

How to Explain Cut at the Counter

The new cut grading system is a comprehensive and powerful tool for retailers

By Amanda J. Luke

What do fingerprints and snowflakes have in common? No two are exactly alike, but each have identifying characteristics and are interesting – or beautiful – according to the eye of its beholder. The same is true of diamonds.

And GIA, after years of research, is able to illustrate this with its new Diamond Cut Grading System for standard round brilliant diamonds in the GIA D-to-Z color scale. It quantifies the fourth C and confirms what retailers and consumers already perceive to be beautiful.

“The retailer can use this information to offer the consumer choices and be able to articulate, scientifically, what the differences are between cut grades such as excellent, very good, etc.,” says Thomas M. Moses, senior vice president of the GIA Laboratory.

He says the new system is a robust approach that assesses all aspects of the cut of a round

brilliant diamond and pulls the pieces together:

Face-up Appearance – the brightness, fire and scintillation (especially pattern) that can be seen when viewing a diamond.

Design – the weight ratio of a diamond (which prevents against “thick makes”) and its durability (related to “knife edge” or extremely thin girdles).

Craftsmanship – the care in execution that can be seen in the diamond’s polish and symmetry.

The more familiar salespeople can become with these characteristics of diamonds, the easier it will be for them to explain the importance of cut, Moses says.

“It is an empowering tool,” he says. “Simply put, the retailer will have more options to offer in a range of grades rather than the limited set of proportions of the past. It may also change the perception of a diamond as a commodity in the consumer’s mind. This will make the jeweler an important sales adviser



Thomas M. Moses



Andy Johnson

and expert for his/her customers.”

That doesn’t mean cut will be as easy to talk about with customers as carat weight, color or clarity, says Andy Johnson, CEO of Johnson Family Diamond Cellar in Columbus, Ohio.

“It’s very simple on the surface, but the path to get there is complex,” he says. “I thought there would be a specific parameter of degrees that would produce the perfect cut, but this is about the relationship between a bunch of different things. There are many more ways to get to excellent.”

That’s one of the surprising things researchers discovered in the course of the 70,000 observation tests they conducted in the last few years. There are a range of proportions that fall within each cut grade, and each specific diamond within that grade may look slightly different in terms of attributes like brightness, fire or pattern. For this reason, a specific stone may be

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See “The GIA Diamond Cut Grading System for Round Brilliant Diamonds” insert for more information.

GIA Laboratory Services

The GIA Laboratory has implemented several programs to help the industry and consumers understand its reports and find out more information about its services.

Update Your 2005 Reports

Reports that reflect the new cut grade (for D-to-Z, standard round brilliant diamonds only) and an updated look will be re-issued on request following these parameters:

Round diamonds graded between

Aug. 1 and Dec. 31, 2005: There will not be a fee; diamonds do not to be returned to the Laboratory.

Round diamonds graded between Jan. 1 and July 31, 2005: There will be a \$15 fee; some diamonds may need to be returned to the Laboratory to obtain updated measurement information.

Round diamonds graded before Jan. 1, 2005: Diamonds must be returned to the Laboratory to be regraded and remeasured; normal update fees will apply.

Fancy shaped diamonds graded in 2005:

Although these reports will not be eligible for a cut grade, a re-issue service to obtain the new report design will be available for a \$15 fee; diamonds do not need to be returned to the Laboratory.

These fees will be honored for a 90-day period starting on Jan. 1, 2006; after that, standard fees will apply. In all cases, original reports must be returned to the GIA Laboratory when the request for re-issue is made.

For more information on re-issue services, please contact GIA Laboratory Customer Service in Carlsbad at (760) 603-4500.

Check Your Report Online

Retailers and consumers can verify information on Diamond Grading and Diamond Dossier® Reports issued since Jan. 1, 2000 by going online to the GIA Web site. This is useful for those who want to confirm that the grading information is consistent with that of an official GIA report. This

service is available by using the GIA report number and weight of the diamond, and will provide all of the written information on the original report.

Find Out More About GIA’s Laboratory

The GIA Laboratory Web site has been updated to include more detailed and practical information to help users in their day-to-day business. Some of the highlights are:

- How to submit diamonds, gemstones and other materials to the Laboratory
- How the GIA Laboratory grades diamonds
- How the GIA Laboratory identifies colored gemstones
- Laboratory services available
- The new GIA Diamond Cut Grading System
- How to read GIA Laboratory diamond reports
- Famous diamonds GIA has graded
- How to link to GIA

To view the new site, go to www.gia.edu and click on “GIA Laboratory.”

Anatomy of GIA's New Grading Report

The GIA Laboratory began to issue updated versions of the GIA Diamond Grading Report and GIA Diamond Dossier® Jan 1. The new reports include information that reflects the new cut grade for all standard round brilliant diamonds falling in the GIA D-to-Z color scale and Flawless-to-I₃ clarity scale.

