

JewelSmiths

Jewelry Designing Guide

Design Tip 1.

Try to keep your design idea to as few as possible. Too many designs or styles will only confuse your selection of a creative piece. Start out with a grouping of like-kind designs, such as nugget, free form, traditional etc... Then start limiting them down to three basic designs.

Design Tip 2.

Always start with a major center gemstone first. The center attraction is the point where all attention is drawn. Whether it's a diamond or colored gemstone doesn't matter, just select the one major focal point that the eye will be drawn to.

Design Tip 3.

Never try to use two or more gemstones center pieces. The design will become too busy and will lose its purpose. Same size center stones will not complement each other, but instead will make it difficult to establish balance. Select the stone that will bring out brilliance and balance and it will.

Design Tip 4.

Size and shape doesn't always matter although emerald cuts are somewhat difficult, but not impossible to design around. Usually a good rule of thumb is anything over .25 carat in rounds, marquise, pear and ovals are best for overall designing.

Design Tip 5.

I'm sure all of you have heard of the "KISS" method to everything. This method also applies to creative designs, "keeping it simple" will keep the design from becoming cluttered or busy. The less you set on your design the better. The mind's eye likes to seek out balance, so less is actually more.



Design Tip 6.

Before you start selecting a design, it's best to look for ideas through jewelry or fashion magazines, different jewelry stores, internet jewelry sites or any other avenue that can offer up ideas. Your ideas start from something already imbedded in your mind. Your ideas are a collection of experiences. Sights, sounds and colors all brought together can help you create a wonderful design. Be patient and start collecting ideas, all of our designers start their careers by looking at hundreds and hundreds of jewelry designing catalogs, this is how they build their creative ability.



Design Tip 7.

There are three elements that go into a great designer piece; first - center gemstone; second - the mounting design; thirdly - the accent gemstones or finishes. The center gemstone should be selected first so that all the other pieces can take shape. The mounting design should take the shape of the stone so that continuity and form is established. Thirdly, the accent of smaller gemstones or a finish around the mounting will tie everything together to create a special piece. The design process is very basic and once established then higher or advanced techniques can be added.

Design Tip 8.

The mounting should take on the shape of your center stone and your creative tastes. Look for shapes that fit with your center stone, setting your stone either in the center or off center of the mounting. Remember that center stones do not have to fit exactly in the center of a mounting to work. Off center balancing is done all the time with great results, just look at pieces in magazines or books. If your mounting fits both those categories you will have a great design.



Design Tip 9.

Accent stones or finishes should allow the center gemstone to radiate over the accent finish. This finish should not become too busy or cover a large portion of the ring as such overwhelming accent will drown out the center stone. Try to go for balance in percentages - 50% center stone; 30% mounting design; 20% accent finishes. Remember these percentages are estimates, be creative, take some risks but always go for balance.

Design Tip 10.

Color of precious metal is somewhat important because certain metal colors go better with certain gemstone colors. A good example is white or blue colored gemstones attain a better radiance in white metals versus yellow metals. This example is not always the case in all designs, in fact many designs are attaining great color combinations through different techniques. Before you start selecting, it's best to consult a professional designer on color combinations and techniques.



Design Tip 11.

Select a design style that fits your personality and tastes. Select a design that works with you, not against you. The piece should make a statement you can live with. If you are not into large swirling free form rings don't try to make it work. If you have a large or fancy cut gemstone, try to develop your personality around it. You can still develop a creative design, using the above methods in establishing your likes and dislikes. Don't force something to work just because you want to purchase a design. One design can be created a hundred different ways, so be patient and go for your particular balance, not someone else's.



Design Tip 12.

Presentation and balance is what you should achieve from a piece. Ask yourself some simple questions to see if you are heading down the right path. Do all the elements go together - center stone, mounting and accents? Does it balance with your finger, neck, ear or wrist? How does it "talk or show " to others looking at it? Do the colors balance between gemstone and metal? Do they complement each other in the design?

Design Tip 13.

One of the most important aspects of a great design is planning. Planning allows you to control certain steps of the designing process. From the beginning to end, planning will allow you to stop or continue with the design at your pace, not theirs. If there is a problem with the process you can step back and work through the concern. Keeping the lines of communication open allows you to become comfortable with the design process every step of the way. Always remember, once a design is finished it is very difficult to alter.

Design Tip 14.

Another important step is locating a designer that can communicate with you on the design. This is very important because some designers like to design pieces they like, not what you like. A good designer can help you develop a design and consult with you on different settings or finishing techniques. It is very important that your designer has the ability to create using the fore mentioned steps. Without the basic concepts of designing you and your designer will develop a piece that belongs in mechanics illustrated, not on you. If you are in the early stages of designing give us a call or email us and one of our designers will answer any question you might have.

Design Tip 15.

As with any other technical profession, the designer that you select should have tools to aid in his/her presentation. These tools should be graphic, visual and come under two descriptions - manual and technical. The first relate to basic tools that help convey the design. Tools such as tweezers, display stones, measuring gauge, loop, colored pencils, drawing forms, waxes and mountings or pictures of mountings all help in bringing the idea to visual life. The second describes technical tools that require skill and imagination; this is a highly graphic designing computer. The computer allows the designer to put collective ideas onto a computer "canvas" and create the design, right in front of you. This technical innovation will become the standard for the future because it answers all of your designing concerns and draws up your finished piece in color.



Design Tip 16.

After the drawing is created and agreed on, the next step should be to design a "wax prototype" that can be put on to see if the design "fits" your design idea. This wax can be worn and gemstones can be displayed on it to give you a sense of proportion, balance and feel. The wax allows you to adjust, alter or change the design if you're not in harmony with the design. It is much easier to change a wax than to change a piece of hard precious metal. Never allow a designer to complete your design until you have entered into this wax phase. Most designing problems are encountered at this stage of the game, so insist that you have a wax prototype made first.

Design Tip 17.

The setting of all gemstones will be the next most important area of concern. This phase must be communicated to you visually not verbally. Not all setting work is the same and only a highly skilled goldsmith should be commissioned to do this area of work. Have the designer show you pictures, portfolios or physical designs on how the setting finish will look. The setting of stones around mounting is what completes the design allowing balance, texture and depth to come together.

Design Tip 18.

I have a saying about beautiful jewelry, "jewelry designers create beautiful jewelry for the eye, but not the body". Many pieces of glorious jewelry is great to look at but will not wear well over prolong periods of time. In our centers we see attractive designer pieces that were purchased less than three months before and the item needs extensive repair work. Always think of the wear factor when selecting a design. Designs should include thicker or slightly heavier mountings, hinges or links. All areas should be substantial and settings should be heavier or made of platinum or white gold (both are harder than yellow gold).

