

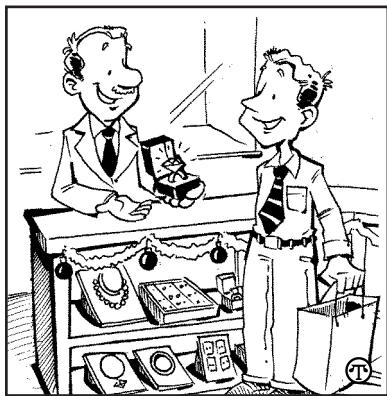
# HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

## Unwrap The Mystery Of Diamond Buying

(NAPSA)—Now that the brisk chill of autumn is settling in, winter can't be far away—and that means the holiday season is just around the corner. If you're thinking of buying that special someone a diamond—the ultimate symbol of love and romance—shop wisely. This rare gemstone is not only a beautiful gift, but also a treasured heirloom, and should be treated as such.

The first rule when choosing a diamond is to make sure it is accompanied by a grading report issued by the nonprofit Gemological Institute of America (GIA), regarded worldwide as the hallmark of integrity, reliability and consistency. As creators of the Four C's (carat weight, cut, clarity and color), the international standard of grading diamonds, GIA has served the gem and jewelry industry and protected the public trust for more than 70 years.

The GIA Gem Trade Laboratory employs more than 400 laboratory staff, the core of whom is a team of the most highly trained diamond graders, gemologists and research scientists in the world. Using state-of-the-art technology and meticulous procedures, GIA's Laboratory staff evaluate the unique quality factors that affect each diamond's value. These properties are then detailed on GIA's grading reports, which are considered by the jewelry industry to be the most precise and trustworthy available.



### Consumers should understand what to look for when shopping for diamonds.

Thomas C. Yonelunas, chief executive officer of the GIA Gem Trade Laboratory, reminds consumers that it is imperative to have an understanding of the Four C's before buying a diamond.

“To the untrained eye, many diamonds look alike. But in fact, every polished diamond has its own unique set of characteristics that distinguishes it from other diamonds in the marketplace,” said Yonelunas. “The GIA Diamond Grading Report contains a complete quality analysis of each diamond, including the Four C's; understanding these features is a consumer's best bet when it comes to making an educated diamond purchase.”

Each of the Four C's is rated differently and is determined as follows:

**Carat Weight:** A diamond is weighed in metric carats; one carat is just over seven-thousandths of an ounce. Diamonds are normally weighed to the thousandth of a carat and then rounded to the nearest hundredth.

**Cut:** Most people think cut refers to a diamond's shape, but regardless of shape, a well-cut diamond is bright, fiery and shimmers with light. Well-balanced proportions and a high polish will create magnificent brilliance, fire and scintillation.

**Clarity:** Diamonds have distinctive internal features called inclusions and subtle surface irregularities called blemishes. The degree to which these marks affect the appearance of a diamond will determine its clarity grade. The GIA Clarity Scale ranges from *flawless*, under ten-power magnification, to *included*. Flawless and internally flawless diamonds are very rare and, therefore, more valuable.

**Color:** Most diamonds range from colorless to light yellow and are graded for their relative lack of color. The less color, the higher the value. The GIA Color Scale ranges from D, which is absolutely colorless, all the way to Z, which includes diamonds that are light yellow and brown in color.

To learn more about buying a diamond, check out GIA's free, interactive, “How to Buy a Diamond” tutorial, which is featured online at [www.gia.edu](http://www.gia.edu).