

FAMOUS DIAMONDS

Famous Diamonds represent the rarest of all of the world's Diamonds. They owe their reputation not only to their large size and immeasurable value but also to their link with the past and some of the most powerful, rich and famous figures in history. Starting with the oldest and ending with the largest, here is a selection of ten of the worlds most Famous Diamonds.

The Koh-i-Noor

The Cullinan

The Hope

The Regent

The Tiffany

The Taylor-Burton

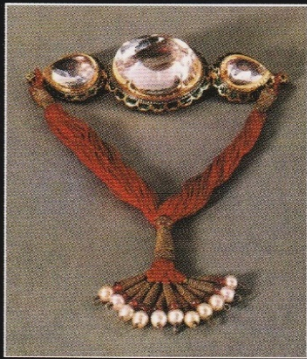
The Centenary

The Millennium Star

The Incomparable

The Golden Jubilee

THE KOH-I-NOOR (ORIGINAL)



The Koh-i-Noor has one of the richest and most fascinating histories of all the Famous Diamonds. It was once said of it that 'He who owns the Koh-i-Noor rules the world'.

Mined in the famed Golconda region of India and cut in the distinctive, early Indian 'Mughal' style, its origins date back to around 1300 AD. For over 500 years, it was owned by rulers from India, Persia and Afghanistan, including Sultans, Mogul Emperors and Sikh Kings. It was given its name by the Sultan Nadir Shah of Persia who, on first seeing it, was so amazed that he shouted 'Koh-i-Noor', meaning 'Mountain-of-Light'.

It was still mounted in an armlet made for the last great Sikh ruler, Maharajah Ranjit Singh, when it was presented to Queen Victoria, in recognition of Britain's rule over India, in 1850.

The armlet pictured above is the same enamelled jewel which was presented to Queen Victoria (the stones are glass replicas which were made subsequent to the recutting of the Koh-i-Noor).

The original Koh-i-Noor was mounted in the centre of the armlet, between two smaller, pear-shaped mughal cuts. The fate of the other two stones is unknown.

When it was removed from its setting for examination, prior to recutting, in 1851, the weight of the original Koh-i-Noor was recorded as having been 186.1 Carats

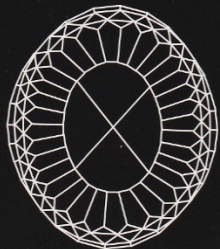


The diagrams below provide three different views of the original Koh-i-Noor. In the absence of accurate, earlier drawings or images of the original, these diagrams are based on various earlier representations (the diagrams have been produced more or less symmetrically in order to more fully illustrate the facet design of this unique cut style).

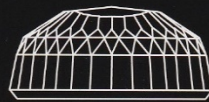
The Koh-i-noor (Original)

Near Colourless - Over 200 Facets - Roughly Oval, Mughal Cut
Approximately 36mm x 30mm x 14mm - 186.1 Carats

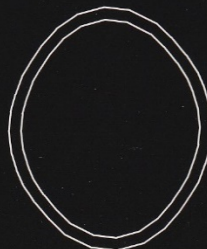
Crown



Profile



Base



(Approximate Actual Size)

THE KOH-I-NOOR (PRESENT)

Shortly after it was received by Queen Victoria, the Koh-i-Noor was put on display at the Great Exhibition of London. Many, including the Queen herself, were disappointed by its lack of brilliance. This was attributed to its unusual cutting style and the decision was therefore taken to have the Diamond re-cut in the more popular 'Brilliant Cut' style of the day.

The firm of Messrs. Coster of Amsterdam was commissioned to undertake the work and the re-cutting began on July 19th, 1851, at the premises of Garrards of London, the Crown Jewellers.

The Koh-i-Noor, in its present form, is mounted in the Crown of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, which is on permanent display in the Jewel House at the Tower of London.



The recutting of the Koh-i-Noor took 38 days to complete, at a cost of 8,000 Pounds. The weight of the Koh-i-Noor, taken after re-cutting, was recorded as having been 108.93 Carats.

Reports at the time stated that the result was less than satisfactory, due to the unexpectedly large weight loss and the overall lack of symmetry of the Diamond.

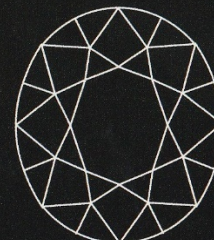
In 1988, during routine cleaning, its weight was checked and found to be 105.61 Carats (weighed in Metric Carats as opposed to the Old European Carat in use at the time of its recutting).

