

Putting a (Beautiful and Budget-Friendly) Ring on It

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January 11, 2017

By: Madeleine Deliee

Since you've decided to take the plunge and get engaged, the next step is often a decision only slightly less fraught: What kind of ring? Modern or vintage? Elaborate or minimalist? Solitaire or multi-stone band? And that's not even getting into the issues of budget (three months' salary or not-on-your-life?) or ethics (socially responsible or rolling the dice?). Fortunately, not all choices have to be either/or. Not only are the following rings under \$500, they don't look like they're on the, ahem, less-expensive side of things *and* are ethically produced. So now you can turn your attention to other, more pressing matters—like finding a venue that isn't going to require you to mortgage your firstborn child.



credit: [Catbird NYC](#)

The Sleeping Beauty Ring by [Catbird](#) features a 14k gold band (white, yellow, or rose) and .18 ct of rose cut white (conflict-free) diamonds. Diamonds are the birthstone for April and symbolize love, prosperity, and endurance. The ring is handmade in Brooklyn and retails for \$438.



credit: [Catbird NYC](#)

The Opal Teardrop Ring by [Catbird](#) has a 14k gold band and an Australian stone. Opals are the birthstone for October and symbolize devotion, fidelity, and long life. The ring is handmade in Brooklyn and retails for \$198.

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credit: [Catbird NYC](#)

The Twinkle Diamond Ring by N+A has a 14k yellow gold band and .04 ct. of diamonds. It is handmade in New York City and retails for \$483. N+A uses only conflict-free diamonds.



credit: N+A New York

The Seven Ruby Ring by N+A has a 14k yellow gold band and a total of .04ct weight of rubies. Rubies are the birthstone for July and symbolize preciousness, wisdom, and health. The same ring is also available with sapphires. It is handmade in New York City and retails for \$391. N+A uses ethically sourced materials.



credit: [Vrai & Oro](#)

The Square Diamond Stacking Pair by [Vrai & Oro](#) is a unique take on the traditional ring. Featuring a black and a white diamond (each .10 carat) that is bezel-set on a 14k gold band, these rings are handmade in Los Angeles and retail for \$490 (pair). Vrai & Oro guarantees that their stones "are at least G-H color + SI2 quality" and are conflict-free.



credit: W Wake

The Tonal Three Step Triangle Ring by WWake has two gold band options and three pale blue sapphires. The piece also has what the maker calls a "personal diamond," which is a small pave included at the bottom of the triangle. Sapphires are the birthstone for September and symbolize sincerity and faithfulness. The ring is handmade in New York. Band options are \$453 (14k yellow gold) or \$476 (rose gold).



credit: [Jennie Kwon Designs](#)

The Magic Sapphire Eye Ring by [Jennie Kwon Designs](#) features a 3.5 mm diamond-cut, bezel-set stone and a 14k gold band. The ring is handmade in Los Angeles and it retails for \$415.



credit: [Jennie Kwon Designs](#)

The Emerald Mini Deco Point Ring by [Jennie Kwon Designs](#) features a 2 mm emerald with a 1.2 mm white diamond on either side and three 14k gold band options (white, rose, and yellow). Emeralds are the birthstone for May and symbolize mature love, healing, and balance. The ring is handmade in Los Angeles and retails for \$395.

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