Make knowledgeable choices and avoid expensive mistakes when investing in the most significant jewelry purchase of your life.

BY LISA KRIKAWA
THE RING LEADER
THE ESSENTIAL ENGAGEMENT RING HANDBOOK

Make Knowledgeable Choices
and Avoid Expensive Mistakes
When Investing in the Most
Significant Jewelry Purchase
of Your Life

By Lisa Krikawa
This book is dedicated to

PSI Seminars, PLD Team #57
To the Owner, Trainer, Coaches and Players,
“Fly Like Eagles!”
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Pink sapphire set in rose gold with diamonds
Preface

This handbook is a compilation of all the educational pieces I’ve written over the years. After 18 years of designing custom engagement rings for clients all over the world, thousands of unique engagement rings later, I’ve developed an enormous appreciation for the many intricacies of designing, building and maintaining an engagement ring.

I’ve also had the benefit of seeing my rings come back in for repairs, and evaluating and repairing countless heirloom and second-hand engagement rings. I’ve seen all kinds of damage, from manufacturing defects, poor structure, poor materials, and user damage.

I’ve talked to women after receiving their rings. I’ve helped couples with their anniversary bands and engagement ring redo’s. I’ve created engagement ring redesigns for 10 year, 20 year and 30 year anniversaries, and sometimes regardless of the anniversary. I know what the women love about their rings, and what they don’t love. I’ve met sentimental diamonds and heard the love stories of parents and grandparents.

I’ve worked with gay couples. I’ve created engagement ring matched sets, engagement rings, and men’s matched sets. In this book, I refer to “she” as receiving the engagement ring, and “he” as giving it, simply as a literary device. I hope you read the correct pronoun for your relationship as well.

This book is not an exhaustive treatise on every single aspect, instead I touch on most of the facets you can take into consideration when choosing your engagement ring. Some of the terms are simply ones I’ve come up with in the last 18 years, or they are ones that make sense to me. Every day, I learn more about jewels and jewelry! I’m excited to share this handbook with you, and I truly hope it helps you with your decisions!

Mokumé gané solitaire set
The Most Powerful Symbol of Love

An engagement ring is the ultimate symbol of love in our society. It represents a promise of love for a life time. A commitment to cherish, hold and love, for good or for bad, to until death do we part. That’s a pretty hearty oath. And when the engagement ring is slid on the finger, all of those unspoken promises and more are silently communicated. That’s a big message for such a small piece of jewelry to carry.

First Big Purchase

An engagement ring is potentially a young man or woman’s first biggest purchase. And, as with any purchase these days, there are lots of choices out there! An engagement ring can be your first high dollar investment in a piece of jewelry, and there’s more to it than the jewelry box store around the corner might reveal.
A Ring That Withstands High Impact Daily

Just like a woman, a ring is not for just standing around looking pretty. It actually has to be tough enough to withstand a lifetime of banging around on things. Most couples dream of passing their important symbol on to the next generation. Will the ring you choose make it that far?

Dangerous Diamond Dealings

In the world of diamonds, there is as much danger and deceit as there is in the drug world. Diamonds are a high stakes game, being played by major international players. And the average Joe has no way to know if his purchase is legit or not. With a little knowledge, you can make your diamond purchase and be confident in your choice.

The Industry of Trust

The jewelry industry is one in which trust is still the highest value possible. Papers can be faked, lack of structural integrity can be overlooked, and diamonds can be drilled, filled, treated, misrepresented, simulated and grown. In the world of jewelry, not all that glitters is gold.

The Stakes are High

So, if there wasn’t enough pressure to get the ring design right, the proposal right, and of course the girl right, there’s much more that can go wrong with your ring purchase than you though possible. There is nothing more sour for a new bride than a ring that has stones falling out, or a ring that becomes a symbol of poorly spent money. And the opposite of that is true as well; your dream ring can be and remain a symbol of love, gratitude, and togetherness, and forever remain a snapshot in time of when you first fell in love.

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Chapter 1: Who Picks Out the Ring?

We’ve all seen the classic engagement ring scene. The guy nervously handles a ring box. He goes down on one knee, and opens the box and presents it to the shocked girl. Of course she says “Yes!” even though she hasn’t even looked at the ring yet.

While that is a romantic view of a proposal, the fact is that these days, the purchase of an engagement ring as a surprise, with no involvement from the recipient, is just not that common. There are probably more women shopping for their dream ring and making the purchase then there are guys looking to pop the question with a surprise ring. Since starting my career in jewelry design in 1998, I’ve seen it all -- from men who designed their intended’s ring entirely on their own to women who self-purchase their ring. And I’ve seen every combination in between. Couples shopping together, women picking out their ring and sending the exact details to their boyfriends, you name it, I’ve seen it.
Will It Be A Surprise?

Considering all the time, effort and expense that goes into creating the perfect engagement ring, is it any wonder so many men want some element of surprise? It elevates their all-important question into a sweeping, romantic gesture -- not to mention, many women swoon over the idea of an idyllic surprise proposal.

Just how much of a surprise element the engagement ring should be depends on the couple. There’s no one right way to go about it, but there are some things you can do to help ensure your surprise ring is well-received.

1) Find out what she likes.

You have several ways to gather intel. The easiest, of course, is to take her shopping and make mental notes of whatever she gravitates toward.

2) What’s her style?

She may also give you clues in her personal style. Is she more formal or informal? Does she like organic, earthy clothes and patterns, or is she more likely to wear business casual? While this should not be the end all be all of what kind of ring to get her, the information definitely helps! Keep in mind that the ring is for a lifetime. Her style may change.

3) Take her career and extra-curricular activities into consideration.

Is she a stock broker on Wall Street or a school teacher? Do you think a huge statement engagement ring would work better for the Wall Street powerhouse? And how about a more modest ring that won’t snag or scratch the kids for the school teacher, that she can feel comfortable doing many activities in? Yes, of course! Is she a nurse, taking gloves on and off all day? Then perhaps a low profile ring that won’t inhibit the glove would be the ticket. For the athlete, she may prefer a low, bezel set, super durable ring that can withstand a beating.

4) Rely on friends and family.

Hang on to her nearest and dearest’s phone numbers. You might want to call them when it’s time to get down to the nitty gritty of picking out the ring. Ask her family and
friends if she’s done any research or shown them examples of rings she loves – that can clue you in on her likes and dislikes. If not, see if they’ll do some detective work for you.

If you’re comfortable with the idea, bring her sister, mom or bestie to the store with you and show them the stones and settings you’re considering. Bounce design ideas off of a couple of people you trust, and listen to what they say.

5) Rely on your jeweler.

Gather as many details as you can -- your jeweler will help you take it from there. One of your best allies when shopping for an engagement ring is your jeweler. Choose someone you trust or one that comes highly recommended, who has years of experience designing or selling engagement rings.

Whether you bring in detailed sketches or go in with no idea of what you want, a trained jeweler will be able to offer a broad perspective on what’s worked well in the past, which materials are the highest quality, and how to put some flair in your design without going over the top.

6) Go with your gut.

While you may ask for input and advice from those around you, ultimately it’s up to you. Gather all the information you can, and then simply go with your gut. If you are taking this time to find something special and unique, it will show.

7) K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Silly!)

Still stuck? When in doubt, stick with something simple, classic and timeless, like a round diamond in a beautiful setting. Put your energy into a nicely made diamond (more about that later!) and a simple yet elegant setting.

8) Go temporary.

Your love may be forever, yet that doesn’t mean the engagement ring has to be. If you think your partner has a very specific vision about what she wants, and you are committed to popping the question and surprising her, consider choosing a stone ahead of time and placing it in a temporary, very simple setting. Then, after you pop the question, the two of you can work together on a setting that she’ll love almost as much as she loves you.
Chapter 2: Center Stone

The center stone of the engagement ring is the one common factor in all engagement rings. While I have seen men and women get engaged with plain bands, or wedding bands with stones in them, and call them engagement rings, a true engagement ring has a focal point, a main center stone.

While it is commonly accepted that a diamond is the traditional center stone for an engagement ring, that really only became commonplace in the middle of the 20th century. Before that, many affluent couples actually preferred the colored precious stones, such as ruby and sapphire.

Today, there are many choices when it comes to the center stone, and while the diamond remains the most popular choice, white diamond alternatives are also popular, along with colored sapphires and even birthstones.
Stone Glossary

**Carat:** This is a precise measurement of weight. While an exact carat is used to measure valuable stones, the weight is also often loosely referred to as “quarter carat,” “half carat,” “three quarter carat,” and so on. One carat is actually 200mg (0.2g).

Because the specific density of stones varies, a diamond and a sapphire with the same exact carat weight may actually have different diameters, so don’t go by weight strictly when it comes to colored stones.

**Shape:** This is the shape of the stone from the top view. The most common for an engagement ring is round, followed by princess (square), cushion, oval, emerald, marquise, pear, trillion, and others.

**Cut:** Shape and cut are sometimes used synonymously (incorrectly), however, the cut refers to how well the stone is cut. A well cut stone will reflect light back out of the top of the stone, creating sparkle.
**Color:** All stones have a color reference, even “colorless” stones. In diamonds, the white diamond scale runs from D-Z, for colorless stones (that’s truly colorless to light yellow), then all other colors will vary in color and saturation (light to dark).

![Diamond color scale](image)

**Clarity:** Clarity refers to what is inside the stone. Are there visible inclusions? Can you see any internal characteristics? If it is “eye-clean” that means you are unable to see anything inside the stone with your naked, unaided eye, without magnification. If it is visibly included, that means that you can see stuff inside the stone. This doesn’t equate with “good” or “bad,” as sometimes, the inclusions are desirable, and there are even highly included stones such as opaque and black diamonds that are full of inclusions.

