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(Clockwise from left) Rings by Kamyen, Alok Lodha, Aneka, Ananya Fine Jewellery, Anmol Jewellers, Karina Choudhrie, La Marquise Jewellery, Farah Khan Fine Jewels, Aaryah, and Gyan Jaipur.

# This Ring Is So You

*From secret engravings to sculptural settings, leading designers break down how to create a piece that tells your love story*

*By Smitha Sadanandan*

**T**he most timeless engagement ring is one that only you can wear. For a truly personal piece, one that tells your love story through its cut, setting, and gemstones, custom designing is the only option. We turned to designers and jewellery experts to decode the process.

**FOLLOW THE SPARKLE THAT SPEAKS TO YOU**

Start by finding a designer or jeweller whose aesthetic aligns with yours. A good way to select the right match is to enquire about their bespoke process and explore their past work.

Jewellery designer Sushma Chhajer of Shruti Sushma, the fine jewellery label she runs with her daughter, Shruti Chhajer Ranka, believes the right

collaborator brings both artistry and meaning. “It’s not just about size or sparkle,” she says. “It’s about what feels most meaningful to them.”

“None of the above,” says Rahul Jhaveri, co-founder and creative director of Studio Renn, when asked what comes first – cut, clarity, or carat. “We invite them to share the sentiment behind the ring and what it represents. The more open they are to different diamond shapes and sizes, the more innovative we can be,” he adds.

Karina Choudhrie, a Dubai-based designer who began her career in the Middle East crafting bespoke pieces for high-end clients, starts with a deep dive into their lifestyle and vision. “Do they want a white or coloured diamond, a classic design or something daring? I always include a hidden detail in the ring’s interior,” she says.

For Kochi-based designer Soorya Narayan, the first conversation is about understanding the couple. “The ring should be a true extension of their story.” Once that’s clear, she begins exploring their dream design.

In New York, Megan Kothari of Aaryah blends sculptural, unexpected forms with rare natural diamonds, starting with mood boards and sketches. “We hand-select one-of-a-kind diamonds, balancing stone and design.”

Dubai-based Pooja Gandhi of Kamyen values emotional resonance. “A lot of emotion is always attached to an engagement ring meeting. Hearing everything she wants and making her feel confident is how the dream ring takes shape.”

At Zoya’s atelier in Mumbai, every journey begins with a story. “The shape, size, and setting are not defined by constraints, but by intention and narrative,” says Sangeeta Dewan, head of design.

Similarly, at Rose in Mumbai, it’s never just about the stone or setting. “It’s about crafting a moment, a memory, a milestone,” says founder Biren Vaidya, who begins with a deceptively simple question: “What does this proposal mean to you?”

**SET A BUDGET, BUT DREAM WITHIN IT**

Clarity around what you’re ready to spend makes for smoother decisions. Think about what truly matters – size, cut, provenance. The next step is how to choose the perfect diamond or gem for the engagement ring, and this is where designers can guide you.

Chajjer advises clients to define a budget upfront. “This will help you focus on the best options within your price range and avoid overspending.”

For Tharayil, the investment should be in the centre stone. “I usually suggest dedicating most of the budget to it. It’s the part of the ring that endures, something timeless that can one day be passed down as a cherished family heirloom,” she says.

Anjali Bhimrajka uses budget as a creative anchor. “We play with silhouettes, settings, and thoughtful design elements to enhance the stone’s impact. The goal is to create something deeply personal, not just perfect on paper.” The founder of Anjali Bhimrajka Fine Jewels urges clients to choose a form that feels quietly elegant, and layers in uniqueness through subtle personal elements. “A timeless ring doesn’t have to be traditional – it just has to feel like you, 10 years from now,” she says. “Sometimes, scaling the size of the centre stone or choosing a different cut can help us stay within budget without compromising design.”

Although Gandhi of Kamyen loathes budget discussions, she acknowledges they are crucial. “It is always wrapped in nerves, but it’s such an important part of the process.” Once the budget is clear, she shares three visual options to gauge preference.

A diamond or stone’s cut determines its brilliance. “A well-executed cut maximises the way light enters and reflects,” shares Ishu Datwani, founder of Anmol Jewellers. “Stones with excellent colour and clarity can fall flat without the right cut.”

For Akhil Dhaddha, creative director and founder of Gyan Jaipur, guiding clients through this decision is both an art and a science. “We suggest the best piece within the client’s budget but we never compromise on the cut.” Offering an assortment of the finest centre stones available in-house allows visual and financial flex.

At Aneka, “rather than offering fully bespoke designs,” design director Vikram Singh and his team in Mumbai build in personalisation across the brand’s symbolic collections, from carat size to gold finishes.

Certification, of course, plays a vital role. Opting for GIA-certified diamonds, especially for one caratage and above, is key to authenticity, quality – and resale value. “Even with coloured gemstones, third-party certification is invaluable,” says Choudhrie.

Commitment to craftsmanship runs deep for Delhi-based private jeweller Alok Lodha. His designs start with the stone. “The shape the

customer envisions is pivotal. It reflects their identity.” Whether it’s an Asscher cut or classic round, his goal is to elevate traditional forms.

While the CEO of Dubai-based fine jewellery brand La Marquise, Nishith Shah, emphasises education and personalisation through “immersive sessions to explore GIA-certified solitaires, settings, and the 4Cs,” Vaidya’s Gem Lab experience at Rose goes one step further, inviting clients into a deeper, more intuitive understanding of their choices.

Both emphasise education and personalisation – where Shah’s sessions build confidence through clarity, Vaidya works towards by demystifying the bespoke ring design process.

