

Vintage Ring Eras

engagement ring styles from 1890-1950



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ARTISAN & VINTAGE

jewelry



Introduction

The approximate age of a piece of estate jewelry is determined by looking at a number of different characteristics, including the cut of the gem, the style of the setting, and the design on the band. Each era in history has its own distinct style and there are certain hallmarks of each era's technology and design aesthetic that are unique. In this book we'll show you some examples of estate jewelry and highlights of each time period.

Art Nouveau Era

1890 to 1910



Art Nouveau style (literally “New Art”) developed at the dawn of the 20th century in Europe. The Art Nouveau era overlaps the Victorian and Edwardian eras and shares the soft and romantic feel of the jewelry from those periods.

Art Nouveau was also influenced by Japanese art and its depiction of the natural world, so natural elements such as dragonflies, butterflies, and flowers often make their way into jewelry from this era.

Another distinguishing characteristic is that Art Nouveau jewelry uses gemstones as an accent instead of the focus of the piece, a departure from the way gemstones were used in the Edwardian and Victorian eras.

Key Points

of Art Nouveau style



Although they're not all found in engagement rings, some salient characteristics of Art Nouveau style are:

- the use of semiprecious stones, especially moonstone, amethyst, opal, and peridot
- the use of enamel
- nature motifs
- femme fatale figures and faces

Edwardian Era

1901 to 1920



The Edwardian era is named for King Edward VII of England and runs from around 1901 to 1920. Edwardian jewelry was designed to complement the fashions of the day, which were severe in shape and pale in color.

Edwardian jewelry has a delicate, almost lace-like look and favors floral motifs and white tones. The formula for white gold was perfected in the Edwardian era and you see white gold as the preferred metal in many Edwardian pieces.

Key Points

of Edwardian style



Engagement rings in the Edwardian style often feature:

- delicate lace settings
- “white on white” look with gemstones and pearls in platinum and gold.
- scrolls, laurel wreaths and garlands of flowers
- more elaborate diamond cuts such as marquise, emerald, baguette and briolette shapes

Art Deco Era

1920 to 1935



In the post-war period between 1920 and 1935, fashions relaxed considerably. The Art Deco styles were bold and often featured abstract lines and patterns.

Art Deco jewelry likewise features geometric forms and bold, colorful designs. The use of synthetic gems in fine jewelry became common during this period. The metal of choice was again white gold and platinum, often made into pierced designs. Although diamonds were still popular, colored gems held favor.

Key Points

of Art Deco style



Engagement rings in the Art Deco style often feature:

- pierced designs
- platinum or white gold
- synthetic, colorful gems

Mid Century Era

1945 to 1960



In 1947, designer Christian Dior introduced a new ideal in women's fashion, known as "The New Look." This now-familiar look is characterized by a small, cinched waist and a full, mid-calf length skirt.

Jewelry design during this period adapted to complement the severe lines of the New Look. The jewelry you will find from the 1950s has an airy and open design that is reminiscent of Edwardian jewelry (conveniently, these designs conserved metal). The use of yellow gold and rose gold grew and there was a movement toward more floral and natural inspiration as opposed to the abstract lines of Art Deco jewelry. Jewelry designs from this period do a particularly good job of showcasing the gem, and are among the most popular for vintage engagement rings of today.

Key Points

of Mid Century style



Engagement rings from this era often feature:

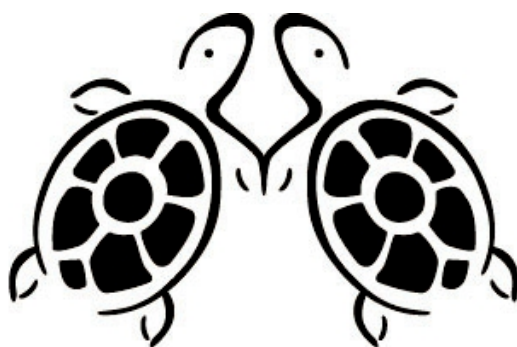
- increased use of yellow and rose gold with colored stones
- floral and botanical motifs
- open and airy designs with intricate filigree or openwork

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