

Bridal Advice

Rings Worth Committing To: A Groom's Guide

(NAPSA)—It's one of the ironies of love and marriage: Whether for romantic or other reasons, the onus for buying the rings often falls on the very person who knows the least about jewelry—the groom-to-be.

So maybe the best piece of advice for any male out there is this: Pretend you're shopping for a new car and do as much homework as you would before entering the showroom. Read on for some other useful tips:

- **Don't Rush It**—Most men take one to three months to find the right engagement ring. But you might be able to save yourself some time and stress by shopping for all three rings—the engagement ring and separate wedding bands for bride and groom—at once.

"Finding three rings at the same time takes some of the pressure off the groom because it means a big part of the wedding to-do list will already be taken care of," says jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor. "Also, it's easy to decide what will coordinate with the engagement ring if you see them all at the same time." Web sites like www.whiteflash.com are terrific resources for visualizing what you need before



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buying, and that particular site's policies are great when it comes to returns and lifetime trade-ups in case you decide to buy a larger stone with a different Platinum setting.

- **Know The Lingo**—You already know that car dealers react differently to buyers who know

what they're talking about. So come armed with a few choice buzzwords technically known as "the four Cs": "cut" (the proper proportions, whether a pear, oval or other shape, optimize a diamond's natural radiance); "clarity" (the



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fewer a diamond's flaws, the more valuable it is); "color" (whitest is best); and "carat" (although a higher carat weight may increase a diamond's rarity and value, small stones can still be more expensive if the other three Cs rate highly). And remember: The center diamond generally accounts for most of the ring's price, so it's important to invest in a quality Platinum setting—which most brides prefer, according to the latest surveys—that will hold the diamond securely in place for a lifetime.

- **Know Her Style**—The good news is that the three rings you buy don't necessarily have to match. "The band and engagement ring just need to work well with one another and complement your bride's personal style," O'Connor explains. "Is she 'girly' or outdoorsy? Modern or traditional?" If you're having trouble figuring out what she likes, talk to her friends or hit a few jewelry stores together.

- **Determine A Budget**—Most men set aside two months' salary for the engagement ring alone. So if you're buying all three Platinum rings at once, figure on budgeting another month's salary for the additional two rings.

For more information and tips, visit www.engagementguide.com, www.preciousplatinum.com and www.whiteflash.com.