



a rose by any other name

Rose gold is back in a big way—this ultra-romantic accessory is the perfect pick for your wedding, and also for years to come. BY YELENA MOROZ ALPERT
PHOTOGRAPH BY DEVON JARVIS »

an imperial history

Long before rose gold shined on today's Hollywood stars, jewelers of 19th-century Europe and Russia were creating intricate 14-karat pieces that filled the jewelry boxes of aristocrats and royalty. "In Victorian England, rose gold was referred to as 'lover's gold,' making it a popular choice for engagement rings," says Jamie Cadwell Gage of LoveGold.com. In fact, Queen Victoria herself was a collector of the pink metal. Russian royalty swooned over it as well—Peter Carl Fabergé, one of the most notable goldsmiths of his time, created rose gold brooches likely worn by the Romanov Empresses. During World War II, the trend trickled down to everyday citizens and became just as big of a hit. "Since platinum was needed for military efforts, and not something as frivolous as jewelry, jewelers turned to copper—the metal that when alloyed with yellow gold makes rose gold," says Antoinette Matlins, gemologist and author of *Engagement & Wedding Rings: The Definitive Buying Guide for People in Love*. Since wearing a rose gold wedding ring reflected support for the war effort, they were all the rage during this era. When the war ended, rose gold fell out of favor as more precious metals such as yellow gold and platinum took the reigns again. That is until now.

a rosy outlook

When it comes to wearing rose gold, you can go all out and still look elegant or simply add a piece or two to give your style a certain *je ne sais quoi*. No matter how you wear it, this pink hue flatters everyone.

in the pink

Thanks to the revival that started with watches in the mid-2000s, everything's coming up rosy in jewelry these days. Brands like Rolex, Piaget and Michael Kors launched collections with this pink metal and before long, the peachy sheen was on everyone's wrists. Retailers caught wind of the emerging trend and soon began stocking up with other types of rosy jewelry too. Its popularity continued to climb as Tiffany & Co. brought the trend to fine jewelry with its Rubedo collection, and in September 2012, Blake Lively flashed her 7-carat diamond and rose gold engagement ring. "Requests for rose gold engagement rings surged after Ryan Reynolds proposed," says Nicole Wegman, engagement ring specialist for Ring Concierge. But it's not just engagement rings; take one look at all the rose-gold-clad celebs at this year's award shows and there's no doubt that pink is the new platinum. "Rose gold is pretty, super-feminine and complements many skin tones," says Jennifer Heebner, senior editor for *JCK Magazine*, a jewelry trade publication. "It was bound to become a staple for stylists everywhere." >>



metal manual

These are some other popular ring metals.

platinum

This metal is naturally white and is one of the purest precious metals, which means it won't change color and is hypoallergenic. It's known for its strength as well as being the most expensive of the metals.

white gold

This is a combination of yellow gold alloyed with white metals like nickel, palladium and zinc. It's extremely malleable and resistant to rust. White gold will eventually fade in color, but there's no rule on when you should replat. Some people replat once a year, while others never do.

titanium

This sturdy metal has a cool, gray finish or can be a polished black. It's as strong as steel and as weightless as aluminum, so it's a favorite choice for men who don't typically wear jewelry.

yellow gold

This naturally yellow metal gets combined with different metal alloys for added strength. The result is jewelry that's available in a rainbow of colors, including white, green and pink.

palladium

A lustrous silver-white metal, palladium is similar to platinum in that it won't change or tarnish over time. Palladium is also lightweight and less costly than the other precious metals. While it's naturally white, it has a darker, grayer tone than platinum.

ready for the romance

Need more convincing? We thought not. Now that you're ready to go for the (rose) gold, here are some things to consider as you shop for and style your pretty pink pieces. To start, keep in mind that you'll find rose gold in a range of pinks, from a darker reddish-pink to a pale pastel peach. The amount of copper used in the alloying process will determine the final hue of each piece. Whichever tone you choose, it will give off a soft and feminine feel and bring out blush tones in all skin types, making it the perfect neutral. No matter what, this pink hue is flattering on everyone. "Even men are asking for rose gold wedding bands," adds Wegman. Another great thing about rose gold is that it's allergen-free. Unlike white gold, which often contains nickel—one of the most common skin allergens—you won't have to worry about itchy fingers with rose gold. "This copper alloy won't cause negative reactions," says Matlins. It's also super-versatile and mixes well with a variety of gems and metals. Here's how to style it like a pro:

mix it with metals

Combining it with the rest of your jewelry is not only acceptable, but also encouraged. "Rose gold jewelry is probably the easiest to blend with other pieces," says Ashley Bowen, a brand ambassador for Simon G. Jewelry. So instead of matching everything, create a story with your jewelry. While combining yellow, rose and white gold à la Cartier's iconic Trinity ring is a stylish choice, this alloy is most flattering when paired with white metals. "A rose gold wedding band goes beautifully with a platinum engagement ring," says Wegman. Numerous bridal collections, including Kirk Kara and Mark Patterson, unite the two metals to highlight design elements in a unique way. "Brides appreciate styles with two-tone details because it feels different from what their friends have," says Grace Terezian, creative director of Kirk Kara.

pair it with gems

Whether you're shopping for an engagement ring or a statement piece to wear down the aisle, rose gold is especially gorgeous with pink gemstones like morganite, sapphire, topaz, tourmaline and kunzite. Another way to go is with black or champagne diamonds. Either one will create a sophisticated look and accent rose gold beautifully. Newer fashion collections incorporate rose gold with both white and champagne-colored pavé diamonds for a modern textural effect. Set on a traditional sparkler? You're in luck. A diamond center stone in a platinum setting not only makes the gem look whiter, but when paired with a rose gold band, the contrast is beautiful.

keeping things rosy

Integrating this lovely pink metal into your wedding jewelry is actually an investment you'll be able to use long after the last dance. It's ideal for everyday wear. But to help retain its luster for decades to come, you'll want to give it some TLC. "If you wear gold daily, clean it every three to four months," says Gage. Using a soft chamois cloth, polish the metal in circles so the cleaning liquid covers the entire surface of the piece. Wipe off any remaining liquid with a dry cloth. Don't feel like doing it yourself? Ask your jeweler. He's likely to offer a free cleaning if you stop in. It's also a good time to have him check the prongs around your diamond—a gold ring can lose its circle shape, which can compromise the stone's setting. And one last thing to note: The soft nature of gold, including the rose variety, makes it more susceptible to scratches, so store your pieces carefully, keeping each one separate.

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borrowing etiquette

Plan to ask for a jewelry loan? Follow these tips.

return it promptly

We're not saying you need to FedEx your mother-in-law her earrings the minute you step off the plane, but you should plan to get any borrowed pieces back to the owner no later than one week after you've returned home from your honeymoon.

give what you get

Did you receive the items in a gorgeous jewelry pouch? Then that's exactly what you should return them in when you're done. If you've somehow lost the original packaging, forget using a plastic bag. Only a container of equal or better quality will do.

be confident...

Do you have a good friend whose style you particularly admire? Don't be shy—go ahead and ask if she'd be willing to give you the loaner. Most family and close friends are honored to help a bride fulfill the "something borrowed" category.

...but don't push it

If you've asked a friend or relative and he or she seems standoffish, find another option. (Try RenttheRunway.com where you can borrow jewelry for as little as \$10.) There's no need to pressure anyone into doing something they feel uncomfortable about.

you break it, you buy it

You never know what could happen—a rowdy dance floor might lead to a broken earring. If the worst should happen and you break or lose the item, always offer to pay to replace it, even if the owner insists otherwise.