



PRINCE RAINIER III OF MONACO PROPOSED TO GRACE KELLY WITH THIS RUBY CARTIER ETERNITY BAND - BUT REPLACED IT WITH A CARTIER PLATINUM RING WITH A 10.5CT DIAMOND WHEN HE SAW OTHER HOLLYWOOD STARS FLAUNTING MUCH BIGGER SPARKLERS

# ROCK STARS

From royals to screen stars, nothing says "I love you" like a shiny, intoxicating gem

Words CHRISTINE VAN DEEMTER

When the young Soraya Esfandiary-Bakhtiari spent two months in bed gravely ill with typhoid just before her nuptials to Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, it is said that he brought her a jewel every day and placed it on her pillow. Richard Burton was so fond of gifting Elizabeth Taylor with jewels that she referred to an emerald Bulgari necklace as her "it's Tuesday, I love you" jewelry. He also bought her the 33.19ct Harry Winston Krupp diamond ring in 1968, which has since been renamed the Elizabeth Taylor Diamond, and the 68ct Taylor-Burton Diamond. The latter jewel was so valuable that its insurers, Lloyd's of London, insisted Taylor only wear it 30 days a year, and be accompanied by armed guards whenever she wore it in public. After their divorce, Taylor sold the diamond to Lebanese jeweler Robert Mouawad, and used the proceeds to fund a hospital in Botswana.

Of all the gifts in the world, the ones in the tiniest boxes must spark the most anticipation. Who doesn't covet a fiery diamond or ruby for your fingers, ears, or neckline?

"Jewelry is essentially timeless, since gold and gemstones don't wear off," says Lebanese jewelry designer Ralph Masri. "That in itself is symbolic of the endurance of love. When you gift jewelry, it's usually meant to be treasured for the long run, and worn on the body as a constant reminder of your love." One of Masri's most cherished commissioned pieces was a bespoke pendant created for a husband to give to his wife upon the birth of their first child. "He wanted me to use a loose,

oval emerald he had gifted her earlier, as it had sentimental value. I encrusted the emerald - a token of their love - into a cocoon-shaped setting to symbolize the protection of their love and child."

Bil Arabi creative director, Nadine Kanso, also looked to love when designing her one-off gold and diamond Passion cuff for Christie's. "The idea was to showcase love in a new way - by wearing your heart on your sleeve." Egyptian jeweler Azza Fahmy echoes this sentiment with her inscribed wedding bands - the most popular being the chevalier gold "My Eternity" ring, inspired by an Oum Kalthoum song.

Sentiment is what turns a glittering gift into an heirloom. "The rings I designed that mean the most to me are the engagement rings I created for my siblings," says Nadine Ghosn, DDFC/Vogue Fashion Prize high jewelry winner. "Finding the stone and being part of the surprise is truly a one-of-a-kind experience, especially since these pieces will be passed on to the next generation." What do couples normally gift each other? Cuff links for men, says Ghosn, and necklaces and earrings for women. "Men tend to stay away from rings until they are ready!"

Anthropologists believe the custom of giving engagement rings dates back to Roman times, when wives used to show



LEFT ELIZABETH TAYLOR'S EMERALD BULGARI NECKLACE BELOW TAYLOR WEARING THE 68CT TAYLOR-BURTON DIAMOND, WITH RICHARD BURTON AT THE 1970 ACADEMY AWARDS



“Elizabeth Taylor referred to an EMERALD BULGARI NECKLACE as her “it’s Tuesday, I love you” jewelry”



LEFT SORAYA ESFANDIARY-BAKHTIARI WEARING HER 22CT DIAMOND RING ABOVE A 1940S DE BEERS AD RIGHT RALPH MASRI'S ARABESQUE DECO RING

## I do! The world's most beguiling engagement rings



**THE DUCHESS OF WINDSOR** WHEN YOU ABDICATE THE THRONE OF ENGLAND FOR THE WOMAN YOU LOVE, YOUR ENGAGEMENT RING SHOULD BE SUITABLY EXTRAVAGANT. EDWARD VIII PROPOSED TO WALLIS SIMPSON WITH A 19.77CT EMERALD RING WITH A PERSONAL INSCRIPTION: "WE ARE OURS NOW 27 X 36," REFERRING TO THE DATE OF THE PROPOSAL, OCTOBER 27, 1936.



**DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES** THE LATE PRINCESS CHOSE HER OWN ENGAGEMENT RING FROM A CATALOGUE, AND SETTLED UPON THE 12CT OVAL SAPPHIRE BEAUTY BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL. HER SON PRINCE WILLIAM PROPOSED TO KATE MIDDLETON WITH THE RING IN 2010.



**MEGHAN MARKLE** PRINCE HARRY PROPOSED TO HIS ACTOR GIRLFRIEND WITH A RING HE DESIGNED HIMSELF, FEATURING A 5CT DIAMOND FROM BOTSWANA, AND TWO SMALLER ONES FROM THE JEWELRY COLLECTION OF HIS MOTHER, PRINCESS DIANA.

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