

BRIDAL GUIDE '98

Cut, Colour And Clarity

(CGA)—As a gemstone, the diamond is beautiful, durable and rare. Its beauty comes from being brilliant and from flashes of spectral colours or fire seen inside the stone and is determined by cut, colour and clarity. These three qualities combined with the carat weight of the stone will determine how onerous a particular diamond is going to be on the pocketbook. These four C's of the trade should also include a fifth C—the customer.

Prior to diamond cutting and polishing, which began in the early part of the 14th century, it was taboo to cut a diamond because it might lose

its magical powers. In the early 16th century, the historically famous Koh-i-Noor diamond from India was first cut as a shallow stone probably to retain as much weight as possible. It was recut in the early 19th century to its present, smaller shape, which is more brilliant and conforms to modern standard proportions. The proportions of the round brilliant and other cuts such as princess, marquise, pear, heart, oval and step, collectively called fancy cuts, have evolved with time and have been standardized to produce the maximum amount of brilliance and fire in a stone.

The round cuts show the most brilliance compared to other fancy shapes. This is why this is the most common shape sold for jewellery. Some of the new cuts such as princess (quadrillion) or radiant provide brilliance close to the round cuts. Many people prefer fancy shapes because of their sleekness and elegance. Most fancy shapes of diamond look bigger than the same weight of round cut because of their slender shape and often shallow pavilion, particularly shapes like marquise, pear and trillion.


Selection of a colour in a diamond is a matter of personal preference. Colourless diamonds enjoy the most sales. Most colourless diamonds normally have a slight tint of yellow, grey or brown. The price of the stone decreases with the increase of these tints.

For an average customer, colour grades from D to J in mounted jewellery are difficult to differentiate. Price-wise D (no colour) is the most expensive colour and N through Z the least expensive.


Natural inclusions of other minerals, small diamonds and fractures found inside a diamond create an obstacle in the path of light, thus reducing the amount of light that can enter and be internally reflected in the stone to affect its brilliance. A system of clarity

grading based upon the visibility of inclusions under 10x magnification has been developed and internationally accepted. The categories vary from flawless (FL) with no inclusions to heavily included or imperfect (I1, I2 & I3), where inclusions are clearly visible with the naked eye. The diamonds with higher-clarity-grade cost more than the ones with lower clarity. The price of a higher-clarity-grade diamond will also depend on its colour as well as its cut.

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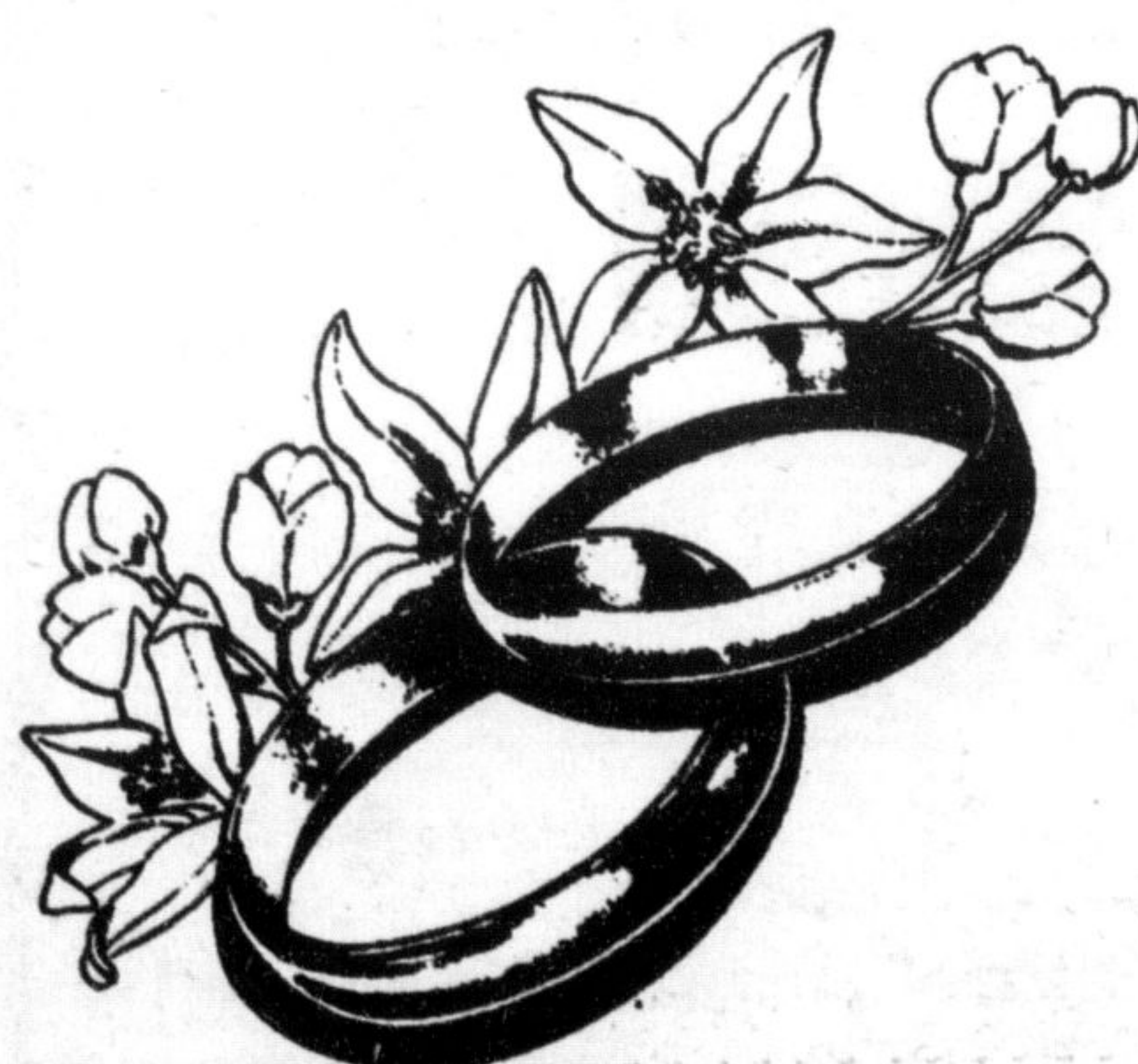
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