

JOYCO Quarterly News

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Is Your New White Gold Ring Turning Yellow?

By Teresa Joy, GG (GIA) NAJA

Recently we have had several customers come into our lab complaining that white gold rings purchased in the area are turning yellow. More than likely your jeweler of choice has done nothing wrong.

When gold is mined from the earth, it is a very deep rich YELLOW. In order to make it stronger, a composition of gold+copper+silver+zinc is used for 14kt. White gold is made when you replace the silver with nickel or palladium. Palladium is a close relative of platinum and very expensive. Nickel is most often the alloy of choice. When nickel and zinc are present in white gold, it reduces the red and yellow colors caused by the copper and gold.

Please note: THE RED AND YELLOW COLOR IS NEVER COMPLETELY GONE. 14 and 18kt white gold is always slightly yellow. The yellow in white gold can intensify when it is exposed to chlorine (like in your swimming pool), bromine (occurs in seawater), salt air, pesticides and other corrosive household chemicals. Although a higher nickel percentage will mean your ring is whiter, it also means that you have a greater risk of stress corrosion when exposed to certain chemicals. It is a normal practice to finish white gold jewelry pieces with a rhodium electropate finish.

Rhodium is a platinum group metal that will give a bright polish finish to your white gold. Also note, everyday wear and tear can eventually cause your rhodium finish to erode and expose a slightly yellow tint. If you want to slow this process down, avoid abrasive household cleaners, talc (often found in common cosmetics) and gardening. Basically, environment and bodily exposure can erode the rhodium and bring out the yellow tint.

If this happens to you, ask your jeweler to first buff the ring and this will somewhat restore your ring to a whiter condition. Next, re-apply a rhodium plate. The application of a rhodium plate DOES NOT indicate fraud. It is a standard practice.

If you still suspect that your ring is yellow gold with a rhodium finish, bring it into our lab and we can perform a test (for a small fee). Also, remember that it is important to get the details of what you purchase in writing.

Brilliant Quote

"When a ruby exceeds six carats and is perfect, it is sold for whatever is asked for it." Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, 17th century explorer and gemmologist

What's In?

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- Long layered necklaces and draping chains
- Dangling gemstones and coins from necklaces, bracelets and earrings
- Sterling silver and enamel cuff bracelets with an Art Deco twist
- Natural sapphire, pearls, emerald, aquamarine, amethyst, citrine, and morganite
- Cocktail rings with large colored gemstones
- Smaller pendants and earrings with simple designs
- Yellow gold is very strong
- Cushion and Asscher cut diamonds*

*Larger (2 carats and over) fine diamonds continue to rise in price and are more rare.

Dateline NBC Exposes Inflated Appraisals

By Teresa Joy, GG (GIA) NAJA

Dateline NBC did a show recently warning consumers that many jewelers are using inflated appraisals as a marketing tool to sell diamonds. The show went to several stores and bought diamonds. In almost every case the sales clerks used appraisals to convince the buyers that they were getting an incredible bargain. Purchases were highlighted from Zales and Walmart. At Walmart the producers purchased a diamond for less than \$2,000. and the IGI (International Gemmological Institute) Lab appraisal stated that the diamond had a value of \$3,300. The producers went from store to store and appeared to be saving thousands of dollars. The show then removed the purchased diamonds from the settings and sent them to different labs. The show said the IGI lab consistently gave higher appraisals than other labs. The end result by the Dateline expert, Don Palmieri is this, "A stone is worth what the merchant sold it for. If it was worth more, the merchant wouldn't sell it for the price they're selling it for." The transcript from the Dateline segment is available at www.msnbc.com/id/8661995.

Within the industry there are grading tolerances that are allowed. I find that grading reports from GIA, AGS and AGTA to be the most consistent and reliable. When doing an appraisal, retail replacement is defined as the cost of replacement with an item of equal quality and kind. Markups can vary some by geographic region and type of retail establishment. Proper appraisals are a

review of the market for a "like" transaction. If you purchase a diamond for \$2,000., that is replacement value of a like item. The only variances would be market fluctuations. If your item is appraised too high then it will cost you more money in the end. Insurance premiums are going to be based on the appraisal amount.

Appraisal values can run higher than the purchases price if you purchased the item at a brokered price or you had some sort of wholesale or discounted access. The only time we do appraisals based on the brokered market is at the request of the client. I never want to leave a client under insured.

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