



MSG JEWELLERS

Gem Talk

by Michael S. George

*MSG Jewellers helps you buy diamonds with confidence . .
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Platinum

In this issue we will be speaking about platinum. It's beauty, it's hardness, and the technicalities of fine platinum jewelry. As many of you already know, platinum is the most precious of all metals and it's beauty, purity, and rarity make it one of the most sought after metals in the world for jewelry , as well as for investments.

In fact, platinum is represented in 97% of all bridal jewelry in Japan compared to 25% in the United States, but growing. Platinum is making a strong comeback from days prior to the war and right after the war because there has been a new surge of recognition of the benefits of platinum.

Platinum jewelry is typically pure platinum. It's Hypo-allergenic and won't tarnish. It's also the hardest precious metal that we know of. And, it's very rare. In fact, it takes 10 tons of ore and approximately 8 weeks to produce just one ounce of platinum. An interesting tidbit: a six square inch cube of platinum weighs 165 pounds. It's a very dense metal as you can see. Yet it is the strongest and most enduring of the precious metals that we presently have. Though it is white in color, it typically has a different tint and richness than that of white gold or sterling silver.

Because of its durability, some of the world's greatest treasurers have been set in platinum, including the Hope Diamond. When platinum is polished, it's more scratch resistant than 10, 14, or 18 karat gold. Even when it is scratched, it generally suffers no loss of metal as other silver and gold jewelry may. These are just some of the reasons why platinum has become the metal of prestige and used so widely these days. It has a much higher melting point than gold, typically 1768 degrees Celsius. That's 3214 degrees Fahrenheit.

But I would like to address a concern in our industry: dealing with platinum. In most cases when jewelry is labeled "Platinum," it is pure platinum. That means that there is no alloying of that metal. It can contain some minor alloys, up to 50 parts per thousand and still be considered pure platinum. However, any more alloying than 50 parts per thousand would be like taking pure gold and adding metals to harden it and that's how we result in 21, 18, and 14 karat gold. Typically when platinum has been alloyed, it's given the numeric value based upon the percentage of platinum to alloy. For example, 800 platinum, 850 platinum, 900 platinum. Showing that in 850 platinum, it is 150 parts alloy and 850 parts platinum. Please keep in mind that when alloying platinum, the value of that merchandise has gone down dramatically. If it is less than 500 parts per thousand, it is not allowed to be called platinum at all when it comes to FTC regulations on platinum jewelry.

If you are interested in finding out more about platinum, please visit us at MSG Jewelers, 7251 Watson Road or give me a call, Mike George, at (314) 353-9488.

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