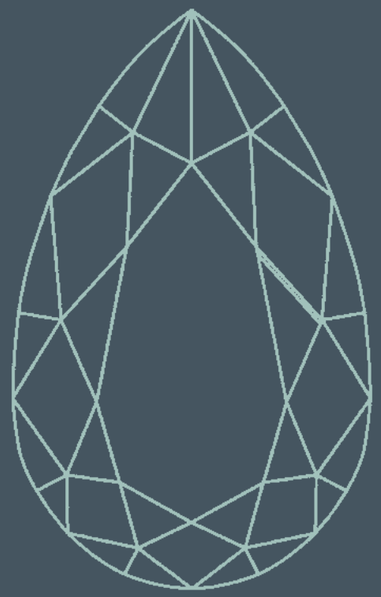
GETTING IN SHAPE

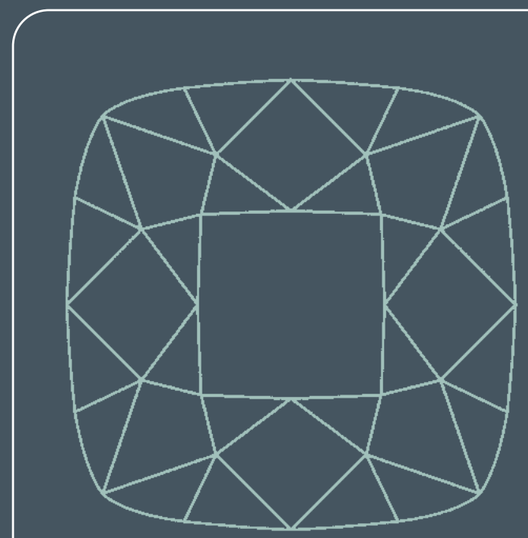
Here are six of the hottest diamond cuts for retailers right now.

By Kate Matthams Spencer

PEAR

Combining round brilliant and marquise cuts into a teardrop shape, the pear is a distinctive fancy cut with an elegant taper that lends itself to pendants and earrings. Paris-based jewelry house Messika has noticed increased traction in this shape recently, reporting strong demand for it in fine diamond jewelry and "a growing segment in men's jewelry. For us, pears are well-liked and recognizable."

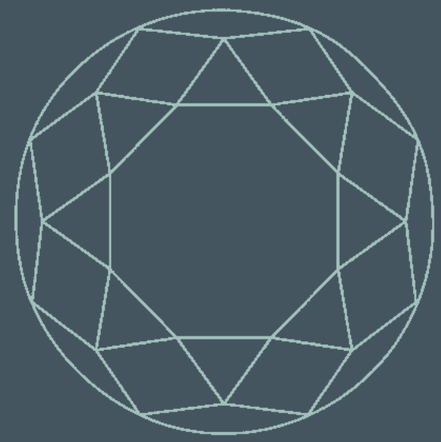




CUSHION

Heritage diamond specialist Baunat has seen an uptick in sales of fancy cuts to the US in recent years, with the cushion leading the charge among well-informed clients. This square cut with rounded corners and large facets is known for its fire and its vintage feel, making it a popular choice for diamond commitment rings.

"Elongated cushion cuts have been in high demand over the last six months. It's a classic shape with originality"



ROUND BRILLIANT

The world's most popular diamond cut, the round brilliant shines as a solitaire but is often overlooked outside the engagement market in favor of fancy shapes. That said, round brilliants are currently in the jewelry spotlight for bringing balance to mixed-stone designs. "I love creating patterns with diamonds and mixing up shapes," says Nancy Newberg of Nancy Newberg Jewelry. "Round-cut diamonds are always an important part of this mix, as they give softness."

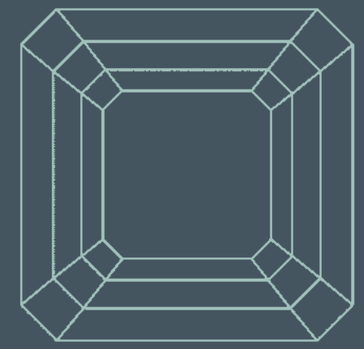
OLD CUT

Old cuts are antique diamonds cut without modern precision tools. The less-structured faceting makes for an "imperfect beauty," according to Ellis Mhairi Cameron, whose eponymous brand just launched a collection in New York featuring this cut. The client response was strong, she relates: "The collection has already sold well with my US stockists, as it fits their clients' brief for something classic with a twist, featuring more ethically sourced diamonds."



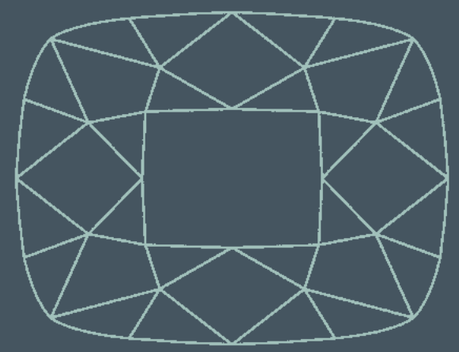
RECTANGULAR CUSHION

The rectangular cushion is a more unusual, elongated version of the classic cushion diamond. "Elongated cushion cuts have been in high demand over the last six months," says New York-based jewelry designer Shahla Karimi. "It's a classic shape with originality; [it] stands out in a sea of oval and emerald-cut engagement rings. It's also quite versatile, as it works well not only as a solitaire, but in two-stone, three-stone and cluster rings."



ASSCHER

An Art Deco favorite, this square cut with facets in a distinctive X shape originated in 1902, when the Asscher family pioneered it in The Netherlands. Minimalist jeweler Grace Lee reports a rise in Asscher requests. While the cut often has pavé accent stones, her unembellished Asscher-cut bezel ring "is one of our most popular bridal styles."



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