



Your
ULTIMATE
GUIDE to the

RING

He may be forking the money, but you're the one who'll be wearing that diamond forever. Which is why so many couples today shop for the engagement ring together. These pages are packed with **dazzling new styles**, hot looks from Hollywood, and **wallet-friendly shopping strategies**, so you'll get the sparkler you've always dreamed of.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PLAMEN PETROV

With the right
look, there's
nothing more
beautiful than
the classic cut
diamond and
sapphire. © David
Laurenson

GREAT SHAPES

Diamonds come out of the earth looking like pebbles, but cutting and polishing transform them into a galaxy of sparkling stones.

ROUND



*** Lots of brides wear the brilliant cut, perhaps because it's classic and pretty and adapts to many settings. / Platinum ring with a brilliant, 1.00-carat round and pavé band, \$7,700 (without center stone), delevy.com

PEAR



*** You'll never see this shape. The pear-shaped stone is joined to the shoulders by a "V" channel, making it a "teardrop" setting. / Platinum ring with diamond totaling 1.00 carat (including pavé band), \$6,500 (without center stone), delevy.com

ASSAULT



*** Square with clipped corners, this shape evokes the architectural "assault watchtower" designed by the engineer Walter Gropius—hence the name. / Platinum ring with 4.12-carat diamond, \$28,000, delevy.com

OVAL



*** To be fair, you'll never see the quality of a round diamond other than at many jewelry stores, so you're getting a little different. / 1.00-carat oval, platinum ring with pavé band, \$1,400 (without center stone), delevy.com

EMERALD



*** Since the facets point in many different directions, any flaws in the corners of a stone will be obvious. / Platinum ring with 1.00-carat emerald-cut diamond, \$7,000 (without center stone), delevy.com

EMERALD



*** Although it's often called a square, this stone gets its name from the rounded corners and clipped sides, which leave a lot of room for facets. / Platinum ring with diamond totaling 1.00 carat, \$7,000, delevy.com

EMERALD



*** This ring is both elegant and classic. The emerald-cut diamond has more facets than the round and catches up to high quality once it's set in the ring. / Platinum ring with a 1.00-carat diamond, \$10,000, delevy.com

EMERALD



*** This diamond has the shape of an emerald, but like the cut is different. There's more sparkle. / Platinum and 18-karat yellow gold ring with a 1.00-carat emerald-cut diamond, \$10,000, delevy.com

EMERALD



*** This diamond has the shape of an emerald, but like the cut is different. There's more sparkle. / Platinum and 18-karat yellow gold ring with a 1.00-carat emerald-cut diamond, \$10,000, delevy.com

EMERALD



*** Emerald-cut rings are the classic choice because they're classic and also usually require less facets. / 1.00-carat oval, platinum ring from the Heritage Collection, \$1,200 (without center stone), delevy.com

EMERALD



*** I love a fitted ring to wear the center stone. Back for showing. Good proportion, set in the stone that are roughly equal in length and width. / 1.00-carat oval ring with a 1.00-carat diamond, \$14,400, delevy.com

\$3,481

THE AVERAGE COST of an engagement ring in 2010

TIP The center stones of rings are often sold separately, which allows your guy to pick a gem that fits into his budget.

WHERE TO SHOP

Diamond rings are everywhere. Your guy can even pick one up on his monthly paycheck, no matter what retailer he chooses, he should request documentation about the stone, along with a 30-day money-back guarantee, which will give you time to have it appraised after the purchase.

	PROS	CONS
MOM-AND-POP STORE	Shopping offers a very personal shopping experience —the staff will know your fiancée names the time to buy.	There's limited selection and higher prices — the trendy items (like window displays) are sold at a discount.
LUXURY JEWELER (Tiffany & Co., Harry Winston)	High-end retailers sell high-quality diamonds , jewelry, and a reputation that provides security.	Although the name brings added prestige , it's expensive for a purchase that may not bring a return on that price.
DEPARTMENT STORE (Macy's, Nordy's, JCPenney)	You can find great deals during sales, and often a 30-day money-back guarantee that lets you take and return the ring for a full refund.	Stores are likely to be crowded , and you'll be able to inspect a specific stone. Staffed stores are likely to be crowded .
MALL JEWELER (Deity, Kay Jewelers)	You can't beat the convenient location and often the insurance policies. Plus, you'll be guaranteed free repairs .	Malls can have a limited selection of the latest, and you can't always find what you're looking for .
MASS-MARKET STORE (Jewelry, Forevermark, Target)	The best deals for low-end diamonds. Even a pair of 1-carat diamonds that are cut well can cost less than \$1,000.	The margin is small — diamonds are sold , with prices that are only just above the wholesale price for the stone.
WAREHOUSE CHAIN (Sears & Roebuck, J.C. Penney, Costco)	These retailers have the power to purchase diamonds in bulk, which means they can bring the price down .	There's less attention and the staff is often untrained , so before buying the ring, be sure you know how to inspect it.
ONLINE RETAILER (Blue Nile, Wedding.com, eSeduction.com, Diamond.com)	The best prices for high-quality diamonds. Free home try-ons let you inspect the ring for top-quality stones at a reasonable price .	You have no chance to physically see and touch the ring, so to be on the safe side, a reputable retailer is key.
VINTAGE OR ANTIQUE STORE	No one else will have a ring like yours— unique designs , perhaps from a previous generation, or old-school .	Depending on the store, other rings may be harder to come by , and it can be difficult to find settings or replacement stones.

framed! / A look at four styles ways to set your stone straight.