![Significant inclusions in a diamond and sapphire](image)

**Certification:** Valuable white diamonds are the only stones that really need to be purchased with a certificate (a “cert”). High priced natural fancy colored diamonds and precious stones may also be certified. The vast majority of colored stones, including fancy colored diamonds, do not generally come with a certificate, unless they are significant and untreated, priced in the thousands. The most highly respected grading labs are Gemological Institute of America (GIA) for diamonds and sapphires, and American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) and American Gemological Laboratories (AGL) for colored gems.

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**Hardness:** This refers to how easily the stone is scratched. The Mohs hardness grades stones on a scale from 1 to 10. This is an exponential scale, so diamonds at a hardness of 10 are 4 times harder than sapphires which measure 9 on the Mohs scale.

![Mohs Hardness Scale](image)

**Origin:** This term is actually not used very often on the consumer level, however it refers to where the stone came from. Very few diamonds and colored stones can be traced back to the mine or country of origin, as that information does not travel with the stone. Some gem types are known for their origin, such as tanzanite, which comes from Tanzania. Other gemstones come from a few limited mines around the world, such as alexandrite.

When stones are mined, they are sent from the mines to cutting factories, done either with a sub-standard “native cut” in the country of origin or sent to cutting factories in India, Taiwan, and China. Often, excellent cut stones on the U.S. market have been recut in the U.S. or in other fine cutting factories. Stones on the U.S. market include both native cut, and a higher quality recut.
The grading is all done after the stone has been cut or re-cut, and by that time, the origin is sometimes no longer known, although it can often be surmised. The vast majority of diamonds and gemstones on the market do not carry their origin with them, and it is rarely a selling point.

Origin can also refer to whether the stone is “earth-mined” or “lab-grown.” Lab created gems are seeing a huge rise in interest among consumers, as they are typically fair-trade and responsible, and more earth-friendly. Keep in mind, just because it was grown in a lab doesn’t mean that it was cut in a fair-trade factory.

![Lab created sapphire, ruby, emerald, Moissanite, and diamond](image)

**Treatment:** There has been much forward movement in the jewelry industry, in the interest of disclosing treatment of gemstones. It still remains a largely unregulated practice. Many gemstones undergo standard treatments, that are typical and permanent for the stone type, and increase the beauty, such as the heating of sapphire and tanzanite. Other treatments, when not disclosed, become unethical, like the glass filling of rubies and the drill and fill treatment on diamonds. In these two treatments, poor quality gems are made to look like gem quality, and may be sold as such. I can’t stress enough the importance of a reputable jeweler. If they have membership in the American Gem Trade Association (AGTA), all the better, because they have made the conscious and voluntary choice to educate consumers and disclose all treatments.

**Consciousness:** As the awareness of the “blood diamond” has grown in the consumer sector, so has the interest in investing in stones that are conflict-free. This is still a very challenging dilemma, due in large part to the loss of origin as the stone travels around the world. The chain of custody goes from mine to cutter to wholesaler then to retailer, and much information is not kept with the stone. There are opportunities for responsible choices and poor choices at every step of the process, so each link in the chain has to be vetted out to determine the level of responsibility that was in place when the stone passed through.
While the industry is still far from having a perfect method of certifying stones as conflict free or fair trade, much progress has been made on this hot topic in recent years. Both the Kimberly Process and the Responsible Jewelry Council are making progress on this subject.

![Image of children working in a mine]

The battle against child labor wages on in some regions

**Smart White Diamond Buying**

After looking at thousands of diamonds, both loose, and set, with and without certs, I've now settled on what I believe to be the best choices in smart diamond shopping. Each facet of the diamond grading scheme affects the price. In color, the whitest diamond (D color) is the most rare, so a D color diamond demands the highest value in the marketplace. And same with flawless, excellent cut, etc.

**Prioritize**

It is important to know what your priorities are when purchasing a diamond. Each factor in grading a diamond also affects the market value. It's likely you don't have unlimited funds (and if you do, I'd love to sell you a diamond, so call me!), so you have to decide where to put your money. For instance, you might know you need a large diamond, and believe me, I’ve met some men who KNOW their girlfriends want a big one. They will want to get the biggest stone they can afford, yet they won’t be able to
purchase a huge stone that is flawless (no inclusions) and colorless (D on the color scale), because it would cost a small fortune. When diamond shopping, it is really helpful to decide ahead of time what characteristics you want to prioritize.

In order to prioritize what you DO want in your stone, you might have to choose what to give up. Will you sacrifice color or clarity or cut, and prioritize carat ("She needs a 2 carat diamond," poor bloke!). Or will you sacrifice clarity... and get a stone with "imperfections" or inclusions that are visible to the naked eye. That means you can see the "spot" without 10x magnification. Sometimes it’s so faint that only someone with eagle eyes can see it, or sometimes you are unable to see it until the stone gets dirty (like after a week or month of wear, depending on how clean the ring is kept).

You might sacrifice cut, and get a stone with a big "spread," which makes it a shallow cut stone. When you sacrifice cut, you lose sparkle, which is most apparent, again, when the stone is dirty. The lovely thing about diamonds is, if it’s well cut, it will sparkle even when dirty.

Certification

A GIA certificate is the number one most important feature, if you are going to invest a significant amount of your income on a white diamond. All the information below is AS RELATED TO GIA GRADING. GIA stands for Gemological Institute of America. There are too many "subjective" variables from lab to lab. GIA is strict, exact, reliable, and the industry standard. All you need to know is only buy a GIA graded stone (that is, if you REALLY want to know FOR SURE what the diamond ACTUALLY is). For the record, AGS is a great lab also, and I have no doubt that many other smaller labs are as accurate as GIA. The vast majority of diamonds are certified by GIA, so we’ll stick with that.
Diamond Cut

The cut is the only thing that man does to a stone, and the light travels through the stone in a predictable, mathematical way, so I put a big value on an excellent cut. Light return is the term used for how much of the light that enters through the top of the stone returns back to the eye, in the form of sparkle. Why not let loose the most fire possible?

There are plenty of treatises on the market about the perfect numbers for diamond cut, and I’m just not going to go there in this section. The diagram below gives you an indication of just how many numbers you can analyze. I personally do not believe that
it’s necessary, although if you find it fun and interesting, by all means do as much research as you want. My biggest concern is getting a well cut, brilliant and sparkly diamond on the girl’s hand. I promise you, you won’t still be talking about the pavilion angle a month after the engagement.

If you are purchasing a round brilliant cut diamond, you can save yourself a lot of time by looking to see what GIA graded the cut as: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor. GIA has sophisticated equipment to judge light return.

Fancy shapes (everything other than round) do not get a cut grade assigned by GIA. There is some great information available on what numbers to look for in the fancy shapes, however, it again boils down to the sparkle. As each diamond is cut by hand, even an experienced diamond dealer still needs to look at the stone to judge the brilliance. Here’s where buying from a jeweler with experience can really make a difference. If you want their honest opinion on light return for a fancy shape, ask for it. Remember, just like in every other facet of diamond grading, the better the cut, the more it will cost.
Comparing these two Asscher cuts, the one on the left is dark and the points don't meet up in the center, whereas the one on the right is has a great light return, and the four points meet up in the center. That information is not on a certificate.

Diamond Color

If you want a white diamond, you don't have to spend your entire budget on a D-F colored diamond. G and H graded diamonds are white, when face up and even when set in a white metal. An "I" colored diamond is border line, so if you are really trying to squeeze out a little larger stone with your diamond dollars, go I. G-H-I = Value.

If you are setting the stone in yellow gold, you have even more leeway. Often, commercial engagement rings in yellow gold are set with J-M colored diamonds, and the off color is masked by the yellow metal.

The diamonds in the M-Z range are still beautiful, in my opinion. I prefer to highlight the color of diamonds in that range, to bring out the color, either through the use of very white accent diamonds to accentuate the stone, or metal colors that coordinate well with the stone color, such as natural unplated white gold or 10 karat green gold.
**Diamond Clarity**

I love looking at diamond inclusions under magnification. They are all so unique! Feathers and clouds and crystals and wisps, oh my! As a matter of fact, get to know your inclusions and no one can ever switch your diamond on you. But enjoy the fun with a loupe or a microscope, and let the sparkle rule the day when she is gazing at it on her hand. The last thing you want is her hyper focusing on where that little spot is.

The clarity grading scales starts at flawless (FL) and goes through to Included (I). For diamonds graded as flawless (FL) through very slightly included (VS), you will definitely not be able to see any inclusions with your naked eye. The biggest difference in an FL diamond and a VS diamond? Rarity. And that means dollars.

Diamonds with a slightly included (SI) grading are the middle child. SI1 has fewer inclusions than SI2. 99% of GIA certified SI1 clarity diamonds will be absolutely eye clean. And I say that because I’ve seen two SI1 graded diamonds in my lifetime in which I could see the inclusion, when examining the stone under special light, knowing where the inclusion was, and looking at it in tweezers held just so. Clarity grading is subjective, after all, and as strict as GIA is, you’re still relying on a human being for the grade.
So, an SI1 or VS2 is where the value is. An SI1 clarity diamond looks EXACTLY the same as a flawless (Fl) diamond to even the most highly trained diamond grader on the planet, when looking at it without magnification. You just are not able to see the difference without magnification.

SI2 diamonds are the true borderline. If an SI1 diamond is a middle child, the SI2 diamond is the red-headed stepchild. Some of them (the least expensive of the SI2 diamonds) will have inclusions that are visible to the naked eye, and some will not (the more expensive SI2 diamonds). Simply put, the inclusions are graded by volume. So one large inclusion may get an SI2 grade, and also a field of many small inclusions may receive a grade of SI2. You would want to avoid the diamond with one large inclusion, because it is more likely that your eye will be able to see it.

