

Improve Cupid's Aim with Five Simple Steps for Buying Jewelry

(NAPSA)—From diamonds to pearls, every girl melts at the thought of beautiful jewelry from her sweetie for Valentine's Day. But how does a guy know what to buy? And where does he even begin?

Step 1: Recognize her tastes.

Hearts are always a favorite on Cupid's Day, and the shape is in style year round. Red gems, like ruby and garnet, are also a passion of the ladies on this romantic day. You can also personalize the gift by having your jeweler engrave your Valentine's name, or a message, on the jewelry. Pearls are a classic gift, and diamonds are also a hit on this day for lovers.

Step 2: Go to a professionally trained jeweler. Dealing with a reputable, qualified jeweler can make your shopping experience easier and safer. The independent, nonprofit Gemological Institute of America (GIA) recommends checking a jeweler's education and buying from someone with recognized industry credentials, such as a Graduate Gemologist (G.G.) or Accredited Jewelry Professional (A.J.P.). Look for affiliations with jewelry industry groups and professional associations too.



Photo courtesy Platinum Guild International



Visit GIA's Web site, www.gia.edu, to take an online tutorial on how to buy a diamond for your Valentine.

Step 3: Learn the Four Cs of diamonds. She might adore the hue of a hot red gem, yet if you choose to purchase a diamond for your Valentine, you'll want to know how diamond professionals worldwide use the Four Cs—color, clarity, cut, and carat weight—to classify and price diamonds. A knowledgeable seller will clearly explain the Four Cs and encourage you to compare diamonds to suit your price range. You can also take a quick tutorial to learn about the four diamond value

factors at www.gia.edu.

Step 4: Get your papers.

Every diamond should come with an independent report or evaluation from an accredited gemological laboratory. GIA issues Diamond Grading Reports for diamonds and identification reports for other gemstones. They can be requested from your jeweler.

Step 5: Secure your purchase.

Before you surprise your Valentine with jewelry, have the piece appraised and insured. Appraisers and insurers increasingly rely on laboratory's diamond grading or identification reports to accurately evaluate diamonds and other gems.

The GIA Gem Laboratory can also laser-inscribe the diamond's unique Diamond Grading Report number on the gem's girdle (outside edge). The number is permanently recorded, and it can provide verification if the diamond is ever lost or stolen. Personalized messages can also be inscribed for a unique touch.

For more information about gems and jewelry and GIA's gem and jewelry education, visit www.gia.edu, or call 800-421-7250.