The diagrams below provide three views of the Koh-i-Noor in its present cut form. These diagrams, which are also based on earlier representations, have also been produced more or less symmetrically, to show the approximate size and shape relationship between the original and final versions and to correctly illustrate the facet design of this early brilliant cut style.

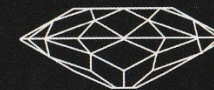
The Koh-i-noor (Present)

Near Colourless - 66 Facets - Oval, Brilliant Cut
36.0mm x 31.9mm x 13.04mm - 105.61 Carats

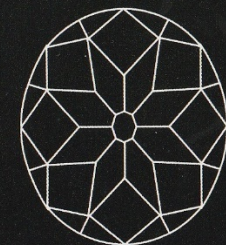
Crown



Profile

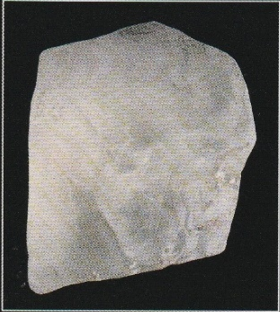


Pavilion



(Approximate Actual Size)

THE CULLINAN



On January 26th, 1905 the largest Diamond ever known was found at the Premier Diamond Mine, near Pretoria in South Africa.

Due to its great size, it was at first thought to be glass. However, on closer examination, it proved to be a Gem Quality Diamond, measuring a massive 100mm x 50mm x 30mm (6 x 3 x 2 Inches) and weighing a world record 3,106 Carats.

It was named the Cullinan Diamond, after Sir Thomas Cullinan, founder and owner of the mine. It was purchased in January, 1908 by the South African government and later presented as a gift to King Edward VII, the King of England, on the occasion of his 66th Birthday.

The task of cutting the Cullinan was entrusted to the firm of J. Asscher & Co. of Amsterdam, well known at the time for their cutting of other large and famous Diamonds. The great Diamond was studied for months before the actual cutting began. Then, on February the 10th, 1908, Joseph Asscher performed the first critical step in the cutting process.

On the first attempt at cleaving the diamond, the blade broke while the stone remained intact. On the second attempt, the diamond split perfectly as planned. Two blades were broken during the whole cleaving process, which took 8 days and produced nine separate pieces. The complete process of cutting and polishing took nearly one year, during which nine main stones, known today as 'the Cullinans', and 96 smaller stones were produced.

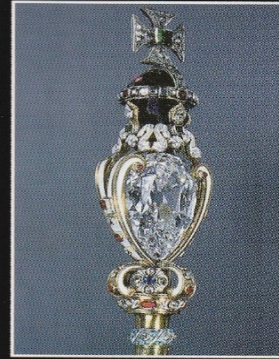


Only the two largest pieces of the Diamond were originally commissioned for cutting and polishing by King Edward. However, through subsequent purchases and gifts to the Crown by the government of South Africa and others, all 105 stones, are now in the possession of Her Royal Majesty, The Queen of England and form part of the British Crown Jewels.

THE CULLINANS

CULLINAN I	1st (Great) Star of Africa	530.20 Carats	Pear shape
CULLINAN II	2nd Star of Africa	317.40 Carats	Cushion Shape
CULLINAN III	3rd Star of Africa	94.40 Carats	Pear shape
CULLINAN IV	4th Star of Africa	63.60 Carats	Cushion shape
CULLINAN V	(Unnamed)	18.80 Carats	Heart shape
CULLINAN VI	(Unnamed)	11.50 Carats	Marquise shape
CULLINAN VII	(Unnamed)	8.80 Carats	Marquise shape
CULLINAN VIII	(Unnamed)	6.80 Carats	Long Cushion shape
CULLINAN IX	(Unnamed)	4.40 Carats	Pear shape

CULLINAN I & CULLINAN II



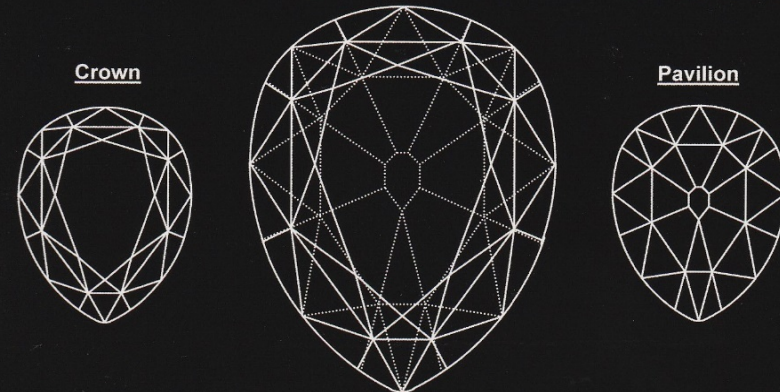
Cullinans I and II hold the unique distinction of being the first and second largest cut and polished, 'colourless' Diamonds known to exist today.