The other thing to keep in mind with the borderline eye visible inclusions, and diamonds graded in the Included range, is as the stone becomes dirty, when it is worn, and the light return and the sparkle is dulled a little bit, those little suckers are going to jump out at you.

When looking at photos of diamonds, you may also notice inclusions. Keep in mind that if the photo is not life size, you are looking at the image under magnification, and those inclusions may or may not be visible in the actual diamond without magnification.
White Alternatives to Earth Mined Diamonds

There are many reasons to choose an alternative to a diamond, and it’s great if you are clear on why you want to do so. Is it because you want something that’s conflict free? Or perhaps it really boils down to cost.

I often hear from clients “I don’t want a diamond,” yet that is not enough information for me to help them make an informed decision. I need to know if it is cost, origin, or consciousness.

I love when customers pose this challenge, because I’m constantly researching and checking out the latest diamond alternatives. Keep in mind that a “simulant” is something that’s “made to look like.” A small chunk of faceted glass could be called a diamond simulant. A “Synthetic, Lab Created or Lab Grown” is identical on a molecular level to the original, it’s just grown in a lab rather than mined from the earth.

Here are some of your options. This is not exhaustive by any means, however, these are my favorites and the top requested alternatives.

Moissanite: A Diamond Simulant

Moissanite can seem confusing at first. It is a lab created diamond simulant. That means it is grown in a lab. It is lab created moissanite. Natural moissanite is an opaque green in nature, however, it is crystal-clear when created in a lab.

Natural moissanite

It has a refractive index greater to that of a diamond, which means that it is super sparkly. It is made to look like a diamond, which makes it a diamond simulant. At 9.25 on the Mohs hardness scale, it’s harder than a sapphire. Moissanite is excellent for everyday wear and the stone will keep its sparkle and fire for a lifetime of wear.
Moissanite cushion and Snowflake Engagement Ring with round Moissanite

Just because Moissanite is made in a lab and not the earth doesn’t mean it’s cheap. In fact, while Moissanite is much less expensive than a diamond, Moissanite stones are still in the hundreds of dollars. So while they’re not cheap, per se, you can get a big, beautiful look without going bankrupt.

_Cubic Zirconia and Other Diamond Simulants_

Cubic zirconia (CZ) is another lab created diamond simulant (made to look like a diamond), and it is used widely in inexpensive fashion jewelry. CZ has a hardness in the 7 range, on the Mohs scale. At this hardness, if worn every day, the surface of the CZ will become scratched and worn within a year. The price is reflected in this quality; a CZ will only set you back a few dollars. It is by no means an acceptable stone for an everyday ring, much less an engagement ring. It won’t last.

If you’re shopping online for a synthetic diamond or diamond simulant, do yourself a favor and research the company before you buy. Many are trustworthy, but some will try to pass off a piece of cubic zirconia as a “real synthetic diamond.” I won’t name
names, however, I’ve seen it happen, so trust me, it pays to do your homework before hand, or simply stick with a known alternative.

![Abraded facet junctions after one year of wear in a poor choice of diamond simulant](image)

**Lab Created Diamonds**

A great choice for a diamond alternative is the lab grown diamond. This is not to be confused with "simulant" or "imitation." Lab grown diamonds are identical to mined diamonds sharing the same physical, chemical and optical properties as their natural counterparts. They are simply grown in a lab, and not in the earth. A lab grown diamond is a diamond, grown under the same conditions as diamonds grow beneath the earth’s surface. By applying tremendous heat and pressure, a diamond begins to grow atom by atom, layer by layer, just as it does in nature.

A lab created diamond is a pocket conscious choice! Though not inexpensive by any means, you can expect to pay 10-30% less than a natural diamond, depending on the size and demand, and up to 40% less in very large sizes.

With a commitment to transparency and guaranteed origin, each lab created diamond is conflict-free. Being eco-conscious and sustainable, lab created diamonds have the added benefit of being considered a "green" choice for the environmentally conscious.
They are produced with a small footprint on the environment, as well as being made without moving any earth.

Lab created diamonds are graded just like a natural diamond, by the 4 C’s. They will also be accompanied by a certificate from a grading lab, although rarely from GIA. Typically, lab diamonds are graded by the International Gemological Institute (IGI).

Grown diamonds are created through two different processes, high pressure-high temperature (HPHT) and chemical vapor deposition (CVD). In both cases, a small diamond seed is placed in a tightly controlled environment where the rough diamond grows, atom-by-atom, just like the natural process.

White, blue, pink and yellow lab diamonds. See them spin and sparkle at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ln18AYcm92Q
White Sapphire

I can see why someone would be tempted to go with a white sapphire: It’s a 9 on the hardness scale (diamonds are a 10), is affordable, and it sounds beautiful. I mean, what’s not romantic sounding about white sapphire. And in fact, large white sapphires are beautiful, when they have an interesting or excellent cut.

Here’s the biggest drawback: white sapphires lack the fire of a diamond. In other words, the flash and fire in the stone is white only, not with a rainbow of multiple flashes of color that you’ll see in diamond, Moissanite, and even cubic zirconia! A diamond’s scintillation gives it fiery colors... a rainbow of colors that play in the white, whereas a white sapphire does not have this scintillation. It is simply... colorless, white. The sparkle of a colorless sapphire does not compare to diamond.

The biggest drawback to white sapphire is truly that when it gets dirty, say after a few days of wear, the sparkle becomes completely dulled, unlike diamond or Moissanite, which continue to sparkle long after they get dirty. When dirty, the white sapphire looks like, well, a lump of soap. I’ve sold lovely white sapphires, with my customer’s insistence, and against my strong recommendation, only to have the ring returned to be replaced with a Moissanite or diamond.

Sapphire is truly lovely when it is imbued with color. Sapphire colors are truly gorgeous, and the primary reason to have a sapphire in an engagement ring is that incredible sapphire color.
Fancy Colored Diamonds

Jenny McCarthy. Carrie Underwood. Jennifer Lopez. Kelly Clarkson. The list of celebrities who have rocked fancy colored diamond engagement rings is long—and it’s easy to see why. These rare, tinted stones add an exotic touch to a treasured piece of jewelry, and since each one is unique, you’re guaranteed a one-of-a-kind creation. What woman doesn’t want that?

Highly prized natural fancy colored diamonds

Luckily, you don’t have to have an A-list’s bank to buy a fancy colored diamond (FCD). Though natural, untreated ones are pricey—especially in ultra-rare blue—there are plenty of lower-cost options that are just as beautiful. Here’s what to know before you shop for one of these colorful sparklers.

Natural champagne diamond in a mokumé gané engagement ring
Natural Fancy Colored Diamonds

When browsing stones, you’ll still want to keep the 4 C’s in mind. You should definitely have a budget in mind when you begin your search. Natural FCD’s are rare, and the cost reflects rarity.

The obvious other big priority will be color. An FCD is evaluated by its color, its overtone or secondary color, and its saturation. Saturation is categorized as light, fancy light, fancy, fancy intense or fancy vivid. Best advice? Choose whatever shade appeals to you. Ideally, you should have a color that elicits an emotional response, such as “I love that color!”

I suggest making shape the third consideration. Because of the rarity of these diamonds, and the fact that you should find a color you love, you’ll probably want to be open to different shapes, just so you have a few stones to choose from. Round diamonds show the least body color, so they are my last choice for a lightly colored natural FCD. The corners of diamonds add a touch of saturation to the color, so this is great news for pale FCD’s in fancy shapes such as pear, marquise, or princess cut.
Because of the extreme rarity of natural FCD’s, Since inclusions are fairly common with fancy colored diamonds, I’d put clarity last on the checklist. Obviously you don’t want a stone that’s cloudy or totally included—unless that’s what you’re looking for, of course—but it’s okay if the sparkler you choose isn't completely eye clean. That gorgeous color is really what you’re after!

Champagne diamonds, or “chocolate” diamonds, have been wildly popular in recent years. Looking gorgeous in rose gold, this warm, earth toned diamond is reminiscent of brandy or cognac. Champagne diamonds are the most common, and thus the most affordable of the natural FCD’s. They come in a full array of saturation from very light to fancy vivid (dark), which is commonly known as a cognac diamonds. These warm beauties can also have overtones in shades of yellow, pink, green and gray, just to name a few.

![Natural brown diamonds, commonly referred to as champagne, chocolate, and cognac](image)
**Color Enhanced Diamonds**

Want a more saturated look? Check out color-enhanced (CE) diamonds. They are earth grown and mined, just like a natural FCD. The difference is that the CE diamond goes through a treatment process which changes the color. These natural stones may start out with an unappealing color, yet after treatment, they turn an eye-popping, highly saturated shade. Color enhanced diamonds are rarely available in the natural pastel shades that natural fancy color diamonds have, making them easily recognized.

![Color enhanced diamond colors](image)

The color enhanced diamond can be far more affordable than its natural FCD counterpart. Color enhanced diamonds are often not certified, nor is the treatment always disclosed. High pressure, heat and irradiation are all acceptable treatments. This is a permanent and internal treatment. Some pink color enhanced diamonds are coated, and that’s a treatment you want to stay away from, particularly for an engagement ring.

![A blue color enhanced emerald cut diamond](image)

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Lab Created Fancy Color Diamonds

If a natural looking fancy color diamond is what you’re after, you simply want the look of natural for much less, or you prefer a pale or pastel shade, consider a lab-created FCD. You’ll still have your choice of the same pastel blues, pinks and yellows as in the natural FCD but for a fraction of the cost. For example, a 3/4 ct. natural blue diamond can set you back around $50,000 while a similar lab-created one could be in the range of $5000.

