

## **Hallmark for Palladium – the “new” precious metal - becomes compulsory**

Palladium is bright, white, tarnish resistant and much less dense than other platinum group metals. Widely used in industry, it has now been officially recognized as a precious metal for fine jewellery, with the introduction of a compulsory UK hallmark from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

Many jewellers are experimenting with Palladium, which has had a voluntary legally recognised UK hallmark since July 2009. From January 1, 2010 this is a legal requirement for all articles weighing over 1 gram.

Palladium was introduced to the jewellery market back in the 1930s and the 1950s but never caught on. Now it has the credibility of an independent UK hallmark guaranteeing its fineness to an international standard, most commonly 950 parts per thousand, but also 999 and 500.

Palladium is gaining significant attention. Over 40,000 pieces have been voluntarily hallmarked in the last six months, demonstrating the potential popularity of this newly recognised precious metal. At a time when the white metal look is very popular, and gold prices are at a record high, Palladium meets current trends and opens up huge opportunities to create inexpensive but innovative pieces.

Palladium joins gold, silver and platinum as the fourth recognized precious metal. This means articles cannot be sold in the UK without a statutory hallmark, applied by one of the four independent UK Assay Offices after testing to ensure the precious metal content meets a recognized standard. Articles can be marked as containing a minimum of either 500, 950 or 999 parts per thousand of Palladium. The UK hallmark protects the consumer from dishonest traders and jewellers from unfair competition.



**The New Fineness symbol for Palladium being introduced in January 2010 to coincide with its compulsory hallmarking status and to avoid confusion with the Platinum fineness symbol**