

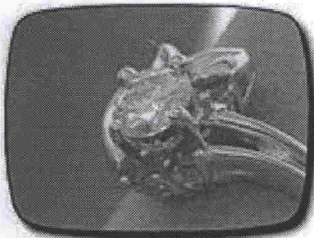


## Moissanite Gemstones Sparkle in the Triangle

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**Wednesday**  
August 5, 1998  
10:50 a.m. EDT



Moissanite is colorless and virtually indestructible. The sparkling stones are nearly impossible to tell apart from diamonds.



Moissanite gemstones look so much like diamonds they can even fool the experts.



Massage therapist Dotty Uhl has been wearing a moissanite ring for the past year as part of a durability

**RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK** -- You can now buy all the glitz and glamour of a diamond without paying the hefty price tag.

Moissanite gemstones look so much like diamonds they can even fool the experts. Back in March, WRAL's [Debra Morgan](#) first introduced this [Capital Idea](#) from a Triangle company.

"People are like, I've heard about it, I've heard about it. Now that it's out, let me come see it."

Before Mike Smith even advertised that he sells moissanite, the word was out and people started coming by his jewelry store in Cary.

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"Right off the bat, people are coming in and they never heard of Mike Smith Jewelers, but they heard of the moissanite and said 'hey we know where we can find it.'"

The look-a-likes come from a company in Research Triangle Park called C3. The company has been creating moissanite for the past three years.

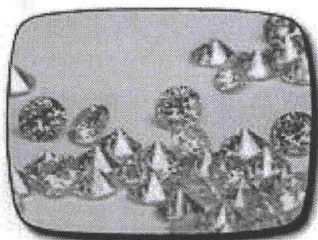
Unlike diamonds, these gems are made in a lab. Unlike other diamond substitutes such as cubic zirconia, moissanite has a chemical makeup very similar to diamonds. That's why chunks of smokey silicon carbide can be cut into colorless, virtually indestructible, sparkling stones that are nearly impossible to tell apart from diamonds.

Dotty Uhl says she loves her moissanite. She's been wearing a ring with the gemstone for the past year as part of a study to test its durability. She was chosen because of how much she uses her hands.

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"I'm a massage therapist. I come into contact with lots

study. She says it's still brilliant.



A one carat diamond sells for thousands of dollars.

The same sized moissanite gem is about a tenth of the cost.

of different oils, gels. In addition to that, as a single person homemaker, I do my own cooking and cleaning and scrubbing and this sort of thing."

So far, she says her gem has held up great -- it's still just as brilliant, with just a few scratches you can't see with your eye.

But perhaps what will catch your eye the most about moissanite will be the cost. A one carat diamond sells for thousands of dollars, whereas the same sized moissanite gem costs a couple hundred -- about a tenth of the cost.

Dotty Uhl say she like the fact that it's affordable, and she won't have to wait for someone to buy the jewelry for her.

#### Related Links

- [Gem Fake, Enthusiasm Genuine- News & Observer](#)
- [Almost a Girl's best Friend: New Product is no Rival for Fine Diamonds - The Diamond Registry](#)

Three stores in the Triangle now sell the diamond look-a-likes. You can find the gems at Touch of Gold, Charles Frank Goldsmith and Grimball and Stokes Jewelers.

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Photographer: [Robert Meikle](#)  
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