With a lab created fancy color diamond, you have the option of white, as well as fancy pink diamond, fancy blue diamond, and fancy yellow.

Awareness and demand for fancy colored diamonds has grown significantly over the past few years, especially with the attention generated by major celebrities who have been recipients of these rare gems. Mined, fancy color diamonds, ranging from the popular canary yellow to pink and blue can range in price for $20,000 to $1,000,000 per carat, well beyond the reach of most consumers. With the introduction of the lab created diamond, you now have access to the rarity and elegance of fancy color diamonds, for a fraction of the cost.
**Black Diamonds**

Take one look at a black diamond and it’s immediately clear why it’s so popular these days. It’s sparkly, dramatic, sexy. In short, it’s a showstopper that looks just as good in a fancy engagement ring as it does in a pair of everyday earrings.

![A black diamond with a small table in an antique style ring](image)

**What is a black diamond?**

They’re just heavily included natural diamonds, which is what gives the stones their dramatic, dusky appearance. Although the opacity also prevents light from coming through, that doesn’t mean black diamonds are dull. In fact, they shine and sparkle in a similar way to white diamonds, thanks to their facets, or polished surfaces.
Natural Untreated vs. Treated

There are two types of black diamonds in the market. The majority are natural treated diamonds, which mean they were mined from the earth and irradiated, or exposed to a strong radioactive and heat treatment that darkens the stone’s color. They’re less expensive than white diamonds -- about a fifth of the price. Does this mean they’re worthless? Not at all; they're beautiful, yet I wouldn’t recommend buying one as an investment piece.

The second type of black diamond is natural untreated, which means the stone isn’t subjected to any irradiation. As a result, the diamond isn’t completely opaque; you can look through it and see the beautiful inclusions. Despite the areas of transparency, however, the stone will appear mostly black to the naked eye. Natural untreated black diamonds are somewhat rare, and you can expect to pay much more than the treated version. The treated versions are not usually certified by GIA, but natural untreated black diamonds may be. The certification will usually only verify that the stone is untreated.
How to Choose your Black Diamond

Since you don’t have to worry about color or clarity, you can focus all your attention on sparkle. The beauty of a black diamond is in its facets, specifically the table (the flat surface on top) and crown (the smaller ones around the table). For maximum sparkle, choose a stone that has a smaller table and bigger crown facets, or perhaps even a rose cut black diamond!

Do I care for a black diamond the same way I would a white diamond?

Although black diamonds are just as hard as their white counterparts, the graphite inclusions make them more brittle. So whether the stone is treated or not, avoid impact whenever possible. If you hit the diamond hard enough, it could fracture or chip on the girdle or facet junctions. Does this happen often? No, but it is possible.
Sapphire

Sapphire is the second most popular stone for an engagement ring, next to white diamond. Sapphire has been used in engagement rings since the 1500’s, and was extremely popular for use in Victorian, Edwardian, and Art Deco engagement rings. The traditional color of sapphire for an engagement ring is blue. The highest quality blue sapphire is a Ceylon sapphire; a rich, deep royal blue.

Blue is not the only color found in sapphire. This is not commonly known, yet it is very exciting if you would love a colored stone in your engagement ring! The most rare and valuable sapphire is a Padparadscha sapphire, a pinkish orange color. Not all peach sapphires get classified as a Padparadscha sapphire, but a nice peach sapphire is still a rare find! Purple sapphire and pink sapphire are close to the top of this list in popularity, and while green sapphire is not often sought after, it can be found in shades

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of blue green and yellow green, it can be absolutely gorgeous surrounded by white diamonds.

Blue and purple sapphire are sometimes classified as “color-change,” meaning the color goes from more purplish in incandescent light, to more blueish in outdoor light.

A palette of gorgeous natural sapphires

**Picking the color**

When picking your special colored sapphire, choose a color that is special to you, something that makes you feel good. Color can be power and personality. Each sapphire is totally and completely unique.

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Ruby: Red Sapphire?

Sapphire and ruby are both gemstone varieties of the mineral corundum. Trace amounts of different elements in the corundum give this versatile gemstone its unique colors. Ruby happens to have the presence of chromium, an element that turns the corundum red.

Sapphire Hardness

Sapphire makes a great choice for a colored center stone because of its hardness. It measures 9 on the Moh's hardness scale (listed on this scale as corundum). Diamond comes in as the hardest material on Earth at a 10. The scale is exponential, however, as sapphire has an absolute hardness of 400, and diamond comes in at 1600. Still, sapphire beats out the softer alternatives. Because of the softer ranking of other semi-precious gemstones, sapphire is always the first "go-to" stone for color. Softer stones will become abraided over time, making them appear matte or milky.

Sapphire Certification

Sapphire is not graded by the same 4 C's as a diamond. As a matter of fact, very few sapphires are even certified. The reason a sapphire would be certified is if it is an unusually large or fine specimen (rare and valuable), or if it is truly unheated, and even then, it's usually just the larger or finer gems that are certified.

Sapphire Cut

How is the cut of a sapphire judged? Each sapphire is cut by hand and so each stone has to be looked at individually. You want to see light flashing back to your eyes as you move the stone. If the center of the stone shows no flashes of light, and you can see through the stone, that would be considered "windowing." It's not uncommon for sapphires to be very deep, as the original "native cut," or cut from factories overseas, are intended to maintain weight and saturation of color, and typically have rectangular shaped facets.

A well cut sapphire is usually recut by the U.S. vendor. Some sapphires are considered "diamond cut," which means that the cut mimics the cut of a diamond. These can be
very sparkly, especially for smaller sapphires. A "Portuguese cut" allows for more depth in the stone, and has lots of little kite shaped facets. Whatever stone you choose, simply make sure that you like the play of light when you look at the stone.

Sapphire Clarity

Sapphire dealers do not assign the diamond clarity scale to sapphires. We will often get questions like "is it VVS or VS? We do not grade sapphires against the diamond scale. What you want to look for in the clarity of a sapphire is that it is eye-clean, in other words, you cannot see inclusions with your naked eye (without magnification). Is that mandatory? Of course not! If you find a rare color in a specific shape, you may just have to love it even if it has some small internal characteristic that is visible to the naked eye. All different kind of inclusions and internal characteristics can be found in sapphire, including clouds, feathers and color zoning. Finer sapphires are clean and solid color (free of significant inclusions or color zoning) even under 10x magnification.
A unique bi-color sapphire with distinct color zoning, a cloud like inclusion and some surface reaching inclusions

**Sapphire Treatment**

Most sapphires are heat treated, and only the most rare of sapphires are unheated. 95% of sapphires undergo low heat at the mine to improve color, reduce color zoning, and improve clarity. If you are looking for the finest sapphire, an unheated specimen that is certified as such commands the highest dollar. Whether you choose a heated stone or a certified unheated stone is a personal preference; the unheated sapphire is more valuable due to its rarity, but does not out sparkle or outlast it's more common heated brother.

**Lab Grown Sapphire**

Lab created sapphire is physically, optically and chemically identical to natural sapphire. The most popular lab for created sapphires is Chatham. A Chatham sapphire is not an imitation, but a real sapphire grown in a human-controlled environment. This is not dissimilar from the way diamonds are grown, or pearls are cultured. Once the required combination of chemical and environmental factors is duplicated from nature, the crystals grow over the course of a year, the length of time depending on the gemstone.

A lab created sapphire is less rare than a natural sapphire. As a result, they may be more suitable for conservative budgets. Lab created sapphire is an excellent choice for those
seeking an affordable precious gemstone without compromising the quality or sacrificing the aesthetic of their jewelry.

Because the crystal formation occurs in a lab instead of Mother Earth, there is less of an environmental impact. Go green by choosing a lab grown sapphire.

Lab-grown sapphires are available in a range of shades in blue, pink, and yellow. Red (ruby) is also an option.

Moissanite and lab created yellow sapphire trillions in a mokumé engagement ring
Birthstones and Semi-Precious Gemstones

Interested in having your favorite gemstone for your engagement ring? It’s a great idea, and one that requires a little bit of research so that you can make an educated decision. The popularity of birthstones for engagement rings is on the rise, however, there are some important considerations to take.

A couple’s reasons for eschewing diamonds are as varied as the birthstone they use. Some women have a love for a particular colored gemstone, while others are simply sentimentally attached to their birthstone. Then there’s the matter of price: most semi-precious gems are a fraction of the cost of a diamond, meaning you can get a much larger stone for much less money.

That said, some stones are better suited for the job than others. Though we hold the engagement ring in high regard, let’s be honest: it’s a piece of jewelry you will wear
every day, on a part of your body that sees the most action. You’ll bang it on the counter, cover it with hair spray or moisturizer, and shower and sleep with it. So it’s important you choose a stone that’s hard enough to take a beating.

Is Your Favorite Gem Up To the Task?

The fact is, not every gemstone should be placed front and center of an engagement ring. It’s preferable to avoid anything softer than an 8 on the hardness scale, including tourmaline, amethyst and tanzanite, unless you just can’t live without it, and you’re willing to take the extra special care necessary. Also skip opals, pearls and natural emeralds, which can damage easily. They are gorgeous, and your investment in these natural beauties will hold value and stay safer in an occasional ring or pendant.
Whatever stone you do end up choosing, work with your jeweler to ensure the best cut. You want to get the most sparkle possible, and an excellent cut will help with that. It’s also a great idea to consider a designer cut, to bring out all the beauty possible.