They are furthermore notable in that, having once been part of the same stone, they remain together as part of the two most important symbols of the British Crown.

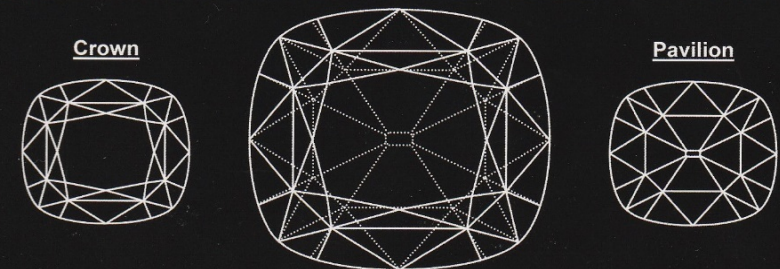
The Imperial State Sceptre
and
The Imperial State Crown



CULLINAN I
Colourless - 74-facet - Pear Shape, Brilliant Cut - 58.9 mm x 45.4mm - 530.30 carats

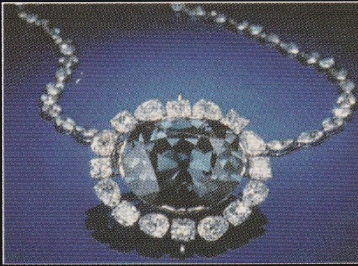


CULLINAN II
Colourless - 64-Facet - Cushion shape, Brilliant Cut - 44.9mm x 40.4mm - 317.40 carats



[Centre Diagrams illustrate approximate actual sizes]

THE HOPE DIAMOND



The Hope Diamond is legendary for its rare blue colour, its large size and its long and intriguing history.

According to one story, it was stolen from the eye of an Indian Idol, and was said to be 'cursed', with the threat of misfortune and death to anyone who owned or held it.

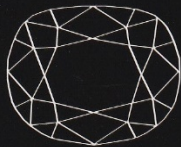
The most reliable record of the history of this famous Diamond begins around 350 years ago in India, where it was first bought by the famous French merchant and traveller, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier.

- 1661 - Brought to Europe from India by Tavernier as a rough-cut, triangle-shaped stone of 112.2 Carats - often referred to as the 'Tavernier Blue'.
- 1668 - Bought by King Louis XIV of France who later had it re-cut into a 67.15 carat, heart-shaped stone. Known from then as the 'French Blue' or 'Blue Diamond of the Crown'.
- 1749 - Mounted in the 'Order of the Golden Fleece' made for King Louis XV.
- 1792 - Stolen during the French Revolution and missing for the next 20 years.
- 1812 - Reappeared as a Cushion Shaped Diamond weighing 45.5 Carats, belonging to a London Diamond Dealer. Now known to be the 'French Blue' which had been recut.
- 1830 - Purchased by London banker and collector Henry Philip Hope and owned by the Hope family for the next 70 years. Known since then as the 'Hope Diamond'.
- 1901 - Sold by Lord Francis Hope to pay off debts and subsequently, over the next eight years, had no less than five different owners - in America, Russia, Turkey and France.
- 1909 - Bought by Pierre Cartier of Paris and mounted in the jewel in which it is set today.
- 1911 - Bought from Cartier by Evalyn Walsh-McLean, wealthy socialite and wife of Edward McLean, the son of an American newspaper magnate. Owned by her until her death in 1947, after which it was sold, along with the rest of her jewellery, to pay off debts.
- 1949 - Bought, from the estate of Evalyn Walsh-McLean, by famous New York Jeweller and Diamantaire, Harry Winston who, loathe to sell it, used it to raise money for charity.
- 1956 - Presented to the Smithsonian Institution, by Harry Winston, where it remains today, on permanent display, as one of the institutions main attractions (pictured above).

