what eye color was placed on the assembly line for the doll being assembled at the time (very strict quality control). The only exception is that Posin'

Cricket might have Mia's blue eyes instead of the usual hazel. The blue eyed Cricket will have darker auburn hair like Crissy and it will be of a wooly consistency. She was meant to be sold in one of the gift sets found in the 1972 Sears catalog. She was in The Wedding Belles bridesmaid gift set that came with a very sweet blue bridesmaid dress set.

Another item that you might have trouble coming up with but certainly isn't "rare" is one of the Marabou gowns that was sold on a hair to her feet, number one Crissy doll found in the 1969 Sears Wishbook. There were three versions. One is featured on the cover of my book. They fetch around \$300 on eBay. They were rather poorly made so they had a tendency to fall apart resulting in less today in existence than there were in 1969.

There is a Crissy version that came with rather brownish hair, the so-called "brown hair Crissy." Truthfully, she isn't brown, it's more of a auburn brown, heavy on the brown. This variation is only found on the number two Crissy (orange lace, hair to bottom). She isn't rare. I have quite a few of them.

Unusual but not rare is Talky Velvet with the typical foundation hairstyle. More often than not, Talky Velvet has a shag haircut that appears all choppy causing many new collectors to wonder if their doll has had a haircut. Talky Crissy also has a shag hairstyle.

About that outfit called The Bold Blazer... well, that one very nearly can be called rare, but I've seen it about 20 or 30 times in the last eighteen years. Be diligent in your search. It will show up and you will eventually be the owner of The Bold Blazer. After all, that IS the fun of collecting... the thrill of the find after a long search!! Have fun!

Crissy hugs and Velvet kisses,

Beth-Ellen Colvin, Atlanta, GA