

# Buying Diamonds With Confidence: Tips From The Experts

(NAPSA)—People mark special events with sentimental gifts of jewelry. While weddings reign as the biggest diamond event, there are many small yet glorious celebrations that are honored with beautiful sparklies, too, such as new jobs, anniversaries, graduations, births...the list, happily, is endless.

So how do people learn about diamonds so they can buy, own and enjoy them with confidence? The nonprofit Gemological Institute of America (GIA), the world's foremost authority on gems and jewelry and the creator of the famous "Four Cs" of diamonds, offers these five tips:

**Choose a qualified jeweler.** Select a jeweler as you would a doctor, a lawyer or any professional: Ask around. Find someone who is a trained gemologist, a GIA Graduate Gemologist or GIA Accredited Jewelry Professional, and is affiliated with a professional jewelry association.

**Research.** GIA's Web site at [www.gia.edu](http://www.gia.edu) offers in-depth information on diamonds, pearls and other gemstones. GIA even built a special [www.gia4cs.gia.edu](http://www.gia4cs.gia.edu) Web site on the Four Cs. Knowing the Four Cs helps you speak the language of diamonds and communicate with jewelers.

**Learn the "Four Cs."** All diamonds are rare and no two diamonds are alike. A diamond's quality and rarity are determined by its unique combination of char-



Photo by Robert Weldon, © GIA 2008

**A suite of diamonds including (clockwise from top) Asscher cut, pear shape, marquise shape and round brilliant cut. These diamond shapes remain popular in today's market.**

acteristics of Carat weight, Clarity, Color and Cut. The International Diamond Grading System, used around the world since its invention by GIA in the 1950s, is based on the Four Cs.

- **Carat:** Diamonds are weighed in metric carats. Two carats weigh about the same as a small paper clip. A carat is divided into 100 "points," so a diamond of 50 points weighs 0.50 carats.

- **Clarity:** Nearly all diamonds contain unique clarity characteristics. Flawless diamonds are exceptional and costly. Most inclusions are invisible unless magnified.

- **Color:** Colorless diamonds are extremely uncommon. Most diamonds have a slight yellow or brown tint. GIA uses letters to represent colors, beginning with D (colorless) and ending at Z (light yellow or brown). "Fancy colored diamonds" come in every color imaginable, are also very unusual and have their own GIA color-grading system.

- **Cut:** While diamonds come in different shapes, such as round, pear or marquise, the term "cut" refers to proportion. The well-cut, balanced diamond has unbridled brilliance, sparkle and fire.

**Get an independent diamond grading report.** A diamond grading report tells you the exact gemological quality of your diamond. Is it a natural diamond? Is it a synthetic diamond? Has it been treated and how? What are its quality ratings according to the Four Cs?

**Have your diamond appraised and insured.** A diamond grading report describes the precise gemological quality of your diamond while an appraiser puts a monetary value to the stone. You can laser inscribe a personal message or the diamond's unique GIA grading report number on the diamond's girdle.

Like true love, a diamond's light and brilliance won't fade with time. To learn more about diamonds, visit GIA's Web site at [www.gia.edu](http://www.gia.edu) or GIA's Four Cs Web site at [www.gia4cs.gia.edu](http://www.gia4cs.gia.edu).