

## Selecting Diamonds

Diamonds are graded for certification by laboratories using grading criteria. Four of these criteria are critical to understand when making a diamond purchase or investment. Known as the "Four C's" these criteria are: color, cut, clarity and carat.

Color is the result of the composition of a diamond and it does not change. When a jeweler is describing the color of a diamond they are referring to the presence or absence of color in white diamonds. Because a diamond with no color allows maximum light to pass through, colorless diamonds are preferred for their sparkle.

Cut refers to a diamonds reflective quality. Most diamonds are cut with 58 facets. The brilliance of diamonds is heavily dependent on the cut. The different angles and the finish of a diamond determine its ability to reflect light and cause its brilliance and fire. Remember that the cut of a diamond can have an impact on its durability as well as its beauty. Some cutting faults can make a diamond prone to breakage. A diamond that is cut too thin can also cause light to leak out of the back and the diamond will lose some of the sparkle and appear not to shine. So, as you can see the Cut is probably the most important of the Four C's.

During the formation process, inner flaws, or inclusions occur in most diamonds. The number and size of these inclusions determine what is referred to as the clarity of a diamond. Diamonds that are clear create more brilliance and therefore are rarer and highly priced. To be considered "flawless", a diamond must have no surface or internal imperfections visible upon being

viewed by a skilled diamond grader using  
10 power magnifications.

Carat is the unit of weight by which diamonds  
are measured. One carat is equal to 200  
milligrams. A carat is divided into 100  
segments called points. 150 points would  
equal one and a half carats.

When you go to the store to make that all  
important diamond purchase, do not be shy!  
Ask questions, get the answers needed to  
make an informed purchase. Shopping for  
certified diamonds enables you to make an  
informed selection. Knowing the "four C's"  
allows you to comparison shop and purchase  
the best diamond at a fair price. But, before  
making a purchase, shop around and decide  
what shapes and styles really appeal to you.  
Enjoy your diamond for years to come!

(word count 403)

PPPPP