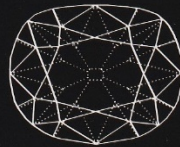
The Hope Diamond

Fancy Dark, Greyish-Blue Colour - 58 facet - Antique Cushion Brilliant Cut
25.6mm x 21.78mm x 12.1 mm - 45.52 Carats

Crown



Pavilion



(Approximate Actual Size)

THE REGENT

Known originally as the Pitt Diamond, this 140.50 Carat, near-colourless Cushion Cut Diamond has been described by many as one of the most beautiful Diamonds in the world. It is also believed to be one of the last of the famous Diamonds to have come from the mines of India.



Although surpassed today in size and quality by a number of more modern famous cuts, it's unique, modified-brilliant cut style, with almost perfect proportions and symmetry, make The Regent one of the finest examples of Diamonds from this era known to exist.

It was found in 1701 by a slave working in one of the alluvial diggings on the Kistna River in the famous Golconda region of central India. It weighed 410 carats in its original rough form.

It was purchased, in 1702, by Thomas Pitt, the first Governor of Madras, who sent it to England, for cutting. The cutting process took 2 years at a cost of around 15,000 pounds and yielded a number of diamonds, the largest of which became known as the Pitt Diamond.

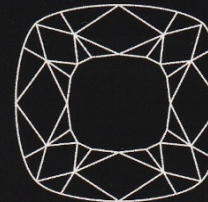
It was then purchased, in 1717, by Phillippe II, Duke of Orleans, who was Regent of France, prior to the reign of King Louis XV. It became part of the French Crown Jewels and has been known as The Regent ever since.

Originally set in the crown of Louis XV for his coronation in 1723, The Regent was used to adorn many different personal ornaments and regalia worn by successive French rulers and their wives. These included: A hair-ornament worn by King Louis XV's wife; A famous hat-ornament worn by Marie Antoinette; The hilt of Napoleon Bonaparte's sword; The Crown of King Charles X and, as the centrepiece in a tiara worn by the Empress Eugenie.

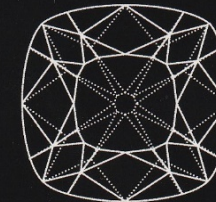
Many of the French Crown Jewels were sold at an auction in 1887. The Regent was retained, however, and is on permanent display in the Apollon Gallery at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

The Regent
Near Colourless - Cushion Shape, Stellar Brilliant Cut
34mm x 32mm x 25mm - 70 Facets - 140.50 Carats

Crown



Pavilion



(Approximate Actual Size)

THE TIFFANY



Also known as The Tiffany Yellow, The Tiffany is one of the largest Fancy Vivid, Yellow Diamonds in the world. It has been described as one of the finest examples of its kind ever seen.

For virtually all of the time since it was first purchased, by Tiffany & Co., almost 120 years ago, it has been displayed, for the pleasure of the many who have come to see it, at Tiffany's prestigious head office address, on 5th Avenue, in New York.

The Tiffany Yellow is probably best known today, in its present setting, in the 'Bird on the Rock'.

The Tiffany was famous long before it's well remembered appearance in the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

The original rough Diamond Crystal, a 287.42 carat Octahedron, was found in South Africa in 1877, in one of the central Kimberley mines. At the time it was one of the largest vivid-yellow Diamonds that had ever been seen.

Following its discovery, it was shipped to its owners in France where it was subsequently purchased by the head of Tiffany & Co. in Paris on behalf of the US parent company.

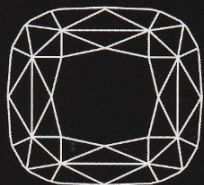
In 1879, after a year of studying, it was cut in Paris under the supervision of the noted gemmologist George F. Kunz. The result was a 128.5 carat, Cushion shaped, Canary-yellow diamond, the largest cut diamond of that colour ever known.

In June, 1890 it was shipped to Tiffany's head office in New York where, apart from being displayed at a limited number of exhibitions in the United States and elsewhere around the world, it has remained ever since.

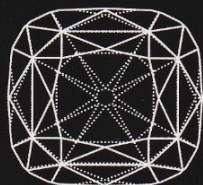
At one time, reportedly, The Tiffany was offered for sale but was never bought. Its value today is unknown and, according to Tiffany's, it is simply not for sale.

