

Diamond Characteristics

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Introduction

The brilliance and everlasting beauty of diamonds have been used to symbolise love and devotion throughout history. With the first diamond set ring being used as a promise of marriage as far back as the middle ages this rare and beautiful gem stone is now more popular than ever. Its beauty and versatility enables the diamond to be used in a wide variety of jewellery set in white gold, yellow gold, platinum and silver.

Creating a source of fascination for centuries diamonds are the most precious and enduring of all gemstones. When a diamond reaches the earth's surface, after billions of years in the making, the true brilliance of each individual stone is known. It is only after this long and difficult journey that an exquisite piece of diamond jewellery can be produced that you will treasure and admire for years to come.

When choosing a piece of diamond jewellery there are four main aspects that should be taken into consideration which relate to the quality of the diamond, these are known as the 4 C's. The colour, clarity, cut and carat weight of a diamond combine to create a stone that is as unique and individual as a snowflake.

With a wide range of diamond set rings and jewellery available in a variety of styles and designs we have something to suit all budgets and occasions.

The expertise of our skilled goldsmiths and the close links developed with our manufacturers enables us to offer even more choice. Specific items can be made to meet your personal requirements, so if you are looking for something extra special please contact us for further information.

The 4 C's

Cut, clarity, colour and carat weight were all identified as being important measures of diamonds as far back as the 1930's when the 4 C's grading system was brought in to use by the Gemmological Institute of America. As each individual diamond is unique using an internationally recognised grading system provides a standard measure of diamond quality throughout the world.

It is the interplay of these four important characteristics that determine the value, rarity and beauty of each individual diamond.

Cut

The cut of a diamond is the only one of the 4 C's not naturally created and also refers to the shape of the stone, this ranges from the traditional round stones to more elaborate fancy shapes such as hearts and pears. The shape of diamond you choose is down to personal preference, the classical round brilliant cut is always a popular choice for engagement rings followed by the elegant emerald cut and the square shaped princess cut.

Before achieving the desired shape a rough diamond must first be assessed by a skilled craftsman. The craftsman will determine the best cut to use and by creating many facets within the diamond will ensure maximum sparkle, brilliance and fire is achieved.

Certificated diamonds are assessed on the basis of the ideal cut. When a diamond is ideally cut, rays of light enter the diamond from all angles and are bent towards the centre of the stone; they are then reflected back through the top of the diamond in a blaze of fire creating a stone that truly sparkles.

Below is an example of some of the most popular cuts available today



Diamond Characteristics

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Colour

Diamonds conjure up images of brilliant white glittering stones with their many facets creating an explosion of fire as they catch the light. In fact diamonds actually range in colour from deep yellow to the most desirable and higher quality bright white that we all recognise.


Measured on a scale from D to Z, to allow for the discovery of new brighter and whiter stones, the colour grades are split into bands with the most desirable grades of D, E and F, known as colourless or exceptional white, at the top of the scale.

The difference between each grade is difficult to see with the naked eye but when diamonds are graded at K or below the difference is easier to spot. At grade K the diamond possesses a yellow tint that becomes more noticeable, turning to brown, the further down the scale you go.

To ensure you have the best diamond colour possible the majority of certificated diamonds we sell are guaranteed to be a minimum of a J colour offering the best quality and value for money.

An example of a diamond colour scale can be seen below.

GIA *	D E F	G H I J	K L M	N O P Q R	S T U V W X Y Z
Colour Grading System	Colourless	Near Colourless	Faint Yellow	Very Light Yellow	Light Yellow



* GIA, Gemmological Institute of America

Clarity

Although diamonds give the appearance of being completely clear the majority actually carry small inclusions often referred to as "nature's fingerprints". These inclusions can appear as tiny white feathers or dark crystals and are unique to each individual stone. A skilled cutter will be able to cut a diamond to minimise the visibility of any inclusions however in most instances these markings will still be seen.

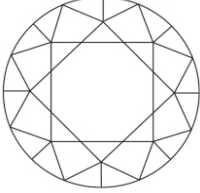
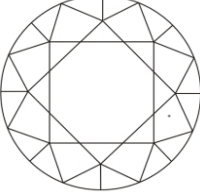
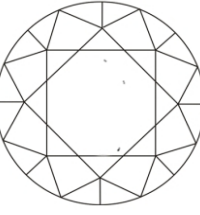
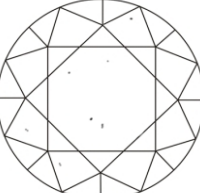
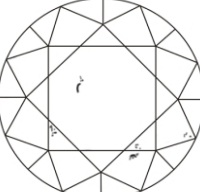
The number of inclusions and their visibility within the diamond determines the value and quality of the stone with the least number of inclusions making a diamond more desirable. As most inclusions are invisible to the naked eye the clarity grading system is based on how visible inclusions are at x10 magnification.

