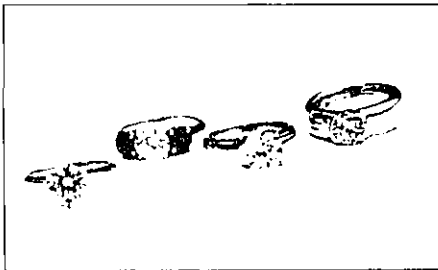


Diamond from page 3

setting to complement your investment. When it comes to precious metals, platinum is the latest trend. Its use in engagement rings makes sense on a number of fronts: platinum is a durable metal that won't erode over time, at least not to the degree that gold does; its silvery-white cast doesn't compete with the color of the diamond; its a timeless classic that lends itself to all styles, from traditional to Victorian filigree to retro to contemporary.



Tiffany by design: Traditional diamond solitaire set in platinum, three-stone sapphire and diamond, the newest addition, Lucinda, and a bezel-set diamond set in 18K gold. Available at Tiffany & Co., Somerset Collection, Troy.

Ornate styles have given way to simple, classic designs. Diamond solitaires and three-stone settings – a center diamond set with two smaller diamonds or other precious stones such as rubies, emeralds or sapphires on either side – are now the most requested. It's important to mention that the geometric shape of your diamond will play an integral role in your choice of settings.

Diamond shapes are purely a matter of preference. Trends will come and go; what's aesthetically pleasing to you (and your fiancée) is matters most. The round brilliant has consistently been the number one choice, followed by princess (square), oval, pear and marquise.

With so many styles and shapes to choose from, how can a guy be expected to make the "perfect" choice?

"Women are taking an active role in the purchase of their diamonds, a VERY active role," laughs Hering. "But they love a surprise too. I recommend that a couple shop together and pick out some styles that they both like. The guy can come back later and make the purchase."

If a total surprise is what you've got in mind, most jewelers will let you exchange a ring in the event that your choice wasn't "perfect."

The care and cleaning of your dia-

mond is essential to the safety and life-long beauty of your diamond. It's best to remove jewelry when working with chemicals of any kind, household or other. Also, never wear jewelry to the beach or when gardening. Sand and dirt are abrasive; lotions and other substances can be difficult to remove. If you're in water, remember that metals like gold and platinum don't float. If your ring slips off, it's gone.

To clean your diamond, Hering recommends taking it to a jeweler rather than doing it yourself. Your jeweler can give it a thorough cleaning as well as check for loose settings, something you can't do at home. Using a toothbrush is not recommended because it can scratch precious metals, especially gold.

Last but not least, do not overlook the importance of getting an independent appraisal of your engagement ring. This should be done at least every two years, primarily because diamond markets fluctuate so quickly. Your trusted jeweler can recommend a qualified appraiser, or contact the AGS, GIA or IGI for recommendations.

For reliable information on the Internet, check out the DeBeers Diamond Information Center @ www.adiamondisforever.com, the Gemological Institute of America @ www.gia.org, or the American Gem Society @ www.ags.org.

Your own website can give guests lots of wedding info

BY KARALYNN OTT
SPECIAL WRITER

The wedding was in California. My fiancée and I lived here. We had 25 friends and relatives from four states, and England, making the trek to join us for the weekend-long event.

We were to rendezvous in San Francisco in the days preceding, and on our wedding day, caravan to Yosemite National Park, four hours away, for the ceremony.

We needed a way to coordinate everyone's travel plans, as well as keep other relatives and friends "in the loop" about our impending nuptials.

Luckily we live in the Internet age. The answer: We created a personalized wedding web page that could serve as both an informative resource for wedding guests and a fun way to share our happy news with the rest of our friends and family.

Regardless of whether you are planning an out-of-state wedding or something just around the corner, a wedding Web page can aid and delight everyone involved.

But first you need to set up a personal Web page. There are several routes to take. Many Internet service providers, such as Microsoft Network, offer free personal Web page space and creation services to their subscribers. Web portals, such as Yahoo.com, offer

free Web pages for people who register with them. Either of these should have a personal Web page banner ad or link on their home page that will get you started.

There are many other services and portals that offer personal Web pages. An Internet search under the key words "personal web page" should lead to a plethora of offerings.

Most services will walk the user through the entire creation process. But those who want more personal help creating a Web page could sign up for a class. Check with local community education or community colleges – many now offer classes in building personalized Web pages.

To include your own photographs, however, you will need to have digital photos or access to a scanner. (A Web page creation class will most likely have a scanner. Many workplaces or schools also have them.)

Once the site is ready, you need to decide on content. Useful elements include:

- An itinerary, especially for longer celebrations
- For out-of-town guests, links to maps, lodging, restaurants, and fun things (besides your wedding!) to do during their stay in the area.

Please see WEBSITE, 10

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