

He's with the band: Men want something with a different ring to it

BY CHANDRA ORR
Copley News Service

Grooms are bypassing basic bands in favor of alternative metals and cutting-edge designs when choosing their wedding rings. The trend now is toward individualized rings that make a statement.

"Overall, men are becoming much more bold when making a statement with their wedding bands and becoming more involved with making a choice," said Elizabeth Florence, executive director of the nonprofit Jewelry Information Center.

HEAVY METAL

The biggest trend in men's wedding bands is the switch from gold to platinum.

"The growth of platinum has just been phenomenal in the past 10 years," Florence said. "Forty percent of all brides and grooms are going for platinum."

"Part of that has just been consumer education about platinum. It is the rarest of all precious metals and the most durable and the hardest, which makes it ideal for setting precious gemstones," she said.

Because it is the hardest metal available, platinum also resists scratches and dents and as a bonus it's hypoallergenic, which works well for those sensitive to gold, she said.

Frank Proctor, vice president of Platinum Guild

International USA, agrees that platinum's durability and strength are the main catalysts behind the metal's surge in popularity.

"You can scratch the metal and the metal is still on the surface — you don't lose the metal, so your ring is going to look the same 50 years from now," he said.

"Men want a symbol that will last a lifetime and that's what platinum is. It's not going to wear down," he said. "It's the purest, rarest, most precious metal. What better metal to celebrate the rarity and purity of that commitment?"

BIGGER AND BOLDER

Regardless of the metal, men's wedding bands are getting bigger and bolder.

"Men's rings are bolder in scale as well as style," Florence said. "Instead of plain gold or plain platinum bands, we're seeing a lot more attention to detail in terms of engraving and different finishes."

The wider, more modern bands — ranging from 4 to 7 millimeters in width — on the market today feature antique-looking satin finishes, industrial-inspired matte finishes and sleek, high-polish finishes, according to Florence.

Milgrain and hammered finishes add depth as well as individuality to a ring.

Milgrain creates the appearance of a tiny rope or little

beads along the edges of the ring. Hammering entails just that — striking the ring's surface with a tiny hammer to create a mottled, bumpy appearance.

"The good thing about finishes is that a ring doesn't have to be stuck with one finish. The finish can be removed and redone later, except with hammering," Florence said.

DESIGN TIME

"Another major trend is more detail on the ring, like scrollwork or filigree or engraving with intricate patterns — sort of borrowing designs from earlier time periods with a nod to Edwardian, Victorian and art deco themes. It doesn't look feminine. It's still very masculine."

"We're also seeing a lot of fluid-looking, almost sculptural designs, and clean lines and geometric looks," Florence said.

The braided look is also growing in popularity, according to Proctor. Simpler rings look like three or more pieces of metal have been woven together, while more intricate designs incorporate intricate engraving to create the appearance of rope that has been braided. The most intricate designs replicate woven mesh.

"You're seeing a hand-carved look with a lot of attention to detail which has not really been there in the past,"

Proctor said.

CUTTING EDGE

The most cutting-edge trend in men's rings melds platinum and rubber for a sleek, modern, industrial look — and a truly unconventional wedding band.

"People are looking for new and exciting things," Proctor said. "Some men prefer the traditional look, but some people want something new, something interesting, something different. It makes a statement. It's not a traditional piece."

Men are also opting for different gems set in platinum, Proctor said.

"You're seeing men experiment more with color. Men are

starting to experiment more with diamonds in their bands and with colored stones as well," he said.

With so many options available for grooms, individuality is truly the hottest trend of the moment.

"Couples are really showing the groom's individuality — and a departure from tradition," Florence said. "But, because this is hopefully going to be worn every day for the rest of this man's life, it's important to remember to think timeless, not trendy."

For more information on men's wedding bands, log on to www.jewelryinfo.org or www.preciousplatinum.com

Bridal Expressions



**Big City Selection That You Want.
Small Town Service That You Deserve.**

- ♥ Wedding Gowns
- ♥ All Occasions Gowns
- ♥ Bridesmaids Gowns
- ♥ Lingerie
- ♥ Tuxedo Rental
- ♥ Shoes & Dye
- ♥ Mother of Wedding
- ♥ Jewelry

888-775-5003

Downtown Cadillac

www.bridalexpressions.net



**NEED A
MINISTER?**
at
Your Special Location in
northwest Lower Michigan
**Discovery Onsite
Ministries**
Contact: **Rev. Donaldson**
701 Division
East Jordan, MI
Phone **231-536-7390**

br1/14 733885

*Remember how you felt,
not just how you looked.*

**Karen Walker
Photography**
your professional imaging team

800-662-1602

www.KarenWalkerPhotography.com

1/14.733873.br