The clarity of a diamond, like the colour, is also divided into grades, on a scale ranging from I (included) to FL (flawless) the rarest and most desirable grade is that of a flawless diamond which has no visible inclusions within the stone ensuring maximum brilliance and sparkle.

The majority of our certificated diamond rings range from the popular Vs grade which has very few inclusions creating the appearance of a beautifully clear stone, to I2 which will have several more visible inclusions. The visibility of these inclusions can depend on the cut of the diamond as they can be hidden by the facets within the stone and sometimes by the setting itself.

Diamond Characteristics

GIA Definitions of Diamond Clarity Grades According to Internal Defects

<p>FL-IF</p>  <p>Internally Flawless</p>	<p>Flawless (FL) diamonds have no inclusions or blemishes visible under 10x magnification.</p> <p>Internally Flawless (IF) diamonds have no inclusions visible under 10x magnification, only small blemishes on the diamonds surface.</p>
<p>VVS1-VVS2</p>  <p>Very Very Slight Inclusions</p>	<p>Very, Very Slightly Included (VVS) diamonds have minute inclusions that are very difficult for a skilled grader to see under 10x magnification.</p> <p>The VVS category is divided into two grades; VVS1 denotes a higher clarity grade than VVS2.</p>
<p>VS1-VS2</p>  <p>Very Slight Inclusions</p>	<p>Very Slightly Included (VS) diamonds have minor inclusions that are difficult to somewhat easy for a trained grader to see when viewed under 10x magnification.</p> <p>The VS category is divided into two grades; VS1 denotes a higher clarity than Vs2. Typically the inclusions in VS diamonds are invisible without magnification, however infrequently some VS2 inclusions may still be visible to the eye.</p>
<p>SI1-SI2</p>  <p>Slight Inclusions</p>	<p>Slightly Included (SI) diamonds have noticeable inclusions that are easy to very easy for a trained grader to see when viewed under 10x magnification.</p> <p>The SI category is divided into two grades; SI1 denotes a higher clarity grade than SI2. These inclusions are not usually noticeable to the naked eye.</p>
<p>I1 I2 I3 / P1 P2 P3</p>  <p>Imperfect</p>	<p>Included diamonds (I) have obvious inclusions that are clearly visible to a trained grader under 10x magnification. Included diamonds have inclusions that are usually visible without magnification or have inclusions that threaten the durability of the stone.</p> <p>The I category is divided into three grades; I1/P1 denotes a higher clarity grade than I2/P2, which in turn is higher than I3/P3. Inclusions in I1/P1 diamonds are often seen to the unaided eye. I2/P2 inclusions are easily seen, while I3/P3 diamonds have large and extremely easy to see inclusions that typically impact on the brilliance of the diamond.</p>

Diamond Characteristics



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Carat Weight

The fourth and final C is carat which surprisingly refers to a diamonds weight not its physical size. It is for this reason that two diamonds of the same carat weight can appear different sizes depending on how they have been cut.

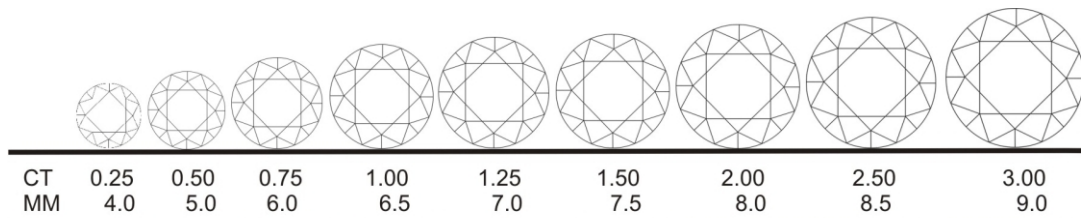
Carats are measured on a scale from 0.05 to 4 carats and can also be expressed as "points". A one carat diamond, for example, can also be referred to as 100 points and ½ carat is 50 points.

Larger diamonds are always rarer than smaller ones making them more desirable but this does not mean that a large stone will be of a better quality than a smaller one. The carat weight of a diamond should always be considered along with the other three C's in order to obtain a stone with maximum impact and fire.

A diamonds carat weight, along with the other three C's, will have an effect on its price. Diamond prices rise on a non-linear scale and as certain carat weights, such as ½ and ¾ of a carat, are more desirable than others their price rises accordingly. Due to their rarity larger diamonds will always be more expensive than a smaller stone of the same quality. For example, a 2 carat diamond will always cost more than two 1 carat diamonds when all other elements of the 4 C's are constant.

