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Design Trends: Diamond Engagement Rings

By John Pollard

>From the grace of halo to the sophistication of micro pave, design trends in diamond engagement rings and wedding band settings are changing, reflecting today's busy lifestyles. Ergonomic designs reign supreme in today's market, no longer does pure panache determine the design that leads to 'I Do.'

"Some brides prefer an ergonomic design that can comfortably be worn day in and day out," says Brian Gavin, Executive Vice President of Whiteflash.com. "Others look for added style in an intricate or trendy setting; which, unfortunately, can be limiting when it comes everyday wear," adds Gavin. Whiteflash.com is an e-jewelry boutique specializing in Hearts & Arrows diamonds and custom-designed engagement rings.

Here's a peek at the up-and-coming trends in engagement rings according to the boutique's jewelry designers:

Myth: solitaires stand tall

Not true of today's diamond solitaire settings, says Gavin. "Solitaire settings are traditionally upswept, raising the diamond to make a very bold statement," he adds. "However, people are also choosing settings where the center diamond sits down low, creating a look that is extremely elegant and also ergonomic." With the diamond down in the setting, brides-to-be are able to wear the engagement ring in everyday work and play situations long after they say their "I Do's."

Halos make a comeback

The likely reason for that comeback, according to Gavin, is that the halo-style diamond engagement ring makes the center diamond appear larger than it really is. "And the appearance of a high carat weight in the center stone is extremely important for many who are headed to the altar," says Gavin. Whiteflash.com has introduced several halo designs to its line of diamond engagement rings in the past year, including one with beaded diamonds along the shank as well as around the center stone. Increased sales prove the design's resurgence and staying power.

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A toast to the 'Champagne' setting

One design stunning even to the most fashion-savvy is the diamond 'Champagne' setting. "Those who desire this setting know exactly what they're looking for...and that's something unique," says Gavin. "The Champagne style of setting has an unmistakable following." The designers at Whiteflash.com deserve a toast of the bubbly for their interpretation of the Champagne-style bubble design in their U-prong Champagne engagement ring...among others.

Gavin says the company's Champagne fashions have produced a great deal of spin-off custom-design work, much of which incorporates Whiteflash.com's exclusive 'A Cut Above' (ACA) melee diamonds. "The design of the Champagne diamond setting intermixes several components...it's these combined features that really draw[s] people to it," he says.

"Often people ask us to replicate one aspect or another of the Champagne design into a custom project, and of course we don't hesitate to do so." According to Gavin, the U-Prong, domed shank and accent diamonds are examples of features that can be applied to any custom piece. "Our 'A Cut Above' (ACA) melee diamonds have been adopted into thousands of projects, and are a stunning complement to any setting style," comments Gavin.

Delicate pave and micro-pave designs

The old debate: Delicate versus complex, which is better? According to the designers at Whiteflash.com, this season the style leans more heavily towards delicacy rather than complexity.

The diamond pave setting is widely admired for its refinement. To give the setting its simplistic, yet exquisite appearance, beads of metal are raised to create secure channels where the diamonds sit securely in the ring. According to the craftsmen at Whiteflash.com, the raised metal of the band (or ring) is used to create the tiny prongs that hold the petite diamonds in place.

Center stage: Eternity bands

The pave and micro pave diamond engagement rings come into play when customers are looking at smaller diamond settings like the eternity band. According to Gavin – who is also a fifth-generation cutter from the world's largest diamond center (South Africa) – there has been a recent push for smaller diamonds in settings. "In some cases even solitaire engagement rings are being replaced with semi, and even full diamond eternity bands," he says. The trend is likely a response to the aforementioned movement towards dainty-looking styles and those that offer daily wear. Eternity bands traditionally are set with diamonds anywhere from one to three points (carats).

