

# Love Sparkles With Fine Jewelry For Valentine's Day

(NAPS)—“Love is all there is,” wrote poet Emily Dickinson. Well, not quite! There are diamonds, rubies, pearls; there is gold, silver, and platinum...the list goes on. Throughout history, fine jewelry has been a symbol of love, and what better time of the year to express one's love than on Valentine's Day.

According to the Jewelry Information Center, a nonprofit trade association based in New York City, Valentine's Day is the second largest jewelry-giving occasion of the year. Topping the list in a recent poll by *Romantic Homes* magazine, jewelry was voted “most romantic gift.”

This most romantic day of the year got its start in the fourth century B.C. when Romans celebrated the feast of Lupercal. A rite of passage for young men, lore has it that they would draw the names of local ladies in a lottery. Throughout the year, the couples would exchange love letters, and spend time getting to know one another.

In the ensuing centuries, love and its celebration became more codified, with jewelry as the accepted symbol of two people's adoration and commitment to each other. Rings are “indisputably the symbol of love,” says Elizabeth Florence, Director of the Jewelry Information Center. “The shape of a ring is a never-ending circle, and the tradition of diamond rings has stood the test of time. They are as fashion-proof as love itself.”

The Pharaohs of Egypt are credited with being the first to use a ring in the form of a circular band to symbolize eternity. The world's first lovers, dressed in animal skins and living in caves, most likely blessed their unions with rings of bone, plaited grass, and amber. Later, steel, ivory, and gold were used.

While the Egyptians did incorporate diamonds into their jewelry, it wasn't until 1477 that the gem became part of the wedding ritual. Thanks to the decree that mandated Archduke Maximilian of Austria to “have a ring set with a diamond,” for Mary of Burgundy, at least 75 percent of today's brides



Heart pendant from Bailey, Banks, and Biddle



**Carry on tradition, and capture her heart with a piece of fine jewelry this Valentine's Day. Fine jewelry gifts come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and prices from accessible to extravagant, and are as fashion-proof as love itself.**

joyously receive an engagement ring glittering with a diamond, the hardest and most enduring substance known to man. As authors Antoinette Matlins and Antonio Bonanno state in their book, *Engagement and Wedding Rings*, “When today's bride receives her engagement and wedding rings, she...will become part of a tradition that has spanned centuries.”

Diana Vreeland, who was editor-in-chief of *Vogue* magazine for many years, spoke passionately about diamonds, “It's love. They almost make me cry. When I see diamonds on a little velvet pillow...I die.”

Buying a gift of fine jewelry can be exciting, but make sure you are an informed shopper. The first step in selecting your Valentine's gift, be it an engagement ring or a simple heart shaped locket, is to shop at a professional jeweler. Look for a jeweler who is a member of a professional trade association such as Jewelers of America, which requires high ethical standards of its members and provides them with ongoing education.

For more information on fine jewelry and to find a list of professional jewelers near you, visit the Jewelry Information Center's Web site at [www.jewelryinfo.org](http://www.jewelryinfo.org).