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NEW ASSISTANT: Strathroy jeweller James Poag holds up a diamond as he looks at his new Isee2 viewer, which measures the beauty of a diamond with far more precision than was previously possible. Poag is one of three jewellers in Canada to use the Belgian technology.

Jeweller gets gem of a machine

BY ERIC BENDER
Free Press Business Reporter

STRATHROY - Jeweller James Poag has a new assistant in his business of evaluating and selling diamonds.

The new partner is technology developed in Belgium that helps him evaluate the stones with more accuracy than before.

The Isee2 he leases for \$2,500 a year is one of 83 in the world and one of just three in Canada.

In a minute or two, Poag can measure "the beauty and performance" of a dia-

mond on the evaluator on a rating scale of one to 10.

"There are differences in diamonds coming from the same source that are considered ideal diamonds. With this, you can tell the difference between diamonds that are all good," Poag said.

"To me, this is the most consumer-friendly piece of technology to come along to assist the consumer."

The Isee2 evaluator takes 15 images of a diamond in 48 different shades of light, from candle glow to high-wattage intensity,

and comes up with scores that rate brilliance, scintillation and symmetry. Brilliance assesses the intensity of light return, scintillation analyses the sparkle and symmetry measures the accuracy of the cut.

The diamonds show up on the computer screen for comparison and for the customer to see.

It eliminates the need for blind parameters and subjectivity in evaluating diamonds, Poag said.

"The customer can make an informed decision based on the overall performance

of the diamond," he said.

Isee2 does another thing that amazes Poag: It can track diamonds from the mine to the customer.

Isee2 can see the tiny "birth certificate" (a registration number) ionized on the table or flat surface of every diamond.

It's not visible to the naked eye and can be seen only under magnification of 200 times.

The number shows where the diamond came from, its weight and who cut it.

Poag got his evaluator three weeks ago after

taking a course on its operation in Atlanta. Isee2 developer Overseas Diamonds sent technicians from Belgium to conduct the course. "As soon as I saw it I was impressed," Poag said.

He immediately set to work evaluating and rating the diamonds in his stock and noted differences among diamonds that had been rated as the same.

"They are all ideal diamonds, but some are better than others," he said.