

brideLIFE

WEDDINGS IN BARBADOS



ANTONIO GUAL
FOR TULLE NEW YORK
talks island
weddings

Emma Corrie shares her
TIPS FOR THE PERFECT DAY

***Fashion
by the Sea***
featuring Soco Hotel
& The Lone Star

MAKE IT
DIY
YOUR OWN

DIY BEAUTY
by MAC Cosmetics



personally yours

(your ring, your way)



BY DIANA JARRETT

You're getting engaged. Now that's exciting news. You'll want a ring that tells your love story in a very personal way. Jewelry stores beckon and media tempts a bride and her fiancé with plenty of design choices. But where should you really start the process of selecting this important ring? Before heading to a store, a little planning is in order.

Consider some important personal facts. This will go a long way in helping you to fine-tune the selection process. And it will be fun, because you'll learn more about yourself, and about the unique couple that you are.

YOUR RING, YOUR PERSONALITY

Is the bride a romantic sort, who often wears feminine 'girly' ensembles? A more detailed ring with delicate flourishes to the design will be an ideal ring choice. Some brides have a preference for times-past; they are drawn to vintage looks in both hair styles and their wardrobe. Nothing would be more perfect than a ring featuring old world charm. But if the lady is an uptown gal who rocks an urban vibe, then we envision either a timeless solitaire ring, or an artistic avant garde design.

SETTINGS

Let's consider lifestyle too. A bride whose hands are busy at work all day 'digging in' to her work will definitely find the low-profile design ring is her best choice. If she's an athletic on-the-go gal, she'll be grateful to have selected an uncomplicated style that doesn't catch on things, or snag clothing. See what we mean? You're already getting a sense of what may work for your lifestyle.



Crown of Light has the latest styles



Halos lend excitement to a ring

STONE SHAPES

The center stone is a very personal choice, and it should be driven by what speaks to you. Everyone has their favorite. But here are a few tips to consider before selecting the important star of your ring. Elongated shaped stones help slenderize the appearance of a bride's hand and are very flattering. These include ovals, emerald cut, and pear shaped diamonds. Large rounds are often ideal for larger framed ladies or those with larger hands; but every bride likes a sizeable diamond. Radiant, cushion and princess shaped diamonds add a lady-like appeal to any ring style.

The stone can also be as distinctive as you are. Did you know that exclusive diamond cuts like Diamonds International's Crown of Light is a sought after diamond by many brides who want a spectacular fiery stone? DeBeers Forevermark diamonds are another way that brides distinguish their ring from all others. These rare diamonds have a unique number laser inscribed within the diamond. No one else has exactly this diamond.

GETTING CLOSE?

Now might be a good time to start collecting bridal jewelry pictures torn from magazines that are reflect your personal style, your setting preferences and the center stone shapes that appeal to you. But we're not done.

METALS ABOUND

Earlier eras actually dictated what metal a bride should chose for her ring. But today's lucky bride has so many choices. And they are all right . . . it's up to you. White or yellow gold are both in style. If you wear both colors of gold in your other jewelry, you may select a bi-color (also called

two-toned) gold ring. If femininity defines your style choices, consider rose or pink gold for a modern twist on an uber-romantic look. Don't forget other beautiful alternatives that are available. They are platinum, a hefty choice, which produces a soft sheen on the metals' surface over time. And there's palladium too, which is another metal in the platinum family; it's budget friendly, which is a nice bonus.

SET A BUDGET . . . BUT BE FLEXIBLE

A budget should not be an afterthought. Decide together what the right amount is for you both. Keep it in mind when you do go shopping as it helps the sales professional to select several options that are right for you. But give yourself permission for a little 'wiggle room' just in case you both find the one and only ring that you want to say "I DO" to. After all, you will be enjoying this ring for the rest of your lives.

YOUR DAY, YOUR WAY

Like your wedding, and your new life together, ultimately you decide what your bridal jewelry should look like. Your options extend to color choices too, which many stylish brides are opting for now. Accent stones on the band or the central stone can be a colorful precious gemstone other than a diamond. But if you've been noticing trendsetting brides lately, especially celebrities, you've seen fancy color diamonds featured in their engagement and wedding bands. There are endless ways to personalize your bridal jewelry.

This is one of the most memorable seasons of your life; and that includes selecting your engagement ring. Armed with these focal points, you'll discover the perfect combination of ring options waiting to find its way onto your hand. We think you'll love the hunt almost as much as the ring you create.

Ask the Gemologist....



Unique fancy colored diamonds



Chocolate diamonds - delicious!



Yellow diamonds deliver elegance

Q: I know what the 4Cs are; color, clarity, cut and carat size, but how do I decide which one is more important when selecting my ring?

GG: That's a really thoughtful question, and it sounds like you've done a little homework. If money is no object, go for all 4 Cs being the best you can get. But most of us work within a budget, whether large or modest. If quality over size is your most important factor, start by looking for stones with superb clarity and color. If you want that wow ring to stun your friends (and yourself) start with the biggest size you can afford keeping in mind that the color may be a bit lower on the scale, as well as the clarity. That said, with some patience, and a knowledgeable sales professional, you'll be able to find the right combo that stays within your budget but satisfies your key requirements.

Q: I'm pretty active and outdoorsy, what kind of setting would you recommend for my engagement ring? I don't want to lose the center stone but I don't want to only wear it just on special occasions either.

GG: Modern women live much more active lifestyles than their relatives did a generation or two ago. But I agree, why get a ring that you can't wear all the time? Besides looking for a low profile design, you may want to consider a ring with a bezel set (or semi-bezel) center stone. This eliminates the slim single prongs that may catch or weaken when subjected to a very active lifestyle. But look for ring designs with channel set diamonds on them too. Not only are they set lower and smooth, but they minimize the risk of pop-outs when the wearer is an active person.

Q: I really would like an engagement ring with color; but I'm not sure how to go about it. I want the colored gem to be truly valuable and not look like a 'fashion' ring.

GG: Great question. One choice we like is using colored diamonds, either natural fancy colored diamonds which came from the ground with their color. But treated color diamonds are a wonderful choice too. They are genuine from the earth diamonds that have undergone a 'nudge' of heat or other treatment to develop its beautiful hue. Either ones are a highly dramatic and very individual choice. Good luck in your search; the right stone is waiting for you!