

A Diamond is Forever and certainly a Girl's Best Friend!

This Blonde preferred Diamonds



When the sultry, immensely sexy Marilyn Monroe hit Hollywood like the blonde bombshell she was, she brought with her the power of persuasion. Men wanted her, women wanted to be wanted like her. They also wanted to look like her and dress like her. Millions of fans followed her every move. She was pin-up girl for the masses, the fresh, wide eyed beauty who shocked conservative America with her appearance as Playboy's first cover girl. What she did was followed avidly - who she dated, what she wore. And what she wore was fabulous - designer clothes, pricey furs and...diamonds! Only the best for such a star, and when it came to jewellery, nothing said "Marilyn" quite like diamonds - on the red carpet, at society functions - in the movies. She sparkled in "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" in 1953 and so did the diamonds she wore. The box office blockbuster featured Marilyn singing "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" after receiving a diamond tiara from her suitor. Her sultry and sensuous performance sealed the appeal of diamonds for women everywhere. A stroke of good luck for the diamond industry? Not so. Movies like "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and "Breakfast at Tiffany's" in 1961, where Audrey Hepburn as the movie's heroine gazes longingly into jeweller Tiffany's window display, were part of an immensely successful, near 30 year advertising campaign to convince the world that diamonds are the gems of love.

Until the 15th Century in Europe only Kings wore diamonds as a symbol of strength, courage and invincibility. In 1477 Archduke Maximilian of Austria gave Mary of Burgundy a diamond engagement ring - diamonds at that stage being thought of as magic and created in the flames of love. This was picked up in medieval Venice where they equated the hardness of diamond with the idea of enduring love, but only for the very rich, as diamonds were very rare.

The rarity of diamonds continued until the South African 'diamond rush' of the late 1880s when the price of the gems fell

dramatically. Harry Oppenheimer, owner of De Beers Consolidated Mines of South Africa, asked N.W. Ayer and Son, a leading advertising agency in the United States, to reverse the declining price of diamonds with a well-funded advertising campaign. The aim was to bring back the diamond as the symbol of rare perfection and opulence, of romance and love.

In the 1930s, the Great Depression took its toll on everyone and everything, particularly luxury goods. Ayer recommended strengthening the association of diamonds with romance, to sell



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