To keep up the brilliance, plan on cleaning your colored stone more often than you would a diamond. Remove it when washing hands or showering, to keep the sediments from dulling the sparkle. As soon as you notice it looking lifeless, clean it with ultrasonic cleaner or jewelry cleaning kit (or just soap, water and a toothbrush if you have an emerald, opal, pearl, or other soft gem).

To help prevent chips and dings, take off your ring when doing chores, washing dishes, going to the gym, and even before you go to bed at night. Believe it or not, even eight hours of rubbing against sheets can damage your stone over time.

This may sound like a lot of upkeep, yet this isn’t any old ring, after all. It’s your engagement ring. With a little bit of care and the right stone, it will last much longer.

A peridot, birthstone for August, with a designer cut by Larry Woods, in a Tree of Life engagement ring
Conflict Free Diamonds

A lot of attention has been paid lately to conflict-free diamonds, and rightfully so. The same challenges apply to colored precious gems, as well. Even with all the reputable vendors out there, the mining and cutting of diamonds precious gems isn’t always handled in the most ethical way. Think small children working 12- to 16-hour days in a factory and breathing in harmful diamond dust. Or miners working in unsafe conditions with very little or no medical help at the ready and for little pay, or worse, at gunpoint.

Yet despite all the awareness, there are still several misconceptions surrounding conflict-free stones. For starters, some people equate all diamonds with conflict, which is hardly the case. Not all diamonds are “bad.” Also, the label “conflict-free” isn’t black and white; there are levels of responsible practices, from how the diamond was mined to how it was cut. Many cultures rely on the diamond trade for their livelihood, so simply boycotting diamonds is not the answer.

Finally, you don’t have to sacrifice your principals to buy a diamond. Plenty of conflict-free diamonds exist; you just have to know what to look for when shopping for one.

Buy a Canadian Diamond

If you want to know without a shadow of a doubt that your diamond was mined ethically, invest in a Canadian diamond. The Canadian government certifies and regulates the industry and ensures miners are paid fair wages, which explains why these diamonds cost more. The registered Canadian diamond mark will be laser cut onto the girdle of the diamond.

Fair Trade Gems

If a conflict free and fair trade gemstone is a priority for you, specify that at the outset with your jeweler, so the gem can be purchased from one of the gem dealers that specialize in responsible practices. There are levels of what constitutes conflict-free. That said, companies like Columbia Gem House are passionate about fair trade and responsible environmental practices and take a long-term approach. This means they’ll mine slowly to take care of the earth during the process, and offer on-site medical resources to miners. Extracted stones are then taken to approved cutting factories that
treat employees fairly. Because of the lack of industry regulation, it’s next to impossible to know exactly where colored stones came from, unless your jewelers buys from a trusted boutique stone dealer that sources the rough and manages the cutting process.

**The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme**

The KPCS is a United Nations-initiated process aimed at stopping conflict diamonds from entering the market. Vendors are asked to sign an agreement that they won’t knowingly trade conflict diamonds. The KPCS is a work in progress, and is definitely not bullet proof yet (no pun intended). It is a fair start, however, even if it does still rely in part on trust and honesty. Reputable jewelers take great care to choose ones that are part of the KPCS, so be sure to ask when you’re shopping.

**Support RJC members**

You can go one step further and shop exclusively with members of the Responsible Jewelry Council. The Worldwide London-based group helps the jewelry industry regulate responsible practices from mine to market, auditing everything from safe chemical disposal to environmental impact to fair employment practices. Members include miners, cutters, refiners, manufacturers and retailers based all over the planet.

![Certified Member](image)

**Buy conflict-free on a budget.**

Consider an alternative like a lab-created blue sapphire or Moissanite, which are conflict-free, fair trade and budget-friendly. Or ask for a recycled diamond. This is a diamond that has been removed from an old estate mounting, and you can even request one that has been certified as such by a third party.

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Chapter 3: Ring Design

What’s Your Style? While there are always “engagement ring styles” that are fashionable, I want to take you beyond fashion, beyond what’s hot, current and stylish, to what best represents not only the woman’s personal style, but the best of the relationship.

Starting with her style: is she a modern woman, with clean, simple styling? Or is she decorative, baroque? Perhaps she is a lover of refined luxury, enjoying the finer things in life with an eye for quality. Or is she frugal, concerned about cost, and unadorned? Maybe she is an artist, or a patron of the arts, unique and passionate about sculpture, museums and history. These are very important clues in the discovery of the perfect engagement ring. This is the first layer.

Her engagement ring should definitely reflect her style to some degree. If she is a simple, frugal woman, she will appreciate and even adore a forever ring that reflects these things. She would be overwhelmed and hesitant to wear a glitzy, over the top ring that carried a high price tag. On the other hand, for the refined woman, a classic style with a top quality center stone would suit her fine!

Remember, this ring is not a fashion statement. It is a reflection of a commitment, a treasure to last a lifetime.

Taking into consideration her personal style, let’s start to incorporate a little of him. Remember, this ring is not a fashion statement. It is a reflection of a commitment, a treasure to last a lifetime. So, who’s the guy? Are his sensibilities the same? That would make it easy: two artists = artistic style ring. The fun challenge comes when the couple has diverse sensibilities.

While I would want the ring to be an excellent reflection of the woman’s style, it is really nice to incorporate something from him. This can be anything from total takeover on his part (big glitzy ring for simple frugal woman), to a simple symbol of his love inside her dream engagement ring (like an etched symbol of the lighthouse where he proposed, inside the ring).
Between those two extremes, there are lots of options. Marriage is collaboration, and it is fun to represent the relationship with a ring design that is collaboration, a blending of two unique individual styles into a single unique object of love.

Whatever your personal styles and tastes are, there is no right or wrong answer to finding the perfect engagement ring design. The final ring will be unique, and it is a snapshot of this moment in time. The engagement ring will be dearly loved for all that it holds and all that it promises. And it is only the beginning of a lifetime of your love and dreams.

For the purposes here, the engagement ring will be described by breaking it down into form, style, center stone, and palette. An engagement ring can have any combination of these variations, making for a multitude of choices.
The Architectural Forms

Following is a list of the most common forms. The form is the general architecture, shapes, parts and construction of the ring. There can be overlapping and combining of the forms. You could have a three stone bypass, a cathedral halo, a split cathedral, etc.

Solitaire

A true solitaire is a ring that has only one stone, the center stone. Solitaire is also used loosely to describe the look of a ring, a single stone with a band, even if the band has accent stones on it.


Halo

A halo is a ring of stones around the center stone. It can be in many different shapes. It can have the same shape as the center stone, or it can be a different shape. A halo can make a small stone look big.


Cathedral

A cathedral describes a ring in which the band swoops up towards the center stone and makes an S shape as it starts to curve in the inverse direction. It can also bow outward, creating shoulders.


**Split Shank**

This is when the band splits into two near the center stone.


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Three Stone

A three stone ring has a larger center stone with two smaller flanking stones, one on either side.


[Palette] White.  [Set] Stand Alone, Precise Contour, Gentle Contour
**Bypass**

A bypass ring is when one side of the ring goes to the top, and one side goes to the bottom of the center stone.

[Palette] Green, White.  [Set] Precise Contour, Gentle Contour

**Twist**

A popular look, where the metal is twisted as in a rope.


[Form] Solitaire. [Style] Traditional Twist. [Center] Round.
The Styles

The style describes the feeling of the ring. Many styles emerged in their respective eras. The style is the genre, decoration or flair of the ring.

Traditional
A classic engagement ring can have any of the above forms, and it is simple, with rounded, thin lines.

**Accented**

The accented engagement ring is traditionally covered in white diamonds, although other colors can be used as well.

[Form] Double Halo Cathedral  
[Style] Accented.  
[Center] Round.  
[Set] Straight Stacker

[Form] Halo Cathedral  
[Center] Cushion.  
[Set] Straight Stacker
Modern

Modern describes a ring that is blockier, perhaps with wider, flatter lines.


Pavé

Pavé is loosely used to describe rings that are covered in small bead set diamonds. True European pavé is when there are wider areas that are paved with diamonds, and all the beads are hand cut with gravers.
Vintage or Antique Style

A vintage style engagement ring could have been made recently. The look tends to be decorative, engraved, and delicate.

[Palette] Yellow, White. [Set] Gentle or Precise Contour or Straight Stacker with Slight Gaps

[Palette] Yellow, White. [Set] Gentle or Precise Contour
**True Vintage or Antique**

A true antique ring would be 100 years or older. A true vintage engagement ring would be at least 20 years old or more, however, vintage more commonly refers to rings made in the 1960’s and earlier. Again, you’ll see antique style used to describe a ring that was made in present-day, and draws from the 1900’s era. The look tends to be decorative, engraved, and delicate.
Organic

An organic style is curvy, and can reflect branches or waves. It may be asymmetrical with some curves. Organic can also include added branches, leaves, and even flowers.


Artistic

In an artistic engagement ring, the sky is the limit. This is a creative, unique ring. It easily crosses the line with organic.


The Center Stone Size and Shape

The reference to the center stone here will be primarily in terms of shape and size, as it affects the overall design. The size and shape of the center stone have a big impact on the overall aesthetics of the ring design.

2.5ct princess cut diamond and an 11mm designer cut aquamarine make for very large stone engagement rings.

Rings with a half carat size diamond.

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The Palette

The palette is the choice of colors in both stones and metals. While the most popular palette by far and away is white, there are many wonderful and interesting possibilities.

