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With this ring

Finding your perfect wedding ring needn't be like hunting for a needle in a haystack. Why not get one made to your own design?

Wedding rings... Once upon a time your choice was a plain gold band or... a plain gold band. Then things got exciting and you could choose a white gold band. Hey.

Thankfully those days are long gone and it's pretty much a case of anything goes. Now, couples want to express their individuality, and choose a ring – or rings – that reflect their personality and the unique bond with their loved one.

And the choice is endless. From the metal you choose to the design you go for, there is likely to be something out there that reflects what you want to say about yourself, your partner and your union. And if there isn't, there'll be a designer who'll make it for you – whether you've a clear-cut idea of exactly what it is you want, or you need some help coming up with your vision.

Having said all that, your wedding ring is as much a fashion accessory as any other piece of jewellery, with the difference being that it has to go with everything you wear, plus the design has to be timeless as you're going to have to love it forever. Hopefully.

At Lance James in Hertford, the view is that going for a timeless design doesn't necessarily mean a plain band.

'However,' says the jeweller, 'do try to imagine wearing your wedding ring in 20 years. Look at the rings of people who have been married for that long; have they stood the test of time?'

Harriet Kelsall, who has jewellery design workshops in Weston and Cambridge, warns newly-engaged

couples to think long and hard about how their engagement and wedding rings are going to work together.

'In the excitement of choosing an engagement ring, it's all too easy to forget that your wedding ring is going to have to fit with it,' she says. 'I'd advise couples to consider choosing the two together.'

All Harriet's rings are unique and she will come up with designs to match a customer's specific requirements.

'There have been some interesting trends in the past three or four years,' she says. 'One is that people often now ask for a combined engagement and wedding ring. Sometimes they'll wear it as an engagement ring before the wedding, and then add something to the design, such as an engraving or a stone, for the marriage ceremony.'

At Lance James, specialist advice is on hand alongside rings by designers such as Furrer Jacot and Breuning. The shop has more than 8,000 designs to choose from, and if you don't like any of those, it too has an on-site workshop to help you design your perfect ring.

What most people find surprising is that it's no more expensive to get a bespoke ring designed for you than to buy one from a high street jewellers.

'Our prices can range from about £500 up to as much as £4,000,' says Harriet.

- Harriet Kelsall, 01462 790565/01223* 461333, www.hkjewellery.co.uk
- Lance James, 01992 534555, www.lancejames.co.uk



From top: A selection from Lance James; Pair of rings from Lance James; Wedding band designed to fit round antique ring by Harriet Kelsall; Rose gold ring with white gold band by Harriet Kelsall; 'Triangle' fitted rings by Harriet Kelsall; Ring from Lance James; 'Wave' fitted rings by Harriet Kelsall