When all other things are equal, the greater the carat weight, the rarer the diamond and the more expensive it is.

An example of carat weight sizes can be seen below but should be used as a guide only, as diamonds are measured by weight and not size the overall diameter (shown in mm) may be slightly larger or smaller even though the carat weight is correct.



This image is not to scale and diamond pictures are shown for comparison purposes only.



Diamonds at Chapelle Jewellery

With an extensive range of beautiful diamond jewellery available both on our website and in our stores we have something to suit all tastes and budgets.

Our large selection of styles and our knowledgeable and friendly staff make us confident that we can help you choose your perfect piece of diamond jewellery and if you are looking for something a little different we will be happy to help with this too!

We offer fantastic value and exceptional quality on all our diamond jewellery so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have an enquiry. Our customer service lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.



Diamond Characteristics

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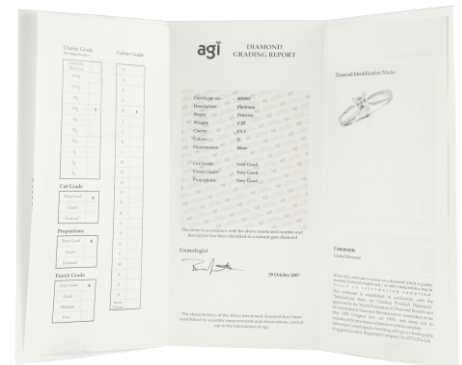
Certification Bodies

A large range of diamond jewellery we sell is supplied with a certificate or diamond warranty which, after the diamond has been independently assessed by a qualified gemmologist, provides an accurate record of the diamonds cut, colour, clarity and carat weight. As these certificates are unique to each individual diamond in a piece of jewellery this provides peace of mind that the diamond you have purchased is of the quality stated.

Although many of the independent bodies mentioned below do provide detailed diamond reports/certificates it has become usual for a credit card size summary report to be provided as certification. This smaller version provides all the relevant information relating to the colour, cut, clarity and carat weight of the diamond in a neat format for easy storage.

AGI - Antwerpse Gemologische Interstelling

AGI launched its diamond grading and certification service in 1989 to meet a growing demand for independently assessed diamonds. With offices in Antwerp, Manchester and Bangkok the AGI has an excellent reputation for objectivity and quality, this certification body issues certificates according to international standards and independently assesses all of its diamonds according to the 4 C's.



Example of AGI certification

Anchorcert

The Anchorcert service, provided by a team of diamond assessors within the Assay Office, is one of the only two UK bodies to assess diamonds according to the international standards of the 4 C's.



Example of AnchorCert documentation

EGL - European Gemmological Laboratory

The European Gemmological Laboratory operates across 10 countries, its newest office opened in India in 2003. The certificates are compiled following assessment according to the 4 C's by independent gemmologists.



Example of EGL certificate

Diamond Characteristics

GIA - Gemmological Institute of America

Established in 1931 and the creator of the 4 C's for diamond grading, the GIA is a well-respected independent body within the diamond industry employing over 1,100 employees worldwide. A non-profit organisation, the GIA is a leader in diamond research and education, having developed the clarity grading used by most diamond buyers.

Example of GIA documentation



GSL - Gem Scan Laboratories

With offices in Dallas, Mumbai and Toronto, Gem Scan provides an independent diamond grading service for jewellery manufacturers and retailers. Like other international diamond assessment bodies, Gem Scan grade diamonds according to the 4 C's.

Selection of GSL reports



HRD - Hoge Raad voor Diamant

HRD is the internationally recognised coordinating body and official representative of the diamond sector in Belgium. All diamond imports and exports in Belgium must pass through this body. The HRD certificates department assesses loose diamonds according to the 4 C's, issuing the appropriate certificate as a result.



Example of HRD certificate

IGI - International Gemmological Institute

Employing over 450 people and operating from 12 countries worldwide, the IGI is recognised as a leading certification body, issuing in excess of 1 million diamond reports every year. These reports are produced by independent gemmologists according to international standards.

INTERNATIONAL GEMMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE DIAMOND REPORT			
REPORT NO	F3B12345	DATE	December 19, 2002
SHAPE / CUT	ROUND BRILLIANT CUT	FINISH	VERY GOOD/VERY GOOD
WEIGHT	0.77 CT	TABLE	61 %
MEAS.	5.80 - 5.84 x 3.63 mm	CROWN	14.5 %
CLARITY	VS2	PAVILION	43.5%
COLOR	G	CULET	POINTED
FLUORESCENCE	NONE	GIRDLE	MEDIUM

Example of IGI diamond report