The **GIA Clarity Scale** represents the recognized grades used to describe the relative absence of inclusions and/or blemishes by the GIA Laboratory.

The **GIA D-to-Z Color Scale** represents the grades used by the GIA Laboratory to describe a diamond's relative lack of color.

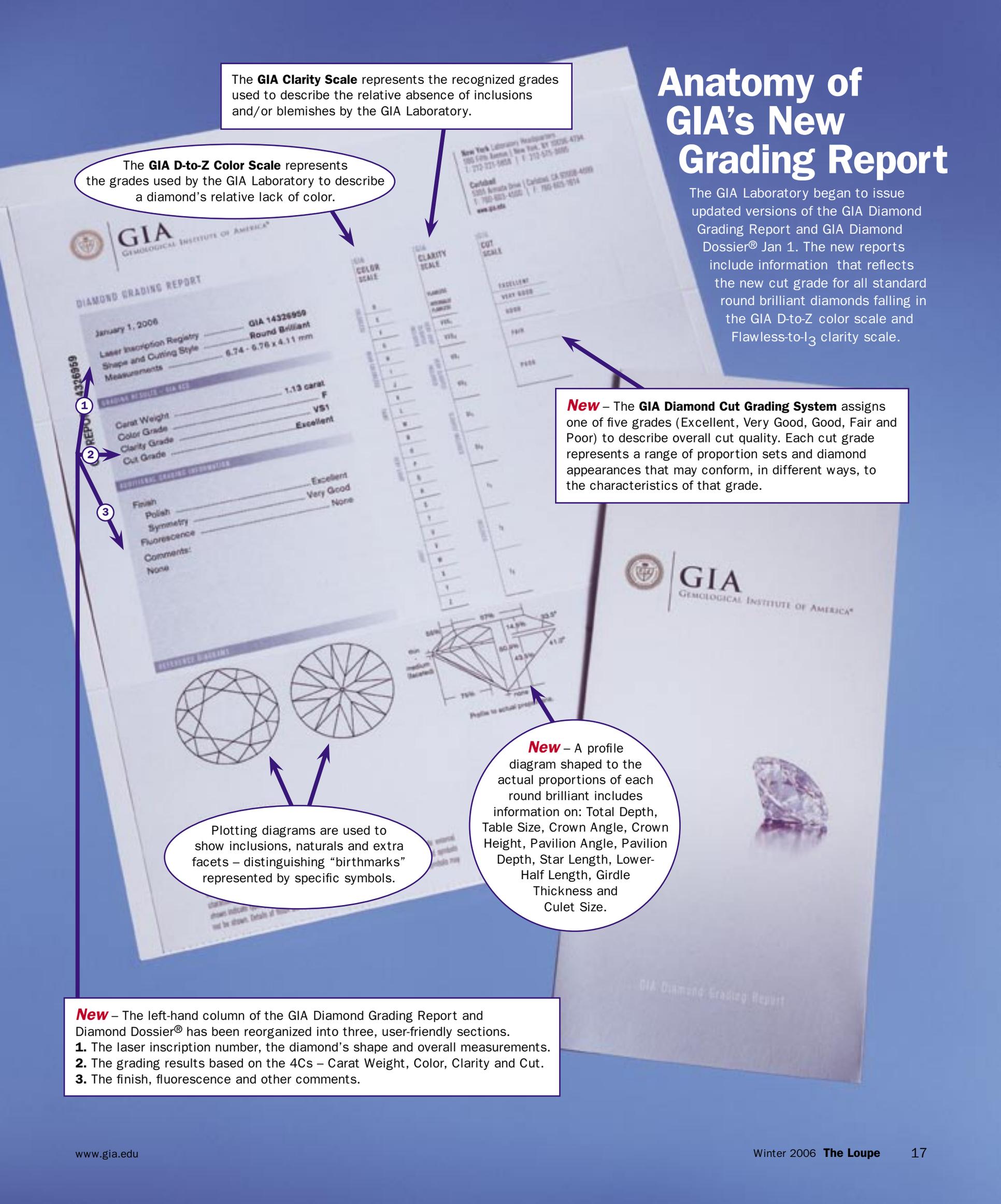
New – The **GIA Diamond Cut Grading System** assigns one of five grades (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor) to describe overall cut quality. Each cut grade represents a range of proportion sets and diamond appearances that may conform, in different ways, to the characteristics of that grade.

Plotting diagrams are used to show inclusions, naturals and extra facets – distinguishing “birthmarks” represented by specific symbols.

New – A profile diagram shaped to the actual proportions of each round brilliant includes information on: Total Depth, Table Size, Crown Angle, Crown Height, Pavilion Angle, Pavilion Depth, Star Length, Lower-Half Length, Girdle Thickness and Culet Size.

New – The left-hand column of the GIA Diamond Grading Report and Diamond Dossier® has been reorganized into three, user-friendly sections.