The Tiffany
Fancy Vivid, Orange-Yellow Colour - 90 Facets - Cushion shape, Stellar Brilliant Cut
27.0mm x 28.5mm x 22.2 mm - 128.51 Carats

Crown



Pavilion

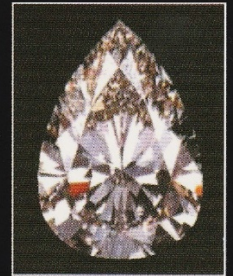


(Approximate Actual Size)

THE TAYLOR-BURTON

One of the most famous 'modern' cuts must be the Taylor-Burton Diamond, a 69.42 Carat, D-Colour, Flawless, Pear Shape Brilliant Cut, which created a sensation when it was purchased in 1969 for Elizabeth Taylor by her husband, the Late Richard Burton.

The Diamond was cut from a 240.80 Carat Rough Diamond found in the famous Premier Mine in 1966. It was cut by renowned New York Diamantaire, Harry Winston, who commented at the time that he doubted if there had been more than six Diamonds in the world of the same quality. The rough Diamond yielded two perfect stones of which the Taylor-Burton was the largest.



The Diamond was first purchased, in 1967, by a Mrs. Harriet Annenberg-Ames, the sister of Walter Annenberg, the US Ambassador to London during the Richard Nixon administration.

Two years later, on October 23rd, 1969, the Diamond was offered for sale at a landmark auction, in New York, which gave the successful bidder the right to 'name' the Diamond. The auction attracted many interested buyers including Richard Burton, Harry Winston and Robert Kenmore the owner of Cartier Inc. In the record-breaking auction, Kenmore emerged the winner with a bid of US\$ 1,050,000 and immediately named the Diamond 'The Cartier'.

Still determined to obtain the Diamond, Richard Burton contacted Cartier the following day and successfully negotiated the purchase of the Diamond for an undisclosed price. As part of the deal Richard Burton agreed to allow Cartier to display the renamed 'Taylor-Burton' Diamond for a limited period at their New York showroom.

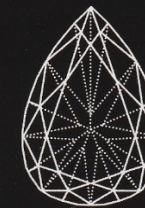
Elizabeth Taylor wore the Diamond for the first time on October 12th, 1969, when she attended Princess Grace's 40th Birthday in Monaco. Nine years later, in 1978, following her divorce from Richard Burton, Miss Taylor announced that she was putting the Diamond up for sale and that the proceeds would be used to fund the building of a hospital in Botswana. The Diamond was bought, for a reported US\$ 5,000,000, by New York Jeweler Henry Lambert. It has since been purchased by the famous jeweller and collector Robert Mouawad.

The Taylor-Burton
D Colour, Flawless - 57 Facets - Pear Shape, Brilliant Cut
Approx. 28.0mm x 20.0mm x 12mm - 69.42 Carats

Crown



Pavilion



(Approximate Actual Size)

THE CENTENARY



The Centenary is the largest Cut and Polished, D Colour, Flawless Diamond in the World. It is also one of the 10 largest Cut and Polished Diamonds known today.

The original Rough Diamond weighed 599 carats and was found, on July 17th, 1986, at the famous Premier Mine, now owned by the DeBeers Consolidated Group.

The finished Diamond weighed 273.85 carats and was cut in a Fancy, modified shield shape. With its 247 uniquely designed facets, it is described as one of the most magnificent examples of the Diamond Cutter's art.

Although discovered in 1986, it was not announced to the world until nearly two years later. It was ultimately unveiled, still in its rough form, at a banquet, held at Kimberley in South Africa, on March 11th, 1988 to celebrate the centenary of the formation of DeBeers.

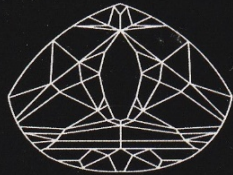
The task of evaluating and overseeing the cutting of The Centenary was entrusted to renowned master diamond cutter, Gabi S. Tolkowski. The team included two other master cutters, Jim Nash and Geoff Woolett and the cutting was carried out in a specially designed underground room in the DeBeers Diamond Research Laboratory in Johannesburg.

The entire planning and cutting process took nearly three years to complete. During this time special tools had to be created and tested (involving the cutting of the Unnamed Brown) and thirteen different Cut Designs were considered. Once the final Cut Design had been decided, the final shaping and polishing lasted nearly one year.

