

INDEPENDENT  
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# the perfect wedding



A diamond engagement ring is a symbol of love and romance. No two diamonds are alike, so when selecting a diamond, consumers should visit a reputable jeweler whom they know and trust.

## Remember the four C's: Buying a diamond engagement ring

The diamond engagement ring has been a symbol of love and romance since 1477 when Archduke Maximilian of Austria gave Mary of Burgundy a gold ring set with a diamond as a token of his love.

Today, the tradition of the diamond engagement ring continues.

According to a new consumer survey, 70 percent of all brides-to-be receive one.

A diamond is an expression of individuality. Just as love is unique, no two diamonds are alike. Each diamond has its own personality and sparkle. Therefore, when purchasing a diamond engagement ring, it is important to become an informed consumer.

A little knowledge can go a long way to help unearth the best-quality diamond within a budget. Understanding diamonds requires knowledge of the four C's: cut, color, clarity and carat weight. These four variables are key to answering the elusive question as to why two diamonds of equal size may not be of equal value.

• **Cut** — Although diamonds can be cut in

several shapes, like oval, marquise, pear or round, it is the quality of the cut that gives the stone its brilliant sparkle. Light is reflected best when all of the facets are perfectly proportioned.

• **Color** — The best color is no color. A totally colorless diamond best allows white light to pass effortlessly through it and be dispersed as rainbows of color.

• **Clarity** — The term "clarity" refers to a diamond's lack of naturally occurring inclusions, often called "nature's fingerprints," most of which are not visible to the naked eye. The fewer the inclusions, the more valuable the diamond.

• **Carat** — Carat refers to the weight of the stone. There are 100 points in a carat. Therefore, a diamond of 50 points weighs one-half of a carat.

Deciding how much to spend on a diamond engagement ring is very personal and obviously depends on income. Most people find the two months' salary guideline to be helpful in determining how much to spend. Most importantly, choose the finest-quality diamond

affordable, because a diamond engagement ring is a unique symbol of commitment that will be treasured for many years.

To find out how to get the best diamond, consumers should visit a

reputable jeweler whom they know and trust.

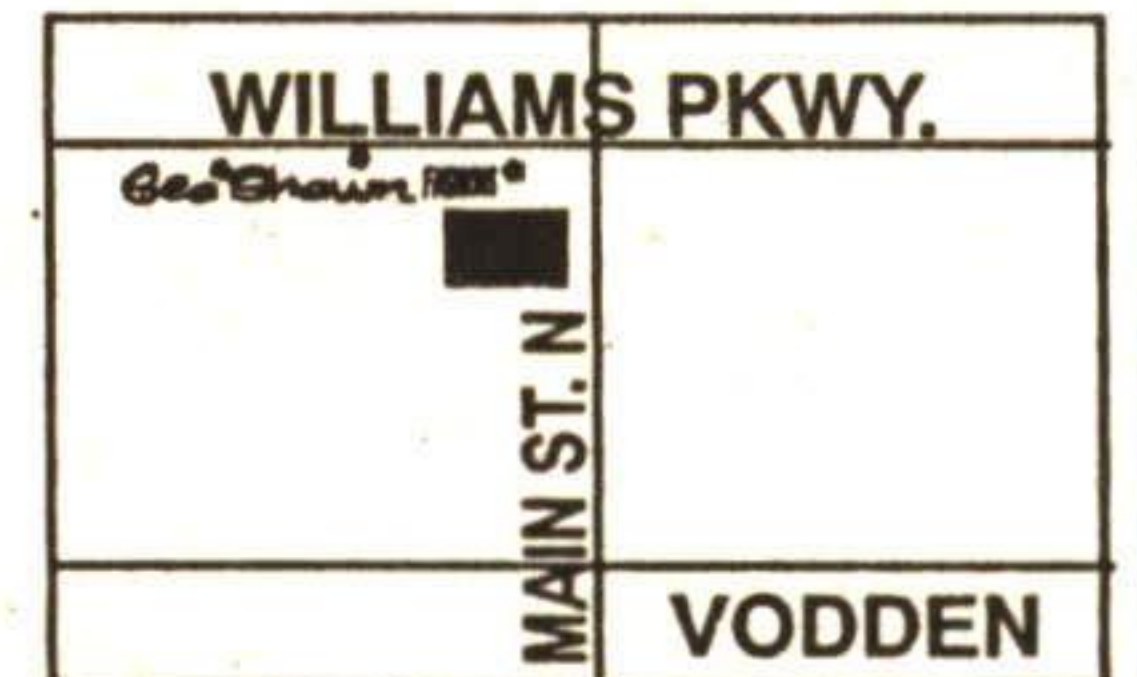
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- Consider having fewer attendants in your bridal party.
- Make your honeymoon plans when special air-fare programs are advertised.

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DEADLINE FOR ENTRY IS 3:00 P.M., FEB. 8, '96

Winner must be available for photo & interview on Feb. 9, '96

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