

A Steiff "Button in Ear" Primer

Written by Brenda Mize, Owner, Beacon's Glow Collectibles

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The Steiff "Button in Ear" (or "Knopf-im-Ohr") trademark truly distinguishes each and every teddy bear and plush animal as a symbol of ultimate quality for toys. The "Button In Ear" trademark was invented in 1904 by Franz Steiff, nephew of founder Margarete Steiff. It was designed to distinguish Steiff bears from all others. Since 1904, each and every piece that Steiff has produced has the Steiff trademark button attached to its left ear.

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To differentiate between Steiff's various collections, each teddy bear and animal produced wears a distinctively colored tag as well as metal embossed button. For example:

- Original Collection: comprised of a yellow Steiff ear tag with red writing and brass embossed button. Easily recognizable as an authentic Steiff Teddy Bear or Steiff animal.



- Limited Edition: comprised of a white ear tag with red writing and gold-plated embossed button. Recognized by Steiff collectors as a piece from a limited edition.

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- Replica: comprised of a white ear tag with black writing and silver-plated embossed button. These replica animals are reproduced exactly according to Steiff's historic role models from the past.



In 1904 all buttons were blank, and for a short timeframe, the Steiff corporate elephant could be seen on the button. But it was not until 1906 when just about all buttons featured the word "Steiff". On occasion reproductions of earlier models replicate the exact trademark button originally given to the item.

References:

1. Pfeiffer Gunther (2001) 100 Years Steiff Teddy Bears. Koelbin-Fortuna-Druck GmbH: Baden/Germany.
2. Margarete Steiff GmbH (<http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/margarete-steiff-gmbh-history/>)