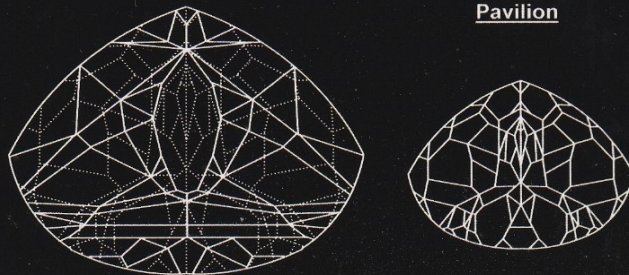
When the cutting was finally completed, in May 1991, The Centenary was again presented to the world. De Beers' Deputy Chairman, Mr. Nicholas Oppenheimer is quoted at the time as having said 'who can put a price on such a Diamond'. It was later insured for \$ 100 Million.

The Centenary
D Colour - Flawless - 247 Facets - Fancy Shield Shape - Special Cut
41.0mm x 52.0mm - 273.85 carats

Crown



Pavilion



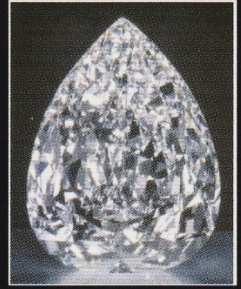
(Approximate Actual size)

THE MILLENNIUM STAR

The Millennium Star is the second largest Cut and Polished, D Colour, Flawless Diamond in the World. It is also one of the ten largest Cut and Polished Diamonds known today.

Weighing 203.4 carats, the Millennium Star is cut with a classic Pear shape, in a modified Brilliant Style, with 54 facets. It is both internally and externally Flawless and is also cut to perfect proportions.

It was presented to the world in 1999, at a special event, hosted by DeBeers, to herald the start of the new millennium. The unveiling ceremony took place at the Central Selling Organisation's prestigious headquarters at Charterhouse Street in London.



The original Rough Diamond weighed 777 carats and was found in 1991 at one of the alluvial workings located in the Mbuyi-Maji district in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was subsequently purchased by the DeBeers Consolidated Group.

The Diamond was cut for DeBeers by a team of the world's top master diamond cutters. The team was led by Nir Livnat, managing Director of Ascot Diamonds, a member of the Steinmetz Group of Companies.

The entire cutting process lasted three years, involving nearly six months of planning, during which time some 100 plastic models were made, nearly all of which were used in designing the ultimate polished Diamond. The original rough Diamond was divided into three pieces, the largest of which was used to produce the Millennium Star.

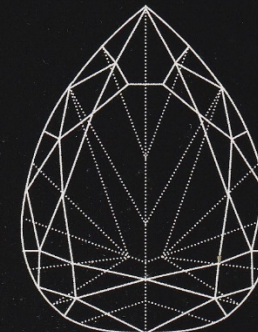
The Millennium Star also featured as the centrepiece of the DeBeers Millennium Collection, exhibited in 2000 at the newly constructed Millennium Dome, in London. The exhibition included a unique, never before seen, collection of 11 Fancy Blue Diamonds which had been cut at the same time as the Millennium Star.

The Millennium Star
D Colour - Flawless - 54 Facets - Pear Shape - Modified Brilliant Cut
55.0mm x 40.0mm - 203.04 carats

Crown



Pavilion

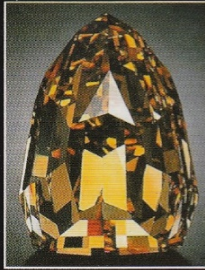


(Approximate Actual size)

THE INCOMPARABLE

Originally known as The Golden Giant, The Incomparable weighs in at 407.48 carats and is currently the third largest cut and polished Diamond in the world. Only the Golden Jubilee (545.67 carats) and the Great Star of Africa (530.30 carats) are larger.

The original rough Diamond weighed 890 carats and was found by a young girl playing in a pile of rubble outside her uncle's house in the town of Mbuji-Mayi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The rubble had been collected from the rejected tailings of a nearby mining operation. After changing hands a number of times the rough Diamond was ultimately purchased by DeBeers.



It was sold, in 1980, to a partnership consisting of Donald Zale of the Zale Corporation, Marvin Samuels of Premier Gems Corporation and Louis Glick, three prominent figures in the United States Diamond Industry. The task of cutting the Diamond was overseen by Marvin Samuels, well known for his expertise in the fashioning of large and important Diamonds.