			
30-TENSION	30-PRONG	30-BEZEL	30-HALO
The stone is held in place by the tension of the band. The band is made of metal , and the stone is held in place by the tension of the band.	The stone is held in place by the prongs of the band. The band is made of metal , and the stone is held in place by the prongs of the band.	The stone is held in place by the bezel of the band. The band is made of metal , and the stone is held in place by the bezel of the band.	The stone is held in place by the halo of the band. The band is made of metal , and the stone is held in place by the halo of the band.

heavy metals

Don't know platinum from palladium? Ananya Gupta of the Jewelry Information Center (JIC.org), a consumer education organization, gave us the breakdown.

PLATINUM / The most expensive choice for a setting, the metal is often paired with diamonds because it's relatively strong and white, with less compromise for just a quarter. Platinum is hypoallergenic, but softens with regular use.

WHITE GOLD / It's known for strength and durability, and mixes metal with other metals. White gold usually gets paired with diamonds, which needs to be purchased separately. Ask your jeweler about alloys, which also may contain palladium (see below) and/or 14-karat gold.

YELLOW GOLD / The metal is easy to work with, along with being a major favorite when they're making a setting. There are also various colors, which adds a warm, soft tone. It may be stretched in buying a ring that's comfortable and reasonably priced, so you might want to consider other gold.

PALLADIUM / The precious metal is popular with the look of platinum, plus a better white sheen. White gold is 14-karat gold and does not have the same durability as platinum, so it's often used as a secondary metal with it.

IN THE LOUPE

Ronda Teresian, author of *Diamond Ring Appropriately*, explains how to use a hand magnifier (called a loupe) with confidence.

- 1** First, look at the diamond with a naked eye. "Because the stone is what it is, you'll see it's not a 1-carat with a 1-carat weight," Teresian says.
- 2** Next, turn the stone around and away from the light, and use the loupe to inspect the facets. You can see the facets with a loupe, but you can't see the facets with a loupe.
- 3** Look at the stone with different lighting, and from different angles. The loupe will help you see the facets, but you can't see the facets with a loupe.
- 4** The loupe is a tool, and it's not a magic wand. It's not a magic wand, and it's not a magic wand. It's not a magic wand, and it's not a magic wand.

LUXE AND LESS

These rings—both from Harry Winston, left, and Juvia Diamonds—look nearly identical. So why does one cost seven times as much? A close inspection based on the G-I-C (color, clarity, cut) grading system, the GIA's diamond grading system, reveals the difference.

G-I-C = The highest quality diamond, with the highest clarity, color, and cut grades.

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carat = The weight of the diamond. A 1-carat diamond is equal to 0.2 grams, and a 1.5-carat diamond is equal to 0.3 grams.

clarity = The absence of inclusions. The more inclusions, the lower the clarity grade, which makes it look cloudy.

STAR POWER / These rings are similar to the ones A-list ladies are flaunting.

Jessie J **Ring:** The singer's 1.6-carat oval-cut diamond ring with a pavé band is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



Julia Roberts **Ring:** The actress's 1.5-carat round-cut diamond ring with a pavé band is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



Rachel Zoe **Ring:** The actress's 1.5-carat round-cut diamond ring with a pavé band is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



Anna Karenina **Ring:** The actress's 1.5-carat round-cut diamond ring with a pavé band is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



read all about it

The top finds for anyone after deals on beautiful expert Diamond Shopping

READ **Diamond Ring Buying Guide**, by Heidi Newman
The Lowdown: How to find a diamond ring that's the perfect size for you, how to choose a quality diamond, **What We Love:** The website's easy shopping tool that lets you see whether you've got a great deal on your ring and the pricing on other rings that were also featured last December. [More Info](#)

CLICK **Over and Over** (diamond.com)
The Lowdown: This community-based site has one of the largest online inventories for those who don't want to go to a jewelry store. **What We Love:** A filter on the site that lets you see whether a diamond is certified. [More Info](#)

DOWNLOAD **They & Co. Engagement Ring Finder** (iPhone app)
The Lowdown: The developer of this app created an easy-to-use app that lets you search in minutes to find a ring, setting, diamond shape and more. Each ring is shown with the price. **What We Love:** That you can view all your rings on the same page. [More Info](#)



WE ASKED

Q I'd like my ring to have a diamond that's not too big, but I want it to be something that's not too small. How do I find a diamond that's just right?

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conflict diamonds
If you're concerned about the source of your diamonds, here's what you need to know about a new label that's helping to make sure you're getting a conflict-free diamond.

75%
of BRIDES readers would rather have a small, perfect gem than a huge-but-flawed rock

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just in case
TO INSURE THE GEM, you should consider getting a diamond insurance policy. It's not the same as a homeowners policy, but it's a separate policy that covers your diamond in case of theft or loss. The policy should cover the full value of your diamond, plus any costs for replacement. The policy should also cover the cost of any damage to the diamond. The policy should also cover the cost of any damage to the diamond.

EDDIE GENSE O'DONOGHUE
WITTO LEE DWYER
PHOTO: JAMES HAMILTON

TREND WATCH

A look at what's hot in the world of sparkles.

MOVING CUTE
A diamond ring with a large, square-cut center stone and a pavé band is a popular choice for brides. The ring is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



YELLOW DIAMONDS
A diamond ring with a large, yellow diamond center stone and a pavé band is a popular choice for brides. The ring is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



EMERALD INSPIRED
A diamond ring with a large, emerald-cut center stone and a pavé band is a popular choice for brides. The ring is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)



NEW SAPPHIRE
A diamond ring with a large, sapphire-cut center stone and a pavé band is a popular choice for brides. The ring is said to have cost her over \$100,000. [insiderjewelry.com](#)