[Left] Rose gold, Red Spinel, Blue Sapphire, Graduated Yellow to Orange Sapphire
[Right] Padparadscha sapphire, Rose Gold, White gold, Yellow gold, White Accents

[Left] Blue Sapphire, Platinum, Accents in Pink Sapphire, Blue Sapphire, Diamonds
[Right] Purple Sapphire, 18k Yellow Gold, Rose Gold, Platinum, Diamond Accents
The Bridal Set: Wedding Band Considerations

Taking the wedding band into consideration is a good idea when planning out the engagement ring. It is not usually purchased right away, as there is an engagement period, and the wedding bands are often purchased closer to the wedding. Thinking about the whole set ahead of time can help yield the best results in your dream ring!

The biggest questions are 1) will you have a straight wedding band that is versatile and can be worn alone, 2) Will your wedding band have a “top” that when it spins, you have to constantly re-align it with the engagement ring, and 3) will there be any features matching the men’s wedding band?

Straight Stacker

The style of engagement ring that stacks with a straight wedding band is the most versatile!
Straight Stacker, Notched Engagement Ring

This engagement ring also stacks with a straight wedding band. In order to keep a large center stone on a narrow band and set as low as possible, the head is notched for the band, so the band can stay straight. This band is only a demi-set, so there is a top. It will likely spin and not stay aligned, in which case the wearer may choose to solder them together. The drawback to that is that the wearer will no longer have the flexibility of wearing the wedding band alone.
**Precise Contour**

An engagement ring that has beautiful curves can be paired with a wedding band that has a precise contour, resulting in a tightly fitted set that is aesthetically pleasing.

![Precise Contour Image]

**Gentle Contour**

The gently contoured wedding band does not suck in tight to all the corners of the engagement ring, rather it flows around in a pleasing curve.

![Gentle Contour Image]
**Straight with Gap**

This extreme example shows how just about any engagement ring can be stacked with a straight wedding band.

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**Double Sided**

Yes please! Diamond bands on both sides, can be straight or contoured.
Enhancer

The engagement ring slides into this enhancer so that they do not need to be soldered together. The enhancer is not worn alone.
**Wrap**

A more traditional way to add onto the engagement ring with a band that latches into place. Drawback? The wrap cannot be worn alone.

**Stand Alone**

Does this REALLY need more?
Chapter 4: Anatomy & Mechanics

When deciding upon your engagement ring design, it is important to keep the mechanics of the ring in mind. You want the ring to fit well. You want the center stone to be scaled appropriately for the ring. In this section, I’ll explain the various parts of the engagement ring, and how to communicate about them.

Ring Size

Everybody’s fingers are different, so getting the right ring size might entail a little trial and error.

There are a couple ways to determine the best size for your engagement ring. If you already wear a ring on your ring finger, and it fits perfectly, find out what size it is. The width will play into this; wider rings will fit tighter than narrow rings, generally. Keep in mind that top heavy rings will have a greater tendency to spin around the finger, so you will probably want it to be a little on the snug side. When your hands get wet, it will be even more floppy.

Make sure the ring does not bother the pinky or middle finger when making a fist. It should take a little bit of effort to shimmy the ring over the knuckle. Rings may feel tighter in the summer and looser in the winter.

For a very top heavy ring, the ring should “stick” to the skin so it does not slip around the finger. A floppy ring is bothersome!

Ring Size for a Surprise

Perhaps one of the most challenging tasks in popping the question unannounced is figuring out her ring size. Here are some ideas to help! Be sure to read the section on choosing the correct ring size, later in the book.

- Take a ring that your partner wears on the LEFT HAND ring finger to a jeweler to find out what size it is.
• Take a ring that she wears on the RIGHT HAND ring finger to a jeweler to find out what size it is. Keep in mind that the dominant hand is usually a little bigger than the other, depending on how much someone works with their hands.

• Print out this ring sizer chart and use it to measure the size of an existing ring using the ring circles, or cut out the paper strip and measure the finger when she is sleeping (room for error: 1/2-1 size)

• Ask her mother, sister or friend. Oftentimes, the mother or sister will know the size difference between their fingers.

• Take her ring finger ring and put it on one of your fingers, if you can't steal it for a day. Mark where it goes up to with a pen, then go to a jeweler and find the sizing ring that goes up to the same spot.

• Take her ring finger ring and press it into clay/wax/sculpey/art tack and take the imprint to a jeweler

None of these methods are fool proof, however, they will get you close. Accept that she will most likely need it sized, so that it fits perfectly and comfortably. It is important to get it close to start with, so the ring is made properly for the general size that she is.
ANATOMY OF A RING

Here is a diagram of the basic parts of a ring, that are particularly useful if you are considering a custom ring.

Comfort Fit: The inside surface of the ring is rounded, for more comfortable constant wear.

Width: How wide the ring is at any given point. Typically, you would refer to the width at the top of the ring and the bottom of the ring.

Shank: The part of the ring that wraps around the finger, not including the head.

Head / Setting: The metal basket that hold the center stone in place.
Center Stone Size

Searching for the perfect engagement ring, but not sure what it will look like with the center stone size that you've selected? Here are some images to help you choose the perfect sized center stone. I've listed the carat weight in diamond, as well as the diameter in millimeters.

Approximate Round Diamond Weights

2mm: 0.03 ct round diamond
3mm: 0.10 ct round diamond
4mm: 0.25 ct round diamond
5mm: 0.50 ct round diamond
6mm: 0.90 ct round diamond
7mm: 1.25 ct round diamond
8mm: 2.00 ct round diamond

A one carat sapphire will have a smaller diameter than a one carat diamond, however, you can easily compare how a 6mm sapphire will look compared to a 6mm diamond, so keep the dimensions in mind!

Not sure how wide your ring should be relative to your stone? Pictured below are some different stone sizes and band widths.

From Left to Right:

8mm diamond on a 6mm band
7mm diamond on a 5mm band
6mm diamond on a 3mm band
5mm diamond on a 3mm band
4mm diamond on a 2mm band
Types of Stone Settings

The function of the setting is to hold the stone safely and securely. There are many different ways to hold a stone, however, in all cases, some metal is pushed over the top of the stone, to hold it in place. There are some additional ways to set smaller accent stones, and those are covered below.

How Much Light Gets to the Stone

This is a common question when it comes to the stone setting. It is a little bit of a misconception that you want as little metal around the stone to “let the light in.” In actuality, the sparkle and brilliance you see in a faceted stone is from light that enters through the top of the stone, bounces off of the pavilion facets, and then back out the top of the stone. So, a well cut diamond could sit right in black leather and still look completely white.

That being said, there is still a balance to be struck. I do find that for darker colored stones, if there is more “air-way” around the stone, it will be easier to clean. If you encompass the whole stone in a full bezel, you lose the opportunity to see the stone from different angles, and the full bezel could darken a gemstone simply by cutting out the light behind the stone.

Going with a super lightweight setting is not wise, either. Keep in mind that precious metal can bend and wear down. A ring takes on a lot of wear and damage because it is on the hand. You want a setting that is sturdy, yet not overwhelming to the stone.
Four Prong Setting

This is a popular setting style and allows for the minimum amount of metal around the stone. Prongs, or claws, are bent over and evenly spaced around the center stone. This setting allows for different stone shapes.

Be sure to read the section on Mistakes to Avoid near the end of the book as related to four prong settings!

Six Prong Setting

A six prong setting will offer more support to your center stone than a four prong setting. The benefit of a six prong over a four prong is that if you have failure in one of the prongs, the stone will not be lost.
Multiple Prong Setting

Multiple prongs reveal more features of the diamond while offering more security.

Full Bezel

In a full bezel setting, the center stone is fully encircled by metal. Thus, this offers maximum protection to the stone. A full bezel can accommodate any gemstone shape and is used in many kinds of jewelry.
Semi-Bezel or Half Bezel

The semi-bezel shows off more of the diamond, while still protecting it. With some of the bezel removed, you can see more of the stone, there’s less metal, and the stone is easier to clean.

Flush Set (Gypsy Set)

In the flush setting, the stone is set completely into the ring. The ring has to thicken to accommodate the depth of the stone, so the larger the stone, the thicker the ring. This is not always an aesthetically pleasing choice for large center stones.
Bar Set

A bar appears on each side of a square or rectangular stone.

Tension Set

A true tension set is where there is no metal that passes beneath the stone, and the stone is truly held in by a C shaped ring. This requires very particular metals that will hold tension over a lifetime of wear. Stone tightening and ring sizing is not possible, and repairs are problematic. You can achieve a tension set look by having a small metal ring under the stone, bridging the gap between the two sides.
**Pavé**
Stones are set closely together, separated by little beads of metal. Pave set accent stones can enhance a modest center stone. Traditionally, pave refers to a field or expanded area of beaded metal and stones. In true European pave the metal is cut to create beads around the stones, and there is a whole area that is paved in diamonds.

Millegraining around pavé set stones gives a metal edge a beaded texture and is the perfect complement to pave-set diamonds. As opposed to a smooth metal edge, the light which reflects off does not compete with the sparkle of the diamonds. Often seen in antique-style engagement rings.
Bead Set

Bead set diamonds are very common in current engagement ring models. The beads are on top of the surface of the metal. These are typically cast in place. Often, bead set and pavé are used synonymously, however, they are actually two different types of settings.

Fishtail

This is a type of setting for diamonds all in a row. This term used when the edge of the metal is cut in such a way that reveals the sides of the small diamonds, and the resulting metal is in the shape of a fish tail.
Channel Set

In a channel set setting, small gemstones are set side-by-side in a groove. The stones are usually uniform in size. While channel set diamonds are typical in wedding bands, they can also be great accents to an engagement ring’s center stone, for a more modern look.

