

What to Look For When Buying Fine Jewelry

For centuries, fine jewelry has been one of the most popular gifts that people buy for all kinds of special occasions. While buying fine jewelry and fine gemstone jewelry is enjoyable for many, a lot of people can find the task rather daunting. Why, you ask Well, there are a couple reasons.

First off, the decision to buy fine jewelry, including designer jewelry and handcrafted designer jewelry, is a quite expensive one and one that should not be taken lightly. Even if you have all the money in the world, it still helps to be educated on fine jewelry, and all of the terms used in the industry.

Secondly, with all of the fine jewelry and designer jewelry collections available out there, one can literally spend hours figuring out what type of jewelry to buy. Necklace or ring One carat or two Yellow gold or white gold Designer jewelry or designer inspired jewelry

In order to make your next fine jewelry venture a great one, here is some information that will aid you in getting the best quality jewelry for your money, whether shopping in a traditional fine jewelry store or online.

Gold Jewelry

Dense, shiny and the most malleable and ductile of the known metals, gold is one of the most popular choices for fine jewelry. When used by itself, the word gold means all gold or 24 karat gold. Because it is soft, 24 karat gold is commonly mixed with other metals by jewelry designers to increase its hardness and durability.

One can learn about what proportion of gold is mixed with other metals based on its karat quality. For instance, fourteen karat jewelry contains 14 parts of gold, mixed in throughout with 10 parts of base metal. Hence, the higher the karat rating, the higher the proportion of gold is in the piece of fine jewelry.

Although karat marking is not required by law, most reputable designer jewelry and other fine jewelry are marked with its karat quality. Next to the mark should be the trademark of the company that stands behind the mark. A quality piece of fine jewelry will always have the trademark name, symbol, or initials. The term solid gold refers to an item made of any karat gold, if the inside of the item is not hollow.

Platinum, Silver & More

Platinum is one of the most expensive precious metals used to make fine jewelry. It is preferred by jewelry designer Peretti, as well as several other fine jewelry designers. More expensive than gold, platinum is typically mixed with other similar metals that are known as the platinum group metals: iridium, palladium, ruthenium, rhodium, and osmium.

As compared with gold fine jewelry, different markings are used on platinum modern designer jewelry as well. Quality markings for platinum are based on parts per thousand. For instance, the marking 900 Platinum refers to the fact that 900 parts out of 1000 are pure platinum. This can also be shown as 90% platinum and 10% other metals. When making fine jewelry, designer jewelry, or designer inspired jewelry, the abbreviations for platinum used are Plat. or Pt. Any fine jewelry items that consist of at least 950 parts per thousand pure platinum are allowed to be marked as platinum.

Silver or sterling silver refer to fine jewelry that contains at least 92.5% silver. Oftentimes, silver products such as handcrafted designer jewelry are marked 925, which means that 925 parts per thousand are pure silver. All quality-marked silver is required by law to bear the name or a U.S. registered trademark of the company or jewelry designer that will stand behind the mark.

Fine gemstone jewelry pertains to both natural gemstones and laboratory-created stones.

Fine jewelry made with real or natural pearls are very rare. They are made by oysters and other mollusks. Because they are so rare, most pearls used in fine jewelry are either cultured or imitation pearls. Cultured pearls refer to those grown by mollusks, but with human intervention. Imitation pearls are man-made, typically with glass, plastic, or organic materials.

Diamonds

And last but not least in the fine jewelry arena are diamonds perhaps the biggest seller of all for all types of designer jewelry and replica designer jewelry. The value of a diamond is based on the widely known 4 Cs, which stand for color, cut, clarity, and carat. The clarity and color of diamonds are typically graded using a number of different systems. Diamond weight is typically stated in carats, and can be described in decimal or fractional parts of a carat.

Many designer inspired jewelry and replica designer jewelry use imitation diamonds, which are know as cubic zirconia in their fine jewelry. They largely resemble diamonds but are much less costly and far less valuable.

About the Author

Stephanie Martin is a veteran insider of both the Los Angeles entertainment scene and the New York City fashion industry. Stephanie's unique background and her love of luxury jewelry have enabled her to identify and bring to Esteffe.com a collection of [fine jewelry](#) from many of the industry's most talented designers including [Kenneth Jay Lane](#), CC Skye, Ted Rossi, Vilaiwan, and R.J. Graziano.