

COCKTAILS, ANYONE?

Shake up your style this holiday season



Martini cocktail rings by Rodney Rayner

With party season just around the corner, the timing couldn't be more perfect to try that most bold and audacious of baubles: the cocktail ring. If you love the limelight, an over-the-top ring will keep you shining strong all evening long. If you're more naturally on the quiet side, a cocktail ring is a terrific conversation starter. Just slip one on, stand up tall, and get ready to sparkle.

The first women to wear these eye-popping attention-getters were the flappers of the 1920s, a time when rouge was the rage, fringe shimmied with abandon, and actual cocktails were near impossible to come by. In most cities, the only place to get them was at illegal cocktail parties accessed by secret passwords and organized by questionable or even unknown hosts (probably best left that way). Fashion during the 1920s dictated that proper

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ladies wore small, delicate pieces of jewelry. Demure may have been *de rigueur*, but not so for the free-wheeling flappers, who flouted both the fashion and the drinking laws of their time. Flamboyant rings made of sassy imitation glass were a perfect compliment to long strands of beads that swung down below rouged kneecaps.

Some people will try to tell you that there are “rules” to follow when you wear a cocktail ring. “Cocktail rings only look good on large hands,” they’ll say, or: “Never let a cocktail ring extend past the bottom of your first knuckle.” Please, don’t listen to this well-intentioned but misguided advice. It completely misses the point, as the flappers themselves would tell you. Or more likely they’d just blow smoke rings in your general direction.

Cocktail rings are to be flaunted, to catch and dazzle the eye, to serve as a megaphone for your hand when you’re making an important (and it will be) point. And of course,

they look especially good when delivering a sparkling martini or glass of bubbling champagne to your lips in the glow of the setting sun.

A special cocktail ring will remind you of stories as juicy as its gems. The night you and your best girlfriends swore that what happens on the cruise ship *stays* on the cruise ship. The New Year’s Eve at Times Square when you wore that little sequined number that nearly stopped the clock. And how can you ever forget the night you met *him*, and how devastating he looked in his tux while splashing barefoot through the surf?

Cocktail rings have never gone out of style, but they’ve certainly changed over the years. During the


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Clockwise from top: Diamond and carnelian ring from Paloma Picasso’s Zellige Collection, courtesy of Tiffany & Co.; fancy-cut amethyst and diamond ring from Haggai; fancy blue aquamarine and diamond ring from Image Inc.



1940s and 50s, as the nation launched into celebration after World War II, these rings had huge, high-end center stones weighing 8 to 10 carats or more. Nowadays center stones come in a wider range of sizes and are offered in both precious and semi-precious gems. Often the center stone is accented with smaller, complimentary gems that enhance, but don't detract from, the center stone's singular stand-out glamour. Precious stones are often mixed with semi-precious, too, and rings are designed with gems set on several levels, giving them a 3-dimensional effect.

A good cocktail ring will add a splash of glamour to even the simplest outfits. Increasingly, they're the right choice to start a day as well as end the night. Think outside the little black dress: wear a cool blue aquamarine with a white tee and jeans for a stroll along the beach, or a candy-pink tourmaline with a pretty sundress for a Saturday picnic in the park. A luscious pearl accented with tiny diamonds is perfect for a bridal shower or Sunday brunch. For nighttime drama, nothing matches the richness of lush red garnet, the bottomless blue of a sapphire, or the warm honey glow of topaz.

So this holiday season, shake up your style, stir your senses, serve it up with a twist, and keep the spotlight on the rocks. 

Bottoms up: South Sea pearl, diamond, and pink sapphire Oceania ring from [Autore USA](#); platinum and diamond Namibia tourmaline cocktail ring by [Erica Courtney](#); Hydrangea ring from [Zaffiro](#); Paloma Picasso's Sugar Stack ring, courtesy of [Tiffany & Co.](#)