

The 4 Cs of diamonds

By METRO CREATIVE

Diamonds are the stone of choice for engagement rings and wedding jewelry. Diamonds are durable and remain a timeless way to complement every style.

Anyone who is about to purchase a diamond is encouraged to do their research about selecting quality diamonds. At the heart of the diamond grading process are the 4 Cs of diamond quality. The Cs refer to carat weight, color grade, clarity grade, and cut grade. The Gemological Institute of America helped to create the Diamond 4 Cs and the International Diamond Grading System™. These benchmarks are used to classify all diamonds.

The following is the GIA's explanation of each component of the system.

Carat: Diamond carat weight is the measurement of how much the diamond weighs and is equivalent to 200 milligrams per carat. Each carat is subdivided into 100 points. Therefore, a one-carat diamond is 1.00 or 100 points, while a twenty-five point diamond is .25 carats. Naturally, larger diamonds can be more rare



and desirable.

Color: A white diamond is more valuable the less color it contains. GIA uses a D-to-Z grading system to determine a diamond's color value. D would be a colorless diamond and Z the most saturated with color.

Clarity: Diamonds are formed by carbon exposed to heat and pressure. Natural internal characteristics known as inclusions and external components called blemishes are the norm. The closer the gem comes to being perfectly pure without inclusions or blemishes, the greater the value.

Cut: To transmit light and sparkle, diamonds have to be cut precisely and with great artistry. A diamond will be further graded based on symmetry and proportions, as well as how the stone returns light. Brightness, which is the internal and external white light reflected; fire, or the scattering of white light into rainbow colors; and scintillation, or the sparkle the diamond produces, are factored into how the cut is valued.

Diamonds are a major investment. Consumers who do their research and verify diamond grading can get the best value for their money.

Did you know?

The per person average couples spend on guests at their weddings has risen considerably since 2009, as more and more couples seek to provide unique guest experiences.

According to The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study, which surveyed nearly 13,000 U.S.-based brides and grooms who tied the knot in 2017, **per-guest spending increased from \$194 in 2009 to \$268 in 2017.**

Some of that increase can be traced to couples wanting to provide memorable experiences, including customized entertainment, for their guests. Among the couples surveyed, **69 percent paid for photo booths** for their guests, while **24 percent provided sparklers. Twenty-two percent of couples included selfie stations or video booths** in the festivities, while **19 percent provided games** for guests during their receptions. The 2017 Real Weddings Study also found that customized entertainment options such as fireworks, cigar rolling stations, wine and liquor tastings, and magicians were more popular in 2017 than in 2009.

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