



Bring on the big bling

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Brilliant bling is getting bigger

The latest trend gracing the red carpets of the world is bigger bling and a new survey confirms it is rubbing off on the rest of us. Yet bigger diamonds are largely out of reach for all but celebrities. Until now.

From Keira Knightly to Jessica Alba, to Naomi Watts. It seems brilliant bling is getting bigger.

Diamond grader Roy Cohen explains the resulting phenomenon coined as *Ring Envy Syndrome* and says he is seeing more and more big stones.

"Girls like to compare or look at each other's diamond engagement rings and obviously is one of the factors," said Cohen.

It is a trend confirmed in a survey conducted by the Diamond Certification Laboratory of Australia, with 60 per cent of respondents saying an engagement ring should be at least a half to one carat.

Idol judge Kyle Sandilands recently joined the gem train with an engagement ring for fiancé.

"That diamond is obviously brought from one of the better jewellers and it wouldn't be all show, no dough stone, it'll be a serious, quality diamond," said Cohen.

But while celebrities can afford to splurge on gigantic gems, experts say big is often not better.

"Probably the most important would be your cut of your diamond, if you have a large stone of a very high purity, very good colour, if it's not cut well it's not going to look as good as a lower colour, lower purity and very well cut diamond."

Still there are diamonds even a celebrity cannot claim. The great Star of Africa, the largest ever found at 3,106 carats cut down to a measly 530 carats adorns the Sceptre of King Edward VII in the Tower of London, right next to the 273 carat Centenary diamond.

The infamous Hope diamond, said to be cursed, is 45.5 carats and now resides in the Smithsonian Institute at Washington.

Although there is one celebrity milestone. The \$3,000,000 Taylor Burton bought by Richard Burton for Elizabeth Taylor in 1969. It is now thought to be somewhere in Saudi Arabia.

Better still, there is now a real alternative offering all of us a chance to shine.

It is called moissanite. A gemstone made in the laboratory from silicon carbide. It is second in hardness only to diamonds. Harder than rubies. Flawless and affordable.

"It's very difficult to tell the difference, we still have jewellers and customers telling us they can't tell the difference," said Lauren Chang Somer, owner of Moi Moi Fine Jewellery. They sell only stones made from Moissanite

Worldwide, one in ten women can only ever dream of having the opportunity to wear a one carat diamond or bigger.

But with moissanite, seven in ten women actually purchase one carat or bigger for their rings.

"To give you an idea, one carat loose moissanite is about \$700, while a diamond of the same quality, one carat loose, is about \$7,000," said Chang Somer.

"To someone who hasn't got a trained eye it's very difficult to tell especially once the stone is set."

Under the microscope, cleaned with alcohol and closely examined, the truth is sparkling. We tested how difficult it is to tell the difference between Moissanite and diamonds by asking shoppers to pick the real thing. No-one could.

If bigger bling is your favourite star's, then this is how you can adopt their dazzle. Even the diamond devotees agree.

For more information go to:

Moi Moi Fine Jewellery - www.moimoi.com.au

Diamond Certification Laboratory of Australia - www.dcla.com.au