



As seen in JQ Magazine

November/December - "Bridal Trends - Bridal Bliss"

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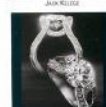
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Bridal Bliss
Fairy Fantasies
Online Marketing

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www.JQintl.com

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Sparks represent more of a cultural language in recent times of protection done through laser engraving. It evokes an inner strength that is subtle yet aggressive in organic or mechanical forms. *futuris* is clean, sharp and sporty, very contemporary." Kay also concurs with Mulchand that palladium is popular with men because it can offer a big look that is not big on weight or cost.

Perhaps motivated to cover costs by the rise in precious metal prices, new opportunities continue to grow as alternative metals in genre wedding bands. For the male market, the "Big Three" alternative metals are titanium, stainless steel, and tungsten carbide. Innovation in styling, laser etching, and combinations of materials has helped to push these products to the forefront of the gentleman's bridal case.

"Men are curious about new innovations," explains J.P. Waldron, vice president of bridal jewelry for Suddles, Lafayette, Louisiana. "We see tungsten watches, titanium golf clubs, and lots of additional jewelry products available in these metals, so it becomes an easy transition to offer a man an alternative metal wedding band. Many younger consumers, who may not share the same traditional jewelry tastes of their fathers, are looking for these metals because, both in styling and price. Additionally, men of all ages who maintain active lifestyles are attracted to their durable qualities."

Waldron notes that titanium is a lighter metal, offering the man a wider band with the same feel as a heavier, yet more conservative of platinum or gold. Tungsten carbide offers a scratch resistant surface, and stainless steel provides a low cost alternative that's also durable and stylish.

"When alternative metals entered the bridal market, the styles were basic, plain polished and milgrain-edged bands for price-conscious men. But as their popularity grew, manufacturers added platinum, gold, steel

diamonds, rubber, and chemical coatings (e.g. black tungsten carbide is created by Physical Vapor Deposition or PVD, or ion plating).

Other innovations for the men's bridal market are coming from Pennsylvania-based Superfit, manufacturer of a lithe-and-light bridal band concept. Leveraging its success in ladies rings, the company has expanded to produce clean, contemporary styled wedding bands for men, as well as divorcee and cuff accents.

What Jewels Should Know
When selling bridal jewelry, remember that consumers today are well-informed. "Consumers research diamond quality facts, fashion trends, and price comparisons," explains Clarissa Rives, director of industry strategy, JPS-JWT. "Consumers need to be able to go head to head with dealers." She suggests jewelers nominate a young site associate to become the modern expert on topics depicted on the base information online and in the jewelry trade and consumer fashion press.

Key points to remember, says Rives: "Young adults are all about individuality but also affiliation via personal expression. They want unique styles and custom designs so they can be distinctive—just like their friends! While offering a diverse selection of styles is important, sensitive choice can paralyze decision and exhaust consumers."

Well-timed collections can help consumers manage their choices. Women are very involved in choosing their engagement ring, so by pre-shopping and experimenting with design websites. When a bride-to-be visits your store with her friends to browse, give her lots of attention."

Beyond the engagement ring and wedding band sets, there are plenty more opportunities for add-on sales in wedding jewelry and bridal party gifts. One key trend is that more brides are wearing two gowns—one



The November/December 2007 issue of *JQ Magazine* featured Wright & Lato's *PGM Collection* wedding bands on page 22. These rings are created using both platinum and palladium.

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