

The Evolution of the Original Swiss Army Knife



Update to available information by request of James Christian
under the directive of Carl Elsener to Urs Wyss, (2006)

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| <p>1884 Jan. 1, Charles Elsener starts his own business</p> <p>1891 first contract to supply the Swiss Army with the sturdy Soldier's knife comprising large blade, screwdriver, can opener and reamer</p> <p>1897 June 12, official registration of the elegant officer's knife with additional small blade and corkscrew, developed by the founder</p> <p>1902 new models with additional wood saw, scissors, nickel silver tweezers, toothpick and lanyard shackle</p> <p>1909 metal cross inlay on the red fibre scales</p> <p>1923 available also in stainless steel</p> <p>1937 Cellidor scales replace the fibre scales</p> <p>1942 new screwdriver with cap lifter, nail file with nail cleaner on the back of the knife</p> <p>1946 new patented can opener (today used by Wenger)</p> <p>1951 improved new patented can opener with small screwdriver, Alox linings replace the nickel silver linings, new screwdriver with cap lifter, wire stripper and bender</p> <p>1952 square Phillips screwdriver in place of the corkscrew, large long nail file with nail cleaner, metal saw and file, fish scaler with hook disgorging</p> <p>1957 Introduction of aluminium tipped tweezers</p> <p>1961 new reamer with cutting edge, scales with invisible rivets</p> <p>1968 the shackle was officially replaced by the key ring with a longer transition period than normal (into the mid 1970s)</p> <p>1973 magnifying glass and Phillips screwdriver, small blade with pointed tip in place of clip blade</p> <p>1978 Introduction of plastic tipped tweezers</p> <p>1980 metal inlay inox instead of nickel-silver, round Phillips screwdriver with split for "meat cans."</p> <p>1982 Introduction of combi tool on 84 mm knives</p> <p>1983 patented mini-screwdriver</p> <p>1985 ballpoint pen, fine screwdriver, chisel, reamer, punch with sewing eye</p> | <p>1986 pliers with wire cutters, combi tool on 91 mm knives</p> <p>1987 Camouflage handles</p> <p>1990 Swiss watch in the handle</p> <p>1991 multi-purpose hook and pin, fluted corkscrew line stopped and replaced with solid model</p> <p>1992 golfer blade, solid round Phillips screwdriver</p> <p>1994 handles Nylon, mat</p> <p>1995 wire crimping tool in pliers</p> <p>1999 bit wrench and bit case</p> <p>1999 translucent scales</p> <p>2000 Altimeter electronics, removed long files out of catalogues some still in inventory</p> <p>2001 Voyager, small tweezers, new scales</p> <p>2002 LED-Module with Phillips screwdriver, Piezo lighter until 2005</p> <p>2003 stayglow scales, last year for metal tipped tweezers that were still in special handles such as horn, stag, etc. in special Swisschamp models. After 2003 special scale models had no tweezers or toothpicks.</p> <p>2004 magnifying glass, plastic</p> <p>2005 Traveller electronics, metal file stainless grinded, new stamping on big blade</p> <p>*There is always a shorter or longer transitional period when you improve or change something at a certain model. When we integrated the multi purpose hook we had both versions, with and without hook at stock. The same happened when we added the wire-crimping-tool to the pliers of the Swiss Army Knives. But normally, this transition period is not longer than 1 year. It could happen when it is a model which is sold only in very small quantities.</p> |
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Urs Wyss 04 OCT 06

Updated with additional information from Urs Wyss,
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