

# Lord of the Rings



## Choosing the right ring is as easy as A B C, C, C and C

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The decisions that you make when purchasing wedding jewelry could conceivably last the rest of your life. The important point to remember is to take your time and consider your personal style.

The first thing local experts suggest when shopping for your wedding jewelry is to look for jewelers that are members of the American Gem Society.

"We have to maintain high standards of integrity, knowledge and quality," said Elaine Abercrombie of Green's Jewelers.

She added that purchasing from a reputable local jeweler as opposed to an online jeweler guarantees that you'll see the product you're buying, the jeweler will be able to go through the famous 4 C's of the gem you're purchasing and you know where to take your rings to be serviced if they need to be.

Lately, personal style has extended to men's wedding bands as well. Off-the-shelf bands can come with accents from Celtic knot work to other designs to appeal to the male shopper. But if there's something that you're looking for and you don't see it, talk to the sales person. They are there to help you find what you need, or find the person who can make it for you.

"Men felt left out," said Jan Ferguson of Ford, Gittings and Kane Jewelers. "For a long time they just wore a plain band. They can now wear a band that shows their interest. And guys can wear diamonds too."

When shopping for a diamond, one must

understand they too have specifications and ratings. According to the American Gem Society, diamonds are measured on four scales.

The defining factors for diamonds are called the four C's: Cut, Color, Clarity, and Carat Weight. The American Gem Society Diamond Grading Standards evaluate three of the four value factors — cut, color, and clarity — on its own 1-10 scale. The scales begin at 0 (zero), the highest grade, and go down to 10, the lowest.

"If you are going to invest in diamonds you need to know and trust the person you're buying from," said Ferguson said. "Never buy a diamond if you have not seen it under a gemscope. The four C's are so important. Cut determines that popping fire that makes her go 'wow!'"

What you see isn't always what you get. Some diamonds are filled with a resin to remove the visible flaws and other non-visible flaws also reduce the value of the diamond.

Since cost is an issue for many people, John Massey of Massey's said he encourages buyers to focus their budget on the center stone of the ring rather than the mounting.

"The center stone is the most important part," he said. "That's where you want to spend most of your money. That's what people see. And if you'd like to upgrade the mounting later, you can always have the stone reset."

And remember, when purchasing wedding jewelry, take your time. Talk to the professionals, think about your personal style and consider your purchase an investment.

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