Flush Set

The accent stones are sunk into the metal, and the metal is burnished around the whole stone, resulting in a stone that is set flush with the metal, without beads.
Stone Height

The height of the center stone plays a big part in the design and comfort of the ring. Depending upon your lifestyle, you will want to take this into consideration. Do you put gloves on and off throughout the day? Do you work with kids? Are you an athlete?

High Profile. A high profile ring can be made a little more comfortable with the addition of the cathedral arches. Without, the stone and prongs are unprotected from impact.

Medium Profile: An average height setting. Looks nice and feels practical.

Low Profile: For protecting the stone or a very active lifestyle.
Chapter 5: Metal

What metal will you choose for your ring? There are many options on the market if you go down the custom route, and a more limited selection if you choose a ring off the shelf. While alternative (non-precious) metals are wildly popular for men’s wedding bands, they are limited and problematic for engagement rings.

Platinum is the number one choice for an engagement ring. It is particularly ideal for delicate designs and large, valuable stones. It is dense, has excellent wear resistance, and is a naturally light gray color. Palladium is another great choice, although not ideal for very delicate designs. It is lightweight, which makes it a great choice for heavier designs. It is a metal in the platinum family, and like platinum, it is a cool light gray color.

White Precious Metals

Platinum

Platinum is considered to be the "most precious" of the precious metals, and is your metal of choice, when only the best will do, and is also the choice of jewelry designers of fine heirloom quality jewelry. Platinum is usually 90-95% pure. Platinum is always a cold light gray, and will retain its polish longer.

Platinum is more scarce than gold. The annual supply of platinum is only about 130 tons, which is only 6% (by weight) of the total Western World's annual mine production of gold.

Platinum does not wear down as gold does, so, over the course of a lifetime, your ring will remain virtually the same weight and size. Subsequently, platinum holds diamonds and gemstones more securely. It can be cherished for generations. Also, platinum is very unlikely to crack or be brittle during any sizing (or repair) operations.
Palladium

Palladium is the most affordable of the precious metals. It has the same color as platinum, but it is much lighter in weight. It does not need to be rhodium plated, like white gold, which is naturally a light brownish gray color. Because of its light weight, it is most recommended for heavier and more solid rings. The main drawback to palladium is that it does require a palladium expert when it comes to repairs.

Palladium has a great wear resistance. Both gold and platinum have certain alloys that are harder and softer than palladium, so palladium cannot be simply put in order with "gold" and "platinum". Palladium is one of six metals in the platinum family. It has similar characteristics of platinum, such as high melting temperature, cool gray color, durability and rarity, however, it is much less dense (lower specific gravity). Palladium is light gray, noble, malleable, lightweight, hypoallergenic, easy to finish and polish, does not require rhodium plating, does not tarnish, and has desirable, platinum-like setting and forming characteristics.

In a photograph, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between platinum, palladium, and rhodium plated 14k white gold

www.krikawa.com
**White Gold**

White gold is pure gold that has been alloyed with nickel and/or palladium and other metals to achieve a "whiteness" of the metal. Natural white gold is a warm grayish metal. 14 karat white gold is the most popular white gold used in the U.S., and is used for the vast majority of commercial engagement rings.

Most commercial white gold jewelry is plated with rhodium, a platinum group metal with a bright white color. White gold is warmer in tone than the rhodium, so as it wears the rhodium scratches off, showing the darker color underneath.

If you have any nickel allergies, you will want to stick with a nickel free white gold. Read more in the Mistakes to Avoid section, chapter 8.
### White Metals Compared

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<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Palladium</strong></td>
<td>cool light gray</td>
<td>requires expertise in repairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>most affordable of the precious metals</td>
<td>lightweight/low density not ideal for delicate designs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95% pure</td>
<td>Vicker's hardness 125 (140 special treatment available for additional cost/time)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>lightweight</td>
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<td>great for larger, bulkier designs</td>
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<td>95% wear resistance (&quot;very good&quot; wear resistance)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Platinum</strong></td>
<td>cool light gray color</td>
<td>most expensive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>best all around metal</td>
<td>high density: heavy for bulky designs</td>
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<td>great for lightweight designs</td>
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<td>&quot;excellent&quot; wear resistance (won't lose weight over time)</td>
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<td>Vicker's hardness 130 (150 special treatment available for additional cost/time)</td>
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<td>95% pure</td>
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**14k White Gold**

- More affordable than platinum
- Very good for repairs
- Vicker's hardness 150
- 14k PD white gold is nickel-free
- Not actually white
- Needs rhodium plating
- "Good" wear resistance (wears down over time)
- Only 58.5% pure
Colored Golds

Yellow Gold

Pure, 100% fine gold is 24 karat. This is a rich, deep golden color that has been used for jewelry historically but is too soft for general purpose jewelry. Here are a few notes about “karat gold.”

18 karat gold means that the metal is 18 parts out of 24 pure gold, or in other words, 75% pure gold. The other 6 parts (25%) consists of an alloy of other metals. 18 karat gold is the standard for European jewelry.

14 karat gold is 14 parts gold, or 58.5% pure gold. It is the standard for American jewelry.
Rose Gold

Rose gold, also known as red or pink gold, is an alloy that consists of pure gold and copper. Fourteen karat rose gold contains 14 parts fine gold and 10 parts alloy consisting of primarily copper. It is the rich red copper combined with fine gold that creates a warm rosy tone.
Green Gold

Green gold is a very pale yellowish sage color. It is made of 10 parts pure gold and 14 parts of a mixture containing primarily silver. 10 karat green gold holds the most green. Higher karats of green gold look more yellow than green.
**Black Gold**

Black gold is widely requested and shown on the internet and in stores. The fact of the matter is that black gold does not exist. What is being shown is white gold that has been plated black. The drawback to this for a ring is that the plating will wear off over time, and the ring will not be attractive with this partially worn surface.

It’s best to reserve the dark plating for recessed areas, where it will not take on any wear.

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**Alternative Metals**

Precious metals are so uniquely suited for engagement rings, due to the malleability of the metal, which is required for stone setting. The other lovely thing about precious metals is that they are also sizable. Buyer beware with the alternative metals; you won’t have sizing options, and the designs will be extremely limited.
Chapter 6: Genus

Where is your ring going to come from, and how was it made?

Off the Shelf

By off the shelf engagement ring, I am referring to a mass manufactured ring, that is available with the stone already set. So you don’t have a choice in center stone, and the only thing that will happen is that the ring will be sized.

Semi Mount

This is also a mass produced ring design, however, there is usually a hole for a peg setting, and one will get soldered in place. Or there is simply no stone in the setting. So, on a semi-mount, you do get to choose your center stone, and it will be held with a standard prong setting.

Design Your Own Custom

A custom ring is a great option if you really want to have some special touches in your ring. Also, if you have a list of what exactly you want your ring to look like, and are unable to find it on the market, this would be a great way to go.

Be sure to research the company you choose, and go with one that offers a 100% satisfaction guarantee policy. That puts the burden on them of making sure they communicate through sketches and renderings, exactly what your ring is going to look like, so there are no surprises.
Heirloom, Vintage, Pawn

You might just be lucky enough to inherit an amazing diamond ring from Grandma! Be sure and have it checked out by your jeweler before you wear it. A ring can take a lot of abuse through years of wear, and it might very well be in need of a new shank, new prongs, or other restoration. You might consider just keeping the diamond, and creating a new setting for it.

Just like the heirloom jewels, any vintage or pawn rings need a thorough cleaning, stone check, and potential restoration. Be sure to have it checked out before wearing!
Chapter 7: Durability

There are certain things you must look out for in your engagement ring, so that it will last a lifetime.

Shank

This will definitely get worn down, particularly if it is gold. The narrower it gets, the more likely it is to break, especially if it has ever been sized. Make sure that your shank has a nice thickness for a lifetime of wearing down.

Prongs

While thin delicate prongs might look nice, they will certainly not be helpful in holding a stone in place. Be sure that the prongs look substantial.

Beads

One of the most common repairs we get is small accent stones falling out of commercial, bead set jewelry. The beads are on the surface of the ring, and are prone to getting bumped and hit, and when they move, the accent diamonds can fall out.

If you are really committed to a ring covered in accent stones, you might want to double check the warranty of the ring, and also take a look to see if the beads are proud of the diamonds (stick above the surface). Looking at a few rings and comparing the beads will help to give you a well rounded view.

Soft Metals

Metals that may not withstand a lifetime of wear, and keep your stone in place, include sterling silver and 22k gold. While lovely metals, these beauties are simply too soft for every day wear. If you are really committed to one of the softer metals, be sure that the metal holding the stone in is nice and thick. You might also want to consider a textured surface, so that the wear blends in with the texture.
Chapter 8: Mistakes to Avoid

Diamond Certification: Comparing Apples to Oranges

With the ever rising prices of diamonds, it can be challenging to find an affordable option. Buying a diamond online or in a store can be a scary process. If someone tells you they have a really great deal, buyer beware! Diamonds are like dollars; a commodity with a pretty set trading price. If someone says they'll sell you a $100 bill for $50, would you believe that? So why is “that diamond” such a great deal? The answer is in the fine print of the stone's grading report.

Imagine for a minute we are comparing two diamonds that look nearly identical on paper. From one dealer, their diamond is $7,000. From another dealer, the diamond with the same stated weight, shape, color, clarity, cut, polish and fluorescence is $2,000 less, for only $5,000! What a deal, right? Not necessarily. It may be that the first diamond has a GIA certificate, and the second has an EGL certificate.