### GO BOLD, GO BIGGER

In the world of engagement rings, natural diamonds are considered forever. When in doubt, a slightly larger diamond or coloured gem can add sparkle and drama.

A simple solitaire band, remarks Vaidya, allows a larger stone – whether a diamond or coloured gem – to take centre stage in a clean and classic style. A halo delicately magnifies the central stone without necessarily pushing the budget in a quest for an increased carat size, while rings set with side stones or in dual-stone designs easily elevate the look, observes Vaidya. The setting, without doubt, is the frame to the story that inspires each design, he adds. This year, Vaidya notes a strong shift toward romantic styles – pears, ovals, and elongated cushion-cut diamonds.

Lodha suggests using clever settings to elevate even modest carat weights. “Cluster arrangements or inventive setting techniques allow us to breathe new life into smaller stones,” shares Lodha. “With larger ones, of course, the world is your oyster.”

Dhaddha finds oval diamonds appealing to clients, while round and emerald cuts continue to remain eternal classics. He recommends halo settings for stones under 2.5 carats, or a classic three-stone setting for greater visual impact. “We also suggest abstract forms, closed settings, or unexpected combinations.”

Farah Khan values security with elegance. When it comes to securing larger stones, Khan swears by the four-prong setting. “It balances beauty with strength, allowing maximum light

while holding the diamond securely,” says the designer based in Mumbai.

Singh champions rare and expressive cuts at Aneka, including the brand’s proprietary ‘Charkha’ diamond and bespoke trillion arrangements that lend a unique personality to each ring.

The gem’s shape is deeply personal for Lodha. The designer recently created a ring layering round diamonds with custom cut tulip-shaped stones. “The goal is to reflect the client’s sensibility – and sometimes, to surprise them with something distinct,” he adds.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK, THEN TRUST YOUR HEART

Explore styles, eras, and silhouettes – but don’t overthink it. Listen to your heart and follow your instinct.

London-based designer Ananya Malhotra’s recent commission, with layered cuts and pastel diamonds, was inspired by the brand’s baguette scatter ring. “We added

pastel diamonds, and carefully integrated into the cascading effect. The band mimicked the ring, allowing her to wear them together or apart,” says Malhotra.

Dewan believes the most enduring designs aren’t trend-led but emotionally anchored. “Timelessness is about emotional longevity,” the head of design at Zoya notes. “Choose a ring that reflects your lifestyle and quiet confidence.”

In New York, designer Preeti Sandhu crafted a unique ring set with organically placed Basra pearls around an elongated 2.54 carat oval diamond of E VS1 colour, and set in a custom-blended gold alloy. “Each pearl was chosen and positioned to achieve softness, not perfection,” she shares. “It took several trials to achieve the right shade of gold.” The result? A one-of-a-kind heirloom that speaks of elegance, individuality, and detail.

### MATCH THE RING TO THE LIFE YOU LIVE

Think about how you move through the world. Do you work with your hands? Travel frequently? Lead a high-energy lifestyle? These details matter. Work with your designer or jeweller to craft a ring with both style and lifestyle in mind.

Bhimrajka suggests pavé with sunken stones for daily wear. “We sometimes suggest keeping one half of the shank plain and embellishing the inner band instead for wearers with a highly active lifestyle.” While pavé adds brilliance, it needs protection, Tharayil notes. She prefers thicker prongs, more gold, and advises removing rings during high-impact activities.

Meanwhile, Datwani outlines the trade-offs. “Solitaire highlights brilliance, halo enhances size, and pavé delivers dazzle but needs care. Bezel offers security.” Bezel settings and low-profile prong settings are particularly suitable as they minimise the risk of snagging on embellishments, delicate fabric. Material choices are also critical, he adds. “Platinum is strong and hypoallergenic; gold alloys are timeless but need gentle care,” says Datwani. For Lodha, it comes down to intentionality. “Practicality is a part of the process. These pieces are meant to be lived in.”

### DETAILS ARE WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS

Hidden initials, offbeat settings, shank modifications, or gemstone accents tucked into unexpected places – it’s often the smallest details that carry the most meaning, quietly transforming a ring into something deeply personal.

At Shruti Sushma, personalisation is the soul of the piece. “We often incorporate secret engravings, initials, or design elements that are visible only to the wearer,” says Chhajer. Bhimrajka echoes this intimacy, leaning toward subtle details like milgrain edges, floral under-galleries, and organic textures – often with a tiny gemstone hidden inside the band. “These touches make a ring feel like it belongs to someone, not just anyone,” says the designer, who favours rose cuts and kite-shaped diamonds for a modern look.

Biren Vaidya’s Proposal Collection treats rings as emotional heirlooms. “The gemstone becomes a memory. A moment captured in form.”

Jhaveri of Studio Renn calls these “hidden details – little elements that reveal themselves over time.” For a bride with an heirloom marquise diamond, he added a vibrant emerald-set split shank to reflect her love of colour. “Personalisation is the foundation,” he says. “It’s often inspired by dates, places, or shared memories.”

At Shruti Sushma, twists and engraved textures bring depth to minimalist styles. Similarly, Sooryia Tharayil engraves the couple’s wedding date or partner’s name inside the shank, turning the ring into a keepsake.

It’s no longer about what an engagement ring should look like – it’s about how it should feel. Whether sculptural or nostalgic, minimal or unconventional, the most meaningful rings don’t follow trends. They tell your story. ■



(Clockwise from top left) Rings by Zoya, Studio Renn, Preeti Sandhu, Rose, Shruti Sushma, and Anjali Bhimrajka Fine Jewels.



Ring by Sooryia Tharayil