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The Tiffany Diamond, a cushion-cut brilliant diamond boasting 82 facets, has been in a number of different settings over the years. **PHOTO: TIFFANY & CO.**

# TIFFANY'S DIAMOND IS SHINING HERE

The rock's first public display in Canada starts today

ALEESHA HARRIS

Weighing in at more than 128 carats, it's considered to be one of the finest fancy diamonds in the world.

The sizable yellow stone, extracted from the earth in 1877 from the Kimberly diamond mine in South Africa, initially rang it at an astonishing 287.42 carats. To say it was an extraordinary discovery, would have been an understatement.

Charles Lewis Tiffany, the namesake founder of the American fine jewelry purveyor Tiffany & Co., purchased the rough-cut diamond in 1878. The price? A mere \$18,000. Following the acquisition, the massive piece was moved to Paris, where Tiffany's chief gemologist at that time, George Frederick Kunz, went to work, presiding over the meticulous cutting of the rough diamond into what it is today: a cushion-cut brilliant diamond boasting 82 facets.

It was then given a name: The Tiffany Diamond. And once you see it in person, it's very easy to see why it's worthy of such a grand moniker.

"The Tiffany Diamond has become a symbol of the highest standards of quality and craftsmanship established with the founding of Tiffany & Co. over eight generations ago," Melvyn Kirtley, Tiffany & Co.'s chief gemologist, says of the sizable stone. "The diamond was cut not for size but for an unprecedented and unique brilliance."

And now you can see it on display in Vancouver.

While the Tiffany Diamond in its current setting — which was crafted in 2012 for the company's 175th anniversary (only the fourth setting for the stone in its history) — has been on display in several countries including Tokyo, Beijing and Dubai, as well as its permanent home at the Tiffany & Co. flagship store on Fifth Avenue in New York, this will be the first time it has been in Canada.

"The Tiffany Diamond rarely travels, but we felt it was important to honour our 10-year anniversary in Vancouver and their newly renovated Burrard Street store," Kirtley explains of the diamond's arrival on Nov. 4. "It is with great pleasure that we showcase the diamond as a symbol of Tiffany's diamond authority and highest standards of quality and craftsmanship."

Kirtley says that in addition to marking the brand's anniversary in the city, the public display is meant



The Tiffany Diamond can be seen at Tiffany's Burrard Street store.

to further solidify the company's relationship with its Canadian customers as a whole.

"This momentous occasion goes to show that we are only further committing ourselves to Canada, and the city of Vancouver in particular, as a major market for luxury goods," he says.

The diamond will be on display on the first floor of Tiffany's store on Burrard Street in the space between the fine jewelry salon and the bridal salon, says Kirtley. Brand fans who have seen the stone on display in New York City will likely recognize the necklace setting.

"The Tiffany Diamond will be displayed in a magnificent necklace of dazzling white diamonds, totalling over 100 carats and featuring 20 Lucida diamonds," Kirtley explains.

While the priceless piece (the stone's current market value has never been confirmed) will be on

display in the city until Jan. 8, unfortunately it won't be available to purchase. Although, interestingly enough, it was once possible to buy the fancy piece.

"Many people have asked if the Tiffany Diamond is for sale. Indeed, it once was," Kirtley says. "Tiffany's Nov. 17, 1972 advertisement in the New York Times wittily announced the un-set stone could be purchased for \$5 million — the equivalent of \$25.8 million today. The offer, however, was good for 24 hours."

"And whether for reasons of thrift or disbelief, there were no buyers."

Thankfully, shoppers who stop by the store to see the diamond during its visit will find a plethora of other pieces to buy — albeit none that can threaten the Tiffany Diamond's title of being one of the finest fancy diamonds in the world. But bring your wallet, just in case.

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