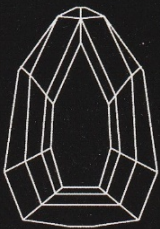
Nearly four years later, in 1984, the Golden Giant was unveiled to coincide with the Zale Corporation's 75th (Diamond) anniversary. It then went on display at the Natural History wing of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.

It was first offered for public sale, as The Golden Giant, at an auction at Christie's in London but was unsold. It next appeared at auction in New York on October 19th, 1988, this time having been renamed The Incomparable, the largest Diamond ever offered for sale to the public. Although it failed to reach its reserve price of US\$ 20 Million, the highest bid of US\$ 12 Million set a record at the time as being the highest price ever bid for a single Diamond.

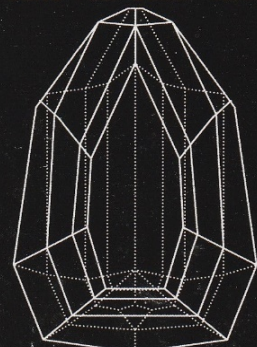
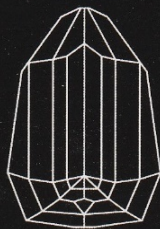
Prior to the cutting of the Golden Jubilee, The Incomparable had been the largest cut and polished, coloured Diamond in existence. But for the cutters' wish to create a Diamond of flawless clarity, it could well have been the largest cut and polished Diamond known today.

The Incomparable
Fancy Brownish-Yellow - Internally Flawless - 71 Facets - Triolette Cut
53.90 × 35.19 × 28.18 mm - 407.48 carats

Crown



Pavilion



(Approximate Actual size)

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

The Golden Jubilee, weighing 545.67 carats, is currently, the largest cut and polished Diamond in the world.

Described as a Fancy Yellowish-Brown, Fire Rose Cushion Cut, it was designed by Master Diamond Cutter Gabi S. Tolkowsky prior to the cutting of 'The Centenary'.

The Golden Jubilee was presented to the King of Thailand in 1997 to celebrate the 50th anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of his coronation. Prior to this event the stone had been known simply as The Unnamed Brown.



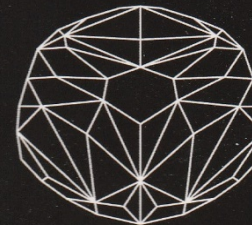
Discovered in 1986 at the Premier mine in South Africa, this diamond weighed 755.5 carats in its rough state. With a golden brown color, the diamond was said to have had a brilliant and magical aura at its centre. It was also said to have been a very delicate stone having multiple tension points that made it liable to fracture unless handled properly.

Before cutting 'The Centenary', it was necessary to develop special tools and equipment to handle the job. It was also important to test them on a suitably large piece of Rough. The Unnamed Brown provided the perfect opportunity, being both large and presenting similar difficulties to those of The Centenary. With it, the team of cutters were able to successfully test and perfect the tools that they had developed, in readiness for cutting The Centenary.

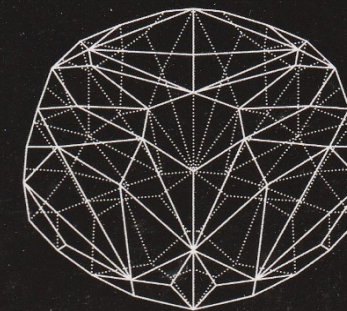
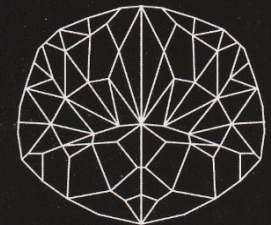
The surprise came when, after a year of work, the result was this beautiful, Golden-Brown Diamond with 148 perfectly symmetrical facets, weighing 15.37 carats more than the Great Star of Africa (Cullinan I), up until then the largest known cut and polished Diamond (530.30 carats). The 72.2% yield (the ratio between the weight of the cut stone and that of the original rough) had been exceptional, the yield for most Diamonds being generally around 50%. The cutting was performed by South African, master diamond cutter, Dawie DuPlessis, noted for his cutting of the famous Premier Rose in 1978.

The Golden Jubilee
Fancy Yellow-Brown - 148 Facets - Fire Rose, Cushion-Cut
51.08mm x 47.26mm x 33.50mm - 545.65 Carats

Crown



Pavilion



(Approximate Actual size)