

## 6 bridal jewelry trends for 2015

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Source: National Jeweler



Unusual cuts, like this marquise-shaped diamond "Attelage" ring by Anna Sheffield, will be one of a number of trends influencing bridal jewelry trends in 2015.

New York--Celebrity couples threw caution to the wind this year, with weddings--and wedding rings--that marked a return to pre-recession extravagance.

George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin tied the knot in a former Venetian palazzo while Kim Kardashian and Kanye West held their \$12 million nuptials in a 16th century fort in Florence, Italy.

Yet the brides' rings had a notably modern look, as did most A-list engagement rings this year. Fewer stars opted for vintage styles, instead choosing cleaner lines and a bit of color.

Here are six trends visible in celebrity wedding jewelry in 2014 that are likely to impact demand in 2015.

**1) Modified halos.** In fall 2013, Scarlett Johansson appeared with the ultimate Art Deco engagement ring, flush to the finger. Her ring offered size and sparkle without requiring a giant center stone, a primary advantage of the vintage-style halo.

But, as Helena Krodel of Luxe Intelligence points out, there wasn't a single halo among the rings of A-list celebrities engaged in 2014. "The halo has been the most important trend we've seen in engagement rings and bridal jewelry in the past decade," she said. "For so long, it seemed like every single engagement ring had either a pavé shank or a pavé halo. I think it's important to note that none of the big five celebrity engagement rings had a halo this year."

Are halos' popularity waning? "They're classics now," Krodel said. "They're no longer the trendy new thing that everyone wants."

"The halo was extremely popular in 2014, and I think it will continue in 2015," said Amanda Gizzi of Jewelers of America. "I don't think it will be as dominating a trend as it was in 2014 but I do think, with people still being very budget-conscious yet wanting a large-diamond look, the halo will stick around for some time."

Amanda Tropila of the Platinum Guild International (PGI-USA) sees halos evolving, with less stone and more metal--etched, beaded or twisted settings that lend a halo look. "Daniel's has one, for example, with metal that looks like a classic halo with diamonds," she says, "but when you look closely, the metal has almost a beaded effect."

**2) Simpler settings.** In place of the halo, Krodel is seeing more "interesting settings" with unusual cuts flanked by matching side stones--a large oval center stone with two smaller ovals, for example.

Tropila notes a return of "simple, clean, modern rings--tension settings or chunkier, plain metal settings with a bezel-set stone."

**3) Unusual cuts.** Angelina Jolie's engagement ring this year had multiple baguettes tapering down the sides of her emerald-cut diamond ring, a look we haven't seen much of since the 1970s.

Other formerly passé cuts seem to be gaining momentum as well. "Shapes that really weren't popular, like the marquise and the pear shape, are coming in again," Tropila said.

Many celebs also opted for emerald cuts, a look that doesn't work so well with average-sized diamonds. Other fancy cuts that seem to be gaining momentum, Gizzi said, are cushions particularly as well as also ovals, radiant and Asscher cuts.

Openwork shanks also are appearing in celebrity engagement rings, a style that works for longer cuts such as the oval. Actress Hayden Panettiere, of *Heroes* and *Nashville*, opted for a pave-set split shank to hold her massive emerald-cut diamond.

**4) Colored stones.** Yellow stones appeared in a couple high-profile engagement rings this year. Clooney gave Alamuddin a 7-carat emerald-cut fancy yellow diamond.

Since sizable yellow diamonds can be quite expensive--Alamuddin's ring cost a reported \$750,000--brides might opt to add the shade by using yellow sapphires, as was seen in the ring Donnie Wahlberg gave his now-wife Jenny McCarthy.

For now, Krodel predicts most brides will restrict color to the side stones.

She adds that she expects to see more champagne diamonds as well, also in that color range. HSN's new diamond expert Diane Warga-Arias said champagne diamonds are hot right now in general.

Both younger and older brides are avoiding conventional diamond rings for different reasons, Krodel said. "A lot of older brides, perhaps because they've already been through it before, are doing non-traditional stones but maybe in traditional settings," she said.

"People under 30 who are getting married for the first time, they're the ones looking for something that isn't traditional in any regard," she said. "It could be a band or a colored gemstone, maybe a gray or an uncut diamond, something rough, in the Todd Reed style."

**5) Stacking bands.** Stacking mania is affecting choice of wedding bands and creating add-on sales opportunities.

"People are loving the idea of stacking bands now, this idea of buying a band that doesn't have to match your engagement ring and then buying another band for an anniversary present or a life's occasion," Krodel said.

For now, brides are sticking to white metals, sometimes with touches of rose gold. "As much of a driving force as it is in fashion jewelry right now, yellow gold is not translating to bridal," Gizzi said. "I think people still feel it's dated."

**6) Gem-set men's bands.** "Men's bands are getting more and more stylized, with diamonds, etching or borders," Tropila said.

Platinum and gold bands incorporating diamonds are big for men, Gizzi said. "We're even seeing some color, like flush-set sapphires or rubies, but primarily diamonds--one round or three round or three princess cut, flush-set."