



Diamonds join the culture club, Times Online UK, 5-24-07

We've had the cultured pearl – now we're about to get the cultured diamond. As everyone knows that a diamond is nothing more than crystallised carbon, it may seem strange that it has taken us all this time to learn to do what Nature has been doing for aeons. But learn we have and these days fancy coloured diamonds (well, so far only yellow) are being grown in a laboratory in Florida.

They are grown exactly the same way as in Nature – by the application of tremendous heat and pressure. Cultured diamonds can be cut and polished in the same manner as the natural ones and each looks to the naked eye, and even to the microscope exactly, like a diamond from the earth – only analysis in a laboratory can reveal the difference.

The Diamond Trading Company needn't start panicking yet. It takes about four days to grow each diamond and each lab is hugely expensive to install. While they're much less expensive than the mined version – retailing at about a third of the going rate – they're not cheap.

Gemesis (gemesis.com), not yet on sale here, could be said to be to the cultured diamond what Mikimoto is to the cultured pearl. The intention is not to pass them off as mined diamonds – each will come labelled and identified so nobody can be fooled – but more to enable you and me to get a lot more bang for our buck.