

stuart moore

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diamond basics

This video gives a practical view of how the present system of Diamond Grading, created in 1953, still works in gemological terms.

But.....

To understand how Grading affects price, don't miss our ground-breaking videos, "Certificates" and "Size vs Weight"; they could help you avoid a very costly error.....

To get the most beautiful stone, we believe the 4c's should normally be prioritized in this order:

cut, color, clarity, carat ...

Let's start with cut.

Note that cut, as I use the term, refers to the proportion, faceting and polish of the stone, not its shape.

Cut is a very tricky subject that is often over-simplified when presented to the consumer, even on the very best certificates. This simplification obscures the differences in how each stone 'greet the eye' (known as 'faces-up' in gem jargon).

For round, brilliant stones (all other shapes come under the term fancy shape) the best you can buy is what we call triple-ex, a stone the GIA has awarded its highest rating (excellent) for polish, symmetry and, most important, overall cut. This lets you know this stone is interacting with light in the best possible way.

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For all other shape stones, the cut varies so wildly, radically changing the way they face up, that we strongly recommend, whenever possible, comparing several stones, together, before buying.

If you prefer to buy online but don't want to end up with the wrong stone, we recommend going to our help section to speak with one of our diamond specialists.

now to color.

Think of color as a glass of water. Left alone it is deemed to be totally colorless which the GIA calls 'd'.

If I add a drop of scotch, the change in color, while not visible to the untrained eye, is detectable by trained eyes or the right instruments, so is an 'e' which also falls into the colorless category. Add another drop and we have an 'f' the last color in the colorless category.

Obviously, by adding more drops, you descend through the letters of the alphabet where a few people can see the tint in a 'g' and almost everybody in an 'i'. However, as shown in our video "Certificates", this is not quite as simple as it sounds.

Our recommendation, if the ring is to be platinum, is to try for an 'f' or higher so there's no contrast between the stone and the metal. But, if your ring will be yellow or rose gold, consider anything from 'd' down, but also seriously consider 'h' through 'm' which are way less costly and, if perfectly proportioned, can 'face up' beautifully in the 'warm' color metal.

Remember, the cost difference per color grade is considerable.

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next, clarity.

Take the glass of water, at any color level you want, and add grains of salt, or pepper, and call them inclusions.

Just as in a diamond, some inclusions will be white or so small you could have dozens and they would be invisible to the eye, while, in another stone, just one small carefully placed black bit is easily seen.

So as shown in our video, "Certificates", grading clarity is pretty subjective. Unless you want to become a gemologist we offer an easy solution to picking clarity. Unless you wish to buy a particular grade for some reason, buy at the point farthest down the scale where you can't find an inclusion with your eye.

That's 'eye clean' in gem jargon.

To achieve this, either online or in-store, we'll help you choose the right stone. If you're buying online, we suggest going to our help section to speak with one of our diamond specialists.

If you'd like to personally examine and compare several stones under a microscope yourself, we'll help you locate the inclusions with your own eyes. Then, taking the stone out of the scope, knowing exactly where those inclusions are, try hard to find them using no magnification.

If you can't find them, save the money. At that level they don't impact in any human-eye detectable way on the stone's brilliance. And, since you're not likely to walk around with a diamond-scope on your arm, your stone has passed the relevant eye-clean test.

Finally, remember every grade you can go down without crossing the eye-clean barrier saves you serious money.

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finally, weight.

Thank you for sticking around for this long video but this last bit is much shorter although no less important.

Our recommendation on carat weight is to listen to your partner as to what their priorities are but only after taking a few minutes to seriously take in our 'size versus weight' video. It gives information critical to your choice of carat weight and can save you from making a very big mistake.

Thank you.