Brides trade up

The 'trading-up' trend will never fade into obscurity. "We've found that it makes a difference in the design process if the bride-to-be is involved up front," says Gavin. "If the groom chooses to go it alone, he typically gravitates toward a simple design with a smaller-than-desired diamond. And what happens next? The bride-to-be upgrades the size of her diamonds, even adding side stones, and looks for a

setting more suited to their tastes."

'Trading up' need not always be done up front. Many couples consider upgrades for important milestones like anniversaries, birthdays and holidays. "While her diamond engagement ring was [current] as a newlywed, many years later she might change or modify her setting to reflect transition in her own life or to keep up with current jewelry trends," says Gavin. "Even if she keeps the setting forever, there is a chance that down the road she may require a larger diamond. We have many repeat customers who upgrade their diamonds with us," he finishes.

Whiteflash.com anticipates change as a constant and has made it simple for customers to upgrade with a unique guarantee: Every certified diamond sold at Whiteflash.com comes with a lifetime trade-up option. The company will accept the return of any original purchase and extend full credit in the amount of the original purchase price. The credit can be used to purchase a different diamond.

"Marriage is a lifetime commitment," Gavin says. "When you choose Whiteflash.com, we'll be there for a lifetime with you."

About Whiteflash

Whiteflash.com is the first company in the U.S. to offer an exclusive brand of Hearts & Arrows diamond and bring the sheer beauty of "super ideal cut" to the Internet. Brian Gavin, a 5th generation diamond cutter, and Debi Wexler, a computer entrepreneur, together founded Whiteflash.com in 1999 bringing an expansive selection of loose diamonds to the Internet, including an exclusive brand of Hearts & Arrows diamonds. 'A Cut Above' (ACA(TM)) is unmatched in its brilliance, fire and sparkle and remains the only Hearts & Arrows diamond sold online with advertised standards and a "true patterning" guarantee. Whiteflash.com also offers original, handcrafted platinum and gold settings, diamond engagement rings and wedding bands, custom diamond ring designs and specialty jewelry.

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<http://www.whiteflash.com/Engagement-Rings/1.htm>

and

<http://new.whiteflash.com/golden-wardrobe/whiteflash-design.aspx>

Buying A Cheap Diamond Engagement Ring

By Low Jeremy

Face the facts. If you are looking for a cheap diamond engagement ring, better be prepared to find a not that cheap diamond engagement ring. Engagement rings are expensive as it is and wanting one with a diamond on it is enough to dry up anyone's pockets.

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Still, if you are really that determined to buy one in such a limited budget, here are some tips that may help you in your search. These may not of course guarantee success but at least you will not be getting any headaches while you scour the metropolis.

Set a realistic budget.

As mentioned before, diamond engagement rings are pretty costly. Finding one that is dirt cheap will be next to impossible. Save yourself a lot of headache by setting a budget that would actually allow you to buy a diamond engagement ring.

To do this, try looking at the prices in jewelry stores, both upscale and those that are in the mid-range. Ask about the specifics such as the carat, the color and the clarity. Compare prices and then decide just how much is the cheapest one. When you have already determined that, try looking at what you have saved up. Is it enough?

Thrift stores

There are stores that specialize in selling second-hand stuff. Try looking at these stores and find out if they are selling used diamond engagement rings. You can also try joining garage sales or estate sales. Here you will find great stuff. Who knows, you might even come across antique engagement rings that you or the person you'll be giving it to will love.

Surf the Internet

There are also online stores that sell diamond engagement rings. Some are brand new while some are already used. You can also try eBay and see if their price range is within your budget. Be careful though as some items are up for bid and you may end up paying more than what you have in your budget.

Try other gemstones

Although diamond engagement rings are really great, if you really cannot afford it, why waste the effort. Engagement rings set with other precious stones will also look great on the fingers of your loved one. Sapphires, amethyst, topaz and even rubies make great engagement rings. One thing that you can also do is to match the color of her eye with the gemstone. You can also buy multiple colored gemstones, even with a small diamond on it. This is less expensive.

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