



Propose with one of these trending styles and post the good news!

BY LORRAINE DEPASQUE

#SHESAIDYES

White, yellow, or rose gold? Round, square, or cushion cut? Classic, modern, or vintage style? When deciding on an engagement ring and wedding band, the choices may seem overwhelming. “We found that one bride-to-be went online and actually looked at 3,800 engagement rings in one day,” chuckles Bernadette Baillie, director of education for *TheKnot.com*. “That’s huge dedication!” Baillie recalls the story while discussing the results of her popular wedding site’s 2016 Luxury Bridal Jewelry & Engagement Ring Study, for which The Knot surveyed 13,000 Millennial couples. To help get your own research underway, we also spoke with jewelry expert Benjamin G. Guttery about what’s trending in wedding ring designs, diamond cuts and colors, precious metals and more. Guttery, a GIA graduate/jewelry trend forecaster/brand advocate, is also founder of the blog Third Coast Gems.

A FEW FAVORITE CUTS

Perhaps celebrity engagements (Blake Lively, Julianne Hough) have played a role in its popularity, for never in recent times has the oval been so in demand. “This fancy diamond cut is one way a bride can have something out of the ordinary,” says Guttery, “and depending on how the stone is cut it can really elongate the finger and look very graceful on your hand.” Nonetheless, according to The Knot’s study, 49% of modern brides still prefer the traditional round, while princess cuts come in as second most popular.

GEM AND METAL COLORS TO LOVE

If you do decide on a classic round center diamond, another way to differentiate is by choosing a stone other than a white diamond. “Colored

gems are in vogue for bridal,” says Guttery, “especially ruby, emerald and all shades of sapphire.” He mentions aquamarine, too. Light blue gems and pink stones have notably become more sought-after in bridal since the Pantone Color Institute named Serenity (a pastel blue) and Rose Quartz (a light pink) as the 2016 Colors of the Year.

A pink gemstone set in rose gold is a beautiful, feminine, tone-on-tone look. Just the same, says Baillie, “Our latest research shows that 68% of brides still want 18K or 14K white gold for their wedding rings.” That said, more and more, as women look for artisanal flair, they’re buying yellow gold, reports Guttery. “Specifically, rich and buttery 18-karat. The glow it gives off is radiating, and the textures and patterns in yellow gold look great.”

DESIGN ’N DETAIL

Whether in the precious-metal surface of your wedding ring, the prongs and bezels holding the gems, or the overall aesthetic, today’s bride is looking for detail, Guttery emphasizes. “Even if a ring itself is simple, the head may have scrollwork, a shank might have an unusual pattern of pavé diamonds and cutouts, or the focus gem may be held by artistic prongs. Also, a lot of today’s designers are re-interpreting elements from past eras—Edwardian or Deco, for example—and incorporating them into their signature bridal styles. Something I’m definitely noticing is more ornate scrollwork.”

One last thing: Before you begin your search for that once-in-a-lifetime ring, be sure to ask your jeweler about two-stone designs, including bypass styles. It’s a retro silhouette that’s made its way into modern bridal—and lots of (soon-to-be) engaged women are falling in love with it.