Sparkling Alternatives to Diamond by Lina Lambert

Article published on May 30th 2012 | Jewelry

Diamonds maybe a woman's best friend but it does not mean she will not befriend other more affordable sparkling stones. Women have always love gems but now that the surging prices of precious stones can be a bit steep for casual accessories, many opt to get alternatives that are inexpensive but still provide that moment of brilliance.

Customers love choice and here are some gems that retailers can help their female consumers remain sparkling and stylish.

One of the most popular and affordable alternative to diamond is cubic zirconia. Having flawless optical qualities, cubic zirconia has been a gemological and economic competitor to diamond since 1976. A lot of accessories are now available that incorporate cubic zirconia as its central gem ranging from rings, earrings, necklaces and bracelets. This gem can be set on various metals including gold, silver, titanium and stainless steel jewelry. Though its hardness is not as high as diamond's, cubic zirconia has a higher dispersion at 0.058-0.066 (diamond has 0.044).

Another white gem that can get the fancy of female customers is moissanite. A rare mineral, moissanite was first discovered in a meteor crater located in Canyon Diablo, Arizona in 1893. Because it is only often found in inclusions of other minerals and on meteorites, moissanite today is synthesized in laboratories. Many companies have patented the use of moissanite in jewelry. Due to this, it has a wide variety of colors available. Moissanite has optical properties that exceeds diamond and possess unique properties on its own which means it cannot be called a diamond simulant. It appeals to many because of its ethical and far more affordable production. Moissanite is an extremely hard mineral, rating 9.5 in Mohs scale (diamond is 10).

White topaz can also add crystalline appeal to jewelry for women. Topaz can range in various colors with the pure kind being colorless and transparent. Far affordable than diamond, topaz can be available in a wide range of metal settings including sterling silver. Stainless steel jewelry for women that uses topaz is also available with larger carat weight that could cost tens of thousands of dollar when compared to an equivalent diamond size. It is a defining mineral for the Mohs scale, having a hardness rating of 8, which is still considered great and durable for everyday use.

Though more expensive than white (pure) topaz, white sapphires can also be a diamond alternative because they are far less expensive. Very durable, sapphires have been one of the four leading precious stones of choice to many jewelry designers next to ruby, emerald and of course, diamond. But because of this, very high quality sapphires are not usually set on lesser metals like stainless steel jewelry though the trend of mixing precious and contemporary metals today might change that in the near future.

If you are a retailer or customer that value style and design instead of cost, there are a lot of great alternatives to diamond like natural stones. For example, birthstones like amethyst, tourquoise and bloodstone are great looking colored gems that can give sparkle to many jewelry and due to their meanings, can provide sentimeal appeal in addition to being fashionable.

Though nothing can truly compare to diamond's unique characteristics, retailers and customers wanting other options when it come to gemstones have a great number of choices. And with technology and fashion continue to tie closer together, there is no telling what kind of sparkling stones will develop to bring more sparkle to the jewelry industry.

Article Source:
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Article Keywords:
stainless steel jewelry, womens steel jewelry

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