A rough diamond of 287.42 carats is discovered in the Kimberley mines of South Africa. Charles Lewis Tiffany purchases the stone and sends it to Paris where it is cut to 128.54 carats. Officially named the Tiffany Diamond, it is one of the world’s largest and finest fancy yellow diamonds.

The Diamond highlights Tiffany’s exhibit at the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition. Tiffany and its magnificent Diamond win top honors at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo.

In its only appearance in Tiffany’s Fifth Avenue windows, the Diamond is placed in the hands of a gold wire angel for a holiday display by famed window designer Gene Moore. The bright and shining stone could easily be seen from across the street.

Jean Schlumberger’s Ribbon Rosette necklace is set with the Diamond and worn by Audrey Hepburn in publicity photographs for the film Breakfast at Tiffany’s. Hepburn later wrote of the gem in a letter to Tiffany & Co., borrowing the words of John Keats: “A thing of beauty is a joy forever.”

In a witty ad placed in The New York Times, Tiffany announces that the Diamond may be purchased for $5,000,000 (the equivalent of $25,800,000 today) within a 24-hour period.

The Diamond appears as part of a celebration of the National Gem Collection at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. A Jean Schlumberger retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris features the Diamond in his “Bird on a Rock” setting.

For the 175th anniversary of Tiffany’s founding, the Diamond is reset in a magnificent necklace of dazzling white diamonds. After appearing at anniversary celebrations around the world, the Diamond in its brilliant new setting returns to its permanent place of honor on the Main Floor of Tiffany’s Fifth Avenue store.

THE TIFFANY DIAMOND


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