



When She Says "I DO"

BY BETH BERNSTEIN

When shopping for an engagement ring, a variety of colors, cuts and authentic antiques abound today. From Art Deco styles to natural colored diamonds, what each bride-to-be is looking for when she says "I do" has been changing throughout the past ten years. Influencing the evolution of bridal rings are the looks we see celebrities receiving as they get engaged as well as what they are wearing on the red carpet.

Perhaps the biggest influence in choosing an engagement ring is that women today no longer want what their friends have. They want to be themselves. They are choosing presence and character over status and competing with their friends and peers.

A brief overview of these cuts will give a better understanding of the choices and help you select the shapes that have lasted throughout time and continue to evolve into the heirlooms of a new generation of women.

The Rose Cut: Shaped with a flat bottom and domed crown, this diamond cut was given its name because its facets resemble the delicate petals of a rosebud. Triangular shaped facets bring brilliance and reflection to the stone.

Old rose cuts were rarely calibrated and were sometimes irregular in shape. The new versions, which are being produced today, come primarily from India and they are calibrated and can be matched up for earrings as well as necklaces and bracelets. Although rose cuts don't have the brilliance of a modern full cut

diamond; the subtle warmth and the cut's larger spread (which gives it an appearance of being bigger than it is) has contributed to the renewed popularity of this stone.

The Cushion Cut: Developed in the eighteenth century, this cut was more refined and elegant and became the favorite of nineteenth century jewelers. Originally called old mine cut, the cushion cut became named for its pillow shape of a square with curved sides and rounded corners. Both the cushion cut with its 58 brilliant style facets and old European cuts which were developed toward the end of the nineteenth century (but were more circular in shape) are considered to be the direct ancestor of the modern brilliant. Cushion cuts can also be identified by thinner girdles and larger culets. Like the rose cut, they also give a larger appearance than modern brilliant cuts.

Today's cushion cuts are most sought after for larger carat earrings and engagement rings. They still look best when designed with a feminine antique feeling. Flatter version cuts of classic diamond cuts: marquise, and pear shapes with fewer facets and smaller culets table cuts are some of the more exclusive and limited edition pieces designers are showing in both white and opaques. Some of the independent designers who are creating alternative bridal looks shared their inspirations, favorite cuts, styling techniques and insider tips on what to look for in these engagement rings.



REBECCA OVERMANN

"I first started using rose cuts approximately six years ago — I think they were a natural fit for my aesthetic, which is organic and textural. The rose cuts seem to blend with the metal, a perfect fit for customers who are looking for something more casual and a little less 'blingy'. Also, the colors and textures in the stones themselves, as well as the unique and unusual new shapes that are being fashioned with the subtle facets of the rose cuts have given me an endless number of variations with which to work. And, I still love the 'perfection' of a fancy cut stone —therefore many of the rose cuts I use are on the brighter, clearer side) these days."

SOFIA KAMAN FOR KAMOFIE

"My favorite of the older cuts are the old mine and European cuts. They have a bit more sparkle than the rose cut (though I love their quiet and demure nature as well). I remember the first time I saw an antique engagement ring with a 4-carat European cut. I tried it on and never wanted to take it off. It was probably that moment when I knew I would start using repurposed vintage stones and 'new old cuts' in my designs. I love that older stones were cut to achieve the maximum beauty of the stone, whether that meant inclusions were not cut out or the stone showed some color, which makes a stone feel like a real part of the earth to me. Their natural quality seemed like a perfect fit for my aesthetic of natural beauty as well as a way to connect to the past, which is another inspiration for me."



JENNIFER DAWES

"I have been working with rose cuts since 2005. I remember the first time I started seeing these stones available in fine gems and was struck by their subtle beauty. They are a great option for brides because of the way they are cut, flat on the bottom and domed on the top, making a larger look affordable by keeping the weight down. Due to their shape they are also a low profile stone, which makes them extremely comfortable to wear. I love the ancient quality of these stones and designing around them to create modern context to our history."