

# TRENDS

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**T**HE BRIDE of today may choose her engagement and wedding rings from a wide variety of hand-crafted patterns to suit her individual taste and her future husband's purse.

Her rings may be simple and tailored with either plain or engraved bands. They may be full jeweled or contain a single diamond mounted on a simple band of precious metal. The solitaire is the most popular engagement ring style. Tiny diamonds flanking the stone and engravings on the band create fashionable variations.

The plain metal band, slim or wide, is the most popular wedding ring. Today's bride sometimes prefers this band enhanced by a molded or engraved pattern. Other popular bands are the half round, which is circled halfway around with a row of tiny diamonds, and the circler, which is encircled with diamonds.

Favorite ring mountings are the fishtail or the channel style. The stone set in a fishtail mounting is secured to the band with four tiny prongs, thus held independent of other stones on the band. Most popular in Ames is the more conservative channel method of mounting a row of stones as a unit in the band. The double channel design sets twin rows of diamonds parallel to each other.

The monetary value of the engagement and wedding rings is determined by the size and quality of their jewels. Diamond sizes are designated in points with 100 points equaling one carat. Quality of the stone is determined by its color, flaws and cut. The whiter a diamond, the more valuable it is. Brilliance depends upon the light reflected. Every flaw in the diamond

cuts off a certain amount of light, creating a "dead spot" in the gem.

Two popular diamond cuts are the round and the baguette or square cut. Every diamond is fashioned either as a single cut or as a full cut. A single cut is smaller and has 33 internal facets or planes off which light is reflected, while the full cut has 58 internal facets.

The metal used for wedding and engagement ring bands is also an important value factor. Platinum, a comparatively new metal, is elegant and expensive. Less costly paladium was originally used to substitute for the precious platinum, but isn't as durable.

Gold is the most popular choice for engagement and wedding bands. Yellow and white gold are generally favored about half and half. The trend in Ames is toward white gold since yellow gold seems



Popular today is the traditional double ring ceremony in which the bride and groom exchange wedding bands. The bride is also wearing a diamond solitaire engagement ring.

to give a yellow cast to the diamond. Men continue to choose yellow gold for the very prevalent double ring ceremony.

A trend has developed since the war to combine the wedding and engagement rings by wider-topped rings. The popularity of the double channel mounting shows evidence of this. The use of guard rings, a pair of single metal bands worn one on either side of the wedding band, creates an illusion of width. A wide ring adorned with diamonds easily takes the place of two smaller rings.

The choice of engagement and wedding rings is up to you and your husband-to-be. Once your ring or rings have been chosen, they'll mean what they have for centuries, a promise—a promise come true.