“So what”, you ask? A very big what! Let's just toss that paperwork aside and look at the actual stones side by side. GIA (Gemological Institute of America) gave the first diamond an I color grade. Now, let's have GIA grade the second diamond. Guess what? GIA says the second diamond is an M color! So do you still think that you are comparing apples to apples? If you want to know exactly what you are buying, insist upon a GIA certified diamond. Do you still want that original diamond for $5000? Fine, buy a GIA stone with an M color, for $5000. At least you will know beyond a shadow of a doubt what your stone is, and it will hold that value in the market. GIA has the strictest standards on diamond grading in the world. It is considered the standard in the industry, and it is the standard by which all other diamonds are compared.

Bottom Line? Know what you are looking at, stick with GIA certified diamonds for white diamonds, and buy your diamond from a trustworthy dealer.
The Dark Truth about White Gold: A Plated Allergen

White gold continues to rule the commercial engagement ring market. It is promoted as the best alternative to platinum. However, white gold isn't actually white. Nor is it 100% safe. You see, when you put that bright white, brand new ring on your finger, you know that it will take a little beating, and get scratched up, but what you are not aware of is that it will also start to change color. In the beginning, you may take your polishing cloth to it, thinking that it is just tarnishing, or getting dull, but if you rub hard enough, you will discover that you are actually rubbing the white off, and that it is anywhere from a brownish gray to a yellow color underneath! Was this some kind of scam? Absolutely not. It is the industry standard to rhodium plate white gold jewelry, and if you have a white gold ring, you can have it re-dipped (for a fee) anytime. Rhodium is a wonderful, cool, light gray color, whereas white gold is not. Why?

Pure 24 karat gold is a rich, orangy yellow. 14 karat gold is 14 parts pure gold and 10 parts alloy, or 58.5% pure gold. So what makes white gold white, and rose gold rose, and green gold green? It is the alloy used. For rose gold, copper is the alloy. For green gold, sterling is the alloy. And for white gold, nickel or palladium is the alloy. Now imagine mixing paint. You have 2/3 of a cup of orange paint, and you need to turn it white by adding only 1/3 of a cup of white paint, for a total of 1 cup of paint. you are never going to end up with a pure white cup of paint. The same is true for white gold. Nickel and palladium are the alloys for creating white gold, and the result is pretty remarkable, considering how much pure orange gold is in the mix. Yet the result is never totally white.

Nickel is a more effective bleaching agent than palladium, and it is a lot less expensive than palladium as well, but 14k nickel white gold produces nickel allergies in people. We often hear of women who say, “I've been wearing this ring for over a year, but now I seem to be getting a rash under my ring! Is it dirty?” It is possible that the rhodium plating has worn off, and the nickel white gold is now touching the skin, or a nickel allergy has developed over time. Using palladium as the mixer for white gold has many benefits, because it creates a malleable metal that is not brittle, it is great for setting and holding stones, and it does not cause an allergic reaction. Very little commercially available white gold jewelry is made in a white gold/palladium alloy due to the slightly higher cost. Know the alloy, and avoid risking becoming allergic to your forever ring.
The Four Pronged Monster: How Secure is Your Diamond?

Wouldn’t it be great to have a diamond ring in which the diamond appears to be “floating,” and none of that beautiful, sparkly, expensive stone is covered up by metal? Well, yes, it would. But without force fields and 22nd century technology, we still have to push a little metal over the top of the diamond to hold it in place. The question is, just how much metal is necessary? Diamond rings with four little prongs sure look nice, however, there is a strong argument against four prongs. If just one of those prongs snags, bends, or wears down, the security of your stone is compromised. One bad prong and Pop! goes the diamond. With only three prongs left, your diamond can fall right out. If you really want to go with four prongs, make sure that one or more of the following is true: the stone is under a carat, the prongs are platinum, and/or the prongs are fat.

Six prongs are nice, because if one prong is damaged, the stone is still secure on 5 sides. In choosing a ring, you want to make sure that your diamond is shown off well, as well as making sure that it is secure. Of all the jewelry forms, rings really take a beating. Prongs are especially prone to damage, and it is prudent to make sure that your prongs are thick enough and well supported.

No matter what kind of prongs you have, and what your center stone and metal are, always remember to get an annual stone check and tighten for your engagement ring. Prongs wear down, and stones get loose. With proper care, you ring can last a lifetime.
Not Understanding the Return Policy

Whether you are purchasing a diamond ring out of the case, or commissioning a designer for a custom ring, you should be well aware of the return policy of the company you choose to work with. Many online retailers have great return policies, on premade goods. However, change one thing about that ring, and all of a sudden your purchase falls into the “custom” category.

Many on-line retailers and traditional jewelry stores have a NO RETURN policy on custom or customized goods. This policy is considered an INDUSTRY STANDARD, and they might not feel the need to share with you this deal breaking policy, while they are trying to sell you a ring.

Have you thought about what to do if your potential fiancé DOES NOT LIKE the ring? It's true, most women will be taken away by the sparkle of their new ring as a newly engaged bride-to-be, but there is a small chance that she might have her heart set on a particular design.

Before you lay down your cash, be very clear about what the return policy on your important purchase is. How many days do you have to return it? How much of your money will be returned? Is it no questions asked, or can you only return it only for certain reasons?
Chapter 9: Ring Care

Stone Cleanliness

To keep the stones in your ring their cleanest and brightest, remove your ring when taking a shower, washing your hands, and doing the dishes to avoid soap scum and mineral deposits on the stone itself, which prevent optimal light return.

You can also purchase a small ultrasonic cleaner and drop it in there once a week or so, or purchase a fine jewelry cleaner that comes with a brush and submersion tray. Or, you may also take a soft toothbrush and dish soap and scrub around the stones in extra warm water. Enjoy a sparkling stone all the time!

Always remove your ring when applying lotion!

Stone Security

Because you use your hands all the time, center stones take a little abuse. This may cause them to loosen in the setting. You might not even notice that the stone is loose, if the stone is dirty, and the dirt is keeping it from rattling around!

Tap gently on the stone. This will help you notice if the stone is moving in the setting.

Whenever you can, stop by any jewelry store to get your stone steam cleaned. It’s always complimentary! And remember to have your stone checked professionally once a year to determine if the stone is safe and secure.

Gemstone Inlay

Extra care should be taken when wearing gemstone inlay jewelry. Rings with stone inlay should remain dry for maximum glue life. Unlike a bezel or prong, there is no metal securing the stone over its edge. Inlaid gemstones are set flush with the metal and glued into place. Through normal wear and tear, the bond can weaken, and the stone can crack, fall out, and be lost.
Precious Metal Finishes

**High Polish**
A high polish ring will take on small scratches pretty quickly, and scuff up uniformly over time. If you want to bring back the shine, a polishing cloth or cream will do the trick. It won't remove small dents and dings, but it will brighten the surface considerably.

**Brushed Finish**
A brushed finish will show scratches pretty quickly. Fortunately, it is easy to refresh with Scotch-Brite. A nice way to resurface the ring whenever you desire is to take a small square of Scotch-Brite (the green scouring pad available at the grocery, drug or hardware store), soften it up in water and soap, and run it gently around the ring.

**Mixed Finishes and non-uniform surfaces**
Mixed finishes are the most beautiful and the most difficult to repeat at home. A mixed finish is achieved with a combination of masking, blasting, and fine hand work. Polishing cream is great for around bezels, and other designs with recessed areas. You can use a combination of a small square of Scotch-Brite on the matte surface, and polishing cloth on the high polished surfaces, or use a soft toothbrush, polishing cream and a gentle hand around the whole ring, or forget about it and just have your jeweler refinish it upon occasion.

**Darkened Recess**
If your ring has a darkened recess, avoid polishing cream. If the surface is brushed, a quick swipe with scotch bright will do; if the surface is high polish, a quick buff with a polishing cloth is the ticket.

**Routine Maintenance**
It is imperative that you take your engagement ring in to a jewelers to have it professionally cleaned once a year. At this time, the jeweler can check to see if all the stones are tight and the metal is still in good condition. The prongs will be checked to see if they are ready for re-tipping.
Chapter 10: Thank You

Thank you for committing to learning about engagement rings, so that you can make an informed decision for this important purchase.

As a way to thank you, I am available by email at answers@krikawa.com to answer any other questions you might have!

Your feedback about this book is welcome and I’d love to hear how you think I could improve it in future editions.

Live long and prosper, and may all your dreams come true.

Love,
Lisa Krikawa
About The Author

Lisa Krikawa is the designer and founder of Krikawa Jewelry Designs at www.krikawa.com. With passion and determination she has built a world-class company dedicated to creating custom wedding and engagement rings. By combining old-world craftsmanship with cutting edge technology and award winning designs, Krikawa is able to create fine custom jewelry of the highest quality.

Born in Canada, Lisa Krikawa moved to the states at a young age. In 1998, she founded Krikawa Jewelry Designs in Tucson, Arizona, after graduating from the University of Arizona with a degree in Fine Arts. The early years of the company were spent exhibiting in high end craft shows from the east to west coast. After the launch of Krikawa.com, the business took off in the direction of custom engagement rings and wedding bands direct to the public, and Lisa’s husband, brother and sister in law joined the company.

In 2014, Krikawa relocated her entire operation to a brand new space in the heart of downtown Tucson, and expanded the showroom to showcase the work of talented local and national jewelry artists.

Krikawa has been published in dozens of magazines, and her work has graced the cover of a number of magazines. Lisa has spoken at many trade events. She is the winner of over 20 design awards and many business awards including the “Better Business Bureau’s Ethics Award.” Krikawa Jewelry Designs is also proud to be a certified member of the Responsible Jewellery Council.

When she’s not designing jewelry and masterminding Krikawa Jewelry Designs, Lisa enjoys time with her three children, writing, and coaching up and coming garage jewelers.

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