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How the Laboratory Describes Round Unmodified Brilliant Cut Diamonds

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ABOUT GIA

Established in 1931, GIA is the world’s foremost authority on diamonds, colored stones, and pearls. A nonprofit institute, GIA’s mission is to ensure the public trust in gems and jewelry by upholding the highest standards of integrity, academics, science, and professionalism through education, research, laboratory services, and instrument development.

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Summary

Following extended research and trade discussions, GIA has added a new cut description for round 58-facet brilliant cuts. This results in three possible descriptions for round unmodified brilliants based on the criteria summarized below:

OLD EUROPEAN CUT

At least three of the four following criteria must apply.

Table size:	Less than or equal to 53%
Crown angle:	Greater than or equal to 40 degrees
Lower half length:	Less than or equal to 60%
Culet size:	Slightly large or larger

GIA Cut Grade not assigned

CIRCULAR BRILLIANT CUT

All criteria must apply.

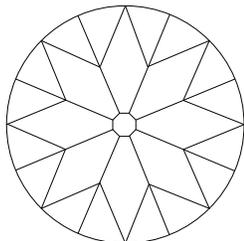
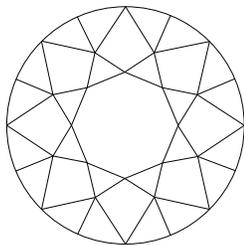
Lower half length:	Less than or equal to 60%
Star length:	Less than or equal to 50%
Culet size:	Medium or larger

GIA Cut Grade not assigned

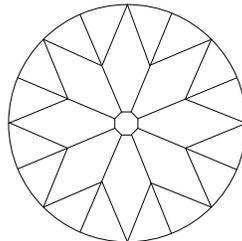
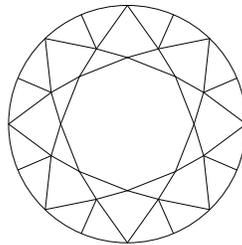
ROUND BRILLIANT CUT

All other proportion sets are classified as round brilliant. **GIA Cut Grade is assigned.**

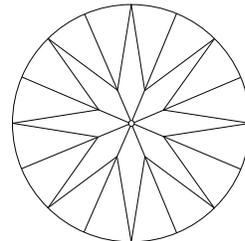
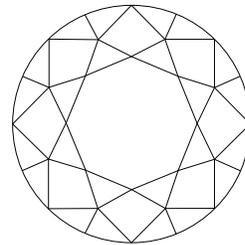
OLD EUROPEAN



CIRCULAR BRILLIANT



ROUND BRILLIANT



Introduction

Historically, GIA has described round unmodified brilliant cut diamonds with one of two cut descriptions; round brilliant or old European. The distinction between these terms was based on a distinctive set of proportions GIA associated with the historic old European term; all others being described as round brilliant. With growing interest and allure in historic cutting styles, GIA has received more and more diamonds that are cut in a style close to– but not quite meeting– the old European criteria. They are also quite different from contemporary expectations for a modern round brilliant. This article describes GIA’s research on this subject and the decision to add a new description to address these diamonds that fall outside the existing two categories.

Background

Since the 2005 introduction of the GIA Cut Grading System for round brilliant cut diamonds any diamond described as a round brilliant receives a cut grade. The grade parameters for the system are based on modern day appearance preferences and the proportions that yield the best combination of brightness, fire, scintillation and pattern.

A round-shaped exception to the cut grade is the old European cut. While it too has the traditional 58 facets, the proportions are very different creating a distinct appearance. This appearance is associated with a time that pre-dates expectations to conform to the appearances of the modern day round brilliant and, therefore, does not receive a cut grade.

The GIA Diamond Dictionary defines an old European cut diamond as a round shape characterized by a very small table, a heavy crown and a great overall depth. To assist graders in the application of this term on grading reports, GIA established a set of proportion criteria based on this definition, staff observations and trade discussions. The parameters in use are:

OLD EUROPEAN CUT



Table size:	Less than or equal to 53%
Crown angle:	Greater than or equal to 40 degrees
Lower half length:	Less than or equal to 60%
Culet size:	Slightly large or larger

GIA recognizes old European cut diamonds are predominately older stones subject to wear over the years. Also, the rough may not have lent itself to all these parameters. To account for this, GIA requires only three of the four parameters be present to apply the description.

In recent years the lab has become aware of the growing interest in older style round brilliants. The allure of a cut that results in a distinct patterning and is associated with the romantic times of the past is of growing interest. Within the trade, these diamonds were often referred to as “transitional-cut” rounds as they often represented cutting innovations taking place as the trade moved from the old European cut to the modern round brilliant.

When such diamonds are submitted for grading reports, GIA has found that they do not fit the criteria noted above for old European cut and, therefore, are described as round brilliants and assigned a cut grade. These diamonds, which were never meant to be judged by modern cutting standards, are often assigned a Fair or Poor cut grade. The trade that values and markets the unique appearance of these diamonds contends they are being unduly penalized by assigning a modern cut grade.

Analysis and Discussion

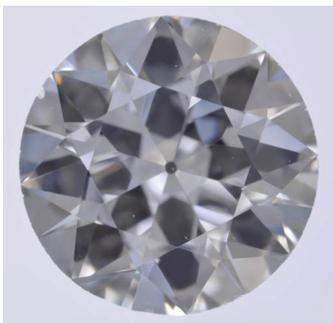
To understand the application of the current round cut descriptions, and the potential need of an additional term, GIA observed a number of these “transitional” rounds over a period of a year. Meetings took place with members of the diamond trade that specialized in the marketing of these diamonds as well. The goals were to:

- Consider the creation of descriptions for rounds that better reflect their historic cutting approach
- Not assign cut grades to diamonds that are not cut to achieve modern round brilliant parameters
- Not allow poorly cut modern round brilliants to pass without cut grades

A number of stones were studied that were not “classic” old European cut but do not appear as modern round brilliants. We noted the appearances of these diamonds were not those of well or poorly cut modern round brilliants. In general, they looked close to what is associated with the old European cut but they did not have the same required proportion parameters for that description as used by GIA. For example, while culets were often slightly large or larger, a number of examples were medium. Table sizes ranged from 43% to 62% making this parameter difficult to use as a criteria for a new category. Similarly, most had bruted girdles but not all. The two characteristics that showed the most commonality among the set of stones were lower half length percent and star length percent.

Following this review, GIA borrowed stones from members of the trade which would theoretically fall into this new description category. After these observations a decision was reached to introduce a new description for 58-facet round brilliants. The criteria for a stone to fall into this new category are:

CIRCULAR BRILLIANT CUT



Lower half length:	Less than or equal to 60%
Star length:	Less than or equal to 50%
Culet size:	Medium or larger

The new description to be used on GIA reports for these diamonds is *circular brilliant*. This new description acknowledges the diamond is not a modern day round brilliant, evokes a description for rounds of earlier times and keeps the historic definition of the old European cut unaltered. As with the old European cut, this new description will not be assigned a cut grade.