1. The laser inscription number, the diamond's shape and overall measurements.
2. The grading results based on the 4Cs – Carat Weight, Color, Clarity and Cut.
3. The finish, fluorescence and other comments.



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more appealing to one customer than another, even though both may perform equally well.

"It's an objective system, but within each grade there is room for personal preferences," Moses says. "The buyer, using that objective criterion, has a more systematic way to compare diamonds."

Tools, Support for Retailers

GIA has developed several programs and tools to help retailers understand and integrate the new cut grading system into their discussions with customers.

The Retail Ambassador Support Program (RASP), developed specifically to help retailers explain the 4Cs, has created an 11 x 17 inch diamond sorting pad and pad holder.

The pad provides information on color, clarity and cut; a diameter size chart for round brilliant diamonds; a chart of common diamond shapes; and plenty of room to take notes on diamonds retailers look at with their customers and/or draw sketches of jewelry designs they envision. The pad will be helpful for customers who need a visual representation of ideas. The pad holder also includes abbreviated information on the 4Cs.

GIA has also created a 4Cs brochure that retailers can give to their customers. Written in consumer-friendly language, it helps explain a diamond's color, clarity, cut and carat weight.

Johnson says the key to making customers comfortable with cut will be to make sure retailers are well-trained and convey the right information.

"Any time you can bring positive information to your customer – when you can explain why a diamond is beautiful or why one diamond is more beautiful than another – it's valuable and good for them. Customers don't want to make a mistake."

The new cut grade is reassuring because it will offer retailers and consumers many more choices, Moses says.

"It doesn't mean you have to disregard everything you've learned in the past," he says. "A well-made diamond that most feel is well-cut today will likely fall into the top categories of our system."

Johnson thinks it will be a matter of time before the cut grading system is ingrained in the industry.

"It's something we have to get used to," he says. "The knowledge is there; you can't change the facts. People will embrace it; it's just going to take time."

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Retail Ambassador Support Program Tools

- *Diamond Sorting Pad and Holder:* To order, call GIA Instruments at (800) 421-8161 or (760) 603-4200.
- *The GIA 4Cs brochure:* To order copies, call Amber Bowmer at (800) 421-7250, ext. 4192 or e-mail: abowmer@gia.edu.

GIA Education and Cut

GIA Education is introducing the new Cut grading system in its domestic On Campus programs and Lab classes in January 2006.

The first step was to integrate it into the Diamond Grading Lab manual and practical teaching procedures, says Duncan Pay, director of Course Development.

Both On Campus and Distance Education students use the manual to complete their practical course requirements.

"Students were learning how to estimate diamond proportions, but now they'll understand how those proportions contribute to a diamond's appearance and its eventual cut grade," he says.

Hands-on Lab classes will also be available for past G.G. or Diamonds graduates to update themselves on the new cut grade and GIA Education will give seminars at selected trade shows.

Class schedules for 2006 have been finalized and are available on the GIA Web site. Details on seminars will be announced soon.

Lab Reps Take Cut Presentation on the Road

By Mauricio Minotta

Representatives from the GIA Laboratory traveled to 10 international cutting and retail centers when they gave presentations on the Institute's new Diamond Cut

Grading System last fall.

Thomas M. Moses, senior vice president, GIA Laboratory and Research, Phil Yantzer, director, West Coast Grading Laboratory, and Barak Green, manager, Laboratory Communications, embarked on their speaking tour immediately after the new system was announced at a New York press conference Aug. 1.

Some of the countries they visited included Israel, Thailand, Belgium, England, India, Hong Kong and Japan. They also gave presentations in South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and Korea.

"It was very important for us to take this information and explain it directly to those who will be using the new grading system to ensure that they understood it," Green said. "Oftentimes it's easier to understand when it's being presented verbally. Also, it was important to be there to answer individual questions that arise after hearing the presentation to provide immediate feedback."

The presentations were broken

down into four segments: Moses explained GIA's philosophical reasons and merits behind the Diamond Cut Grading System; Green covered the history of the research and explained the system's framework and the predictive software that's available for free on GIA's Web site; Yantzer explained the procedure for the Grading Report updates and reissues. Each presentation ended with a question-and-answer session.

"Some felt that the new system was going to be overly complicated," Green said. "But I think once we gave our presentation, we heard that, in some sense, they were relieved because they saw that the system makes sense and that it confirms or supports what they are seeing in round brilliants."

Others who attended the presentations voiced concern over GIA's ability to manage the onslaught of grading report reissues and updates that is expected to hit the Institute's Laboratory this month, Green said.

He reassured them, however, that round brilliants that were graded after Aug. 1, 2005 won't need to be resubmitted because the Laboratory has all the relevant proportions on file to reissue a new report. They expect turnaround time to be less than one week.



Phil Yantzer (right) with Barak Green (left) and Thomas M. Moses (not pictured) provided details behind GIA's new Diamond Cut Grading System during a 10-city tour of the world's most important jewelry retail and cutting centers last fall.

GIA file photo