



## CELEBRITY ENGAGEMENT RINGS: JEWELRY DESIGNER NEIL LANE DISHES ON DESIGNING FOR THE STARS

**By: Stefani Forster**

“Years ago, a guy used to buy a ring for a girl without consulting her — those days are over,” says Neil Lane, jewelry designer to the stars.

He’s a Hollywood veteran who has been in the business of love and diamonds for more than 20 years.

From Jessica Simpson to Miley Cyrus to Nicole Richie, the Brooklyn-born craftsman has designed every kind of ring imaginable — princess, cushion, square cut, marquise, emerald, you name it — for some of the world’s most glamorous and choosy clients (including many of the rings seen on *The Bachelor!*).

Over the years, Neil has noticed a few trends. More than ever, engagement rings are a fashion statement — especially for their celebrity wearers, who always want to be a step ahead of the style curve with a truly “unique” sparkler.

“At the end of the day, people just want to have a beautiful ring that feels special. It’s the symbolism of the unity, of the affection, of the love,” says Neil. “It’s a really bonding thing, and I love being a part of it!”

Read on for Neil’s stories behind some of the world’s most famous and most photographed engagement rings.





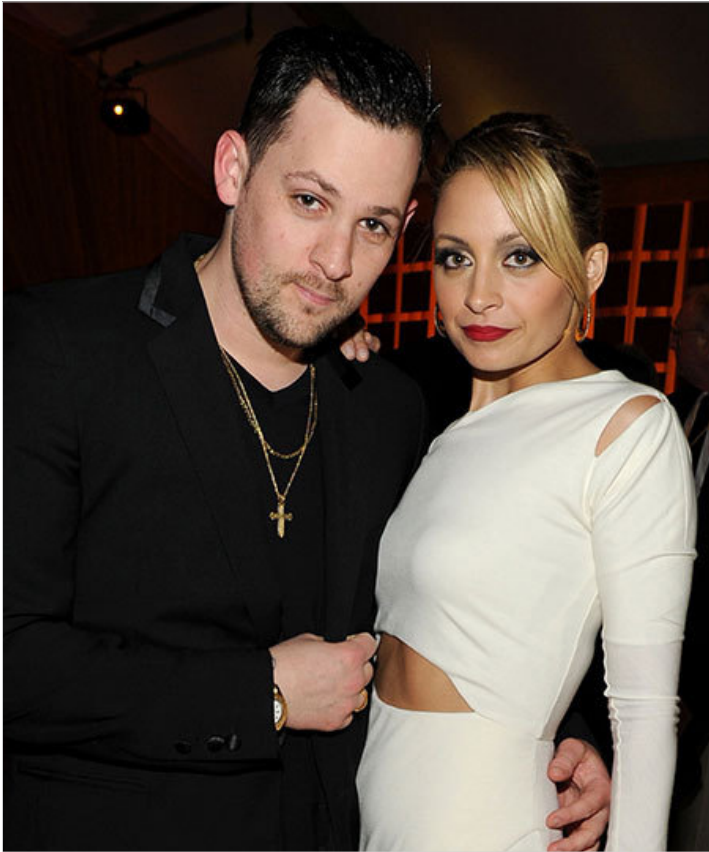
## JESSICA SIMPSON & ERIC JOHNSON:

"[Jessica's] engagement ring is a central ruby with two pear shapes on the side, which I did a few years ago. Creating the wedding band to go with it was more difficult. She's from Texas. She likes that sparkle. She likes that bling. So I had to make a wedding band that would go with the engagement ring. We ended up using marquise shapes and round diamonds. I did it in gold and I also added a rose colour to it to give it some softness. Finally, I also did etchings in the ring to give it a romantic, old-fashioned feel. She loved it. But that was a work in progress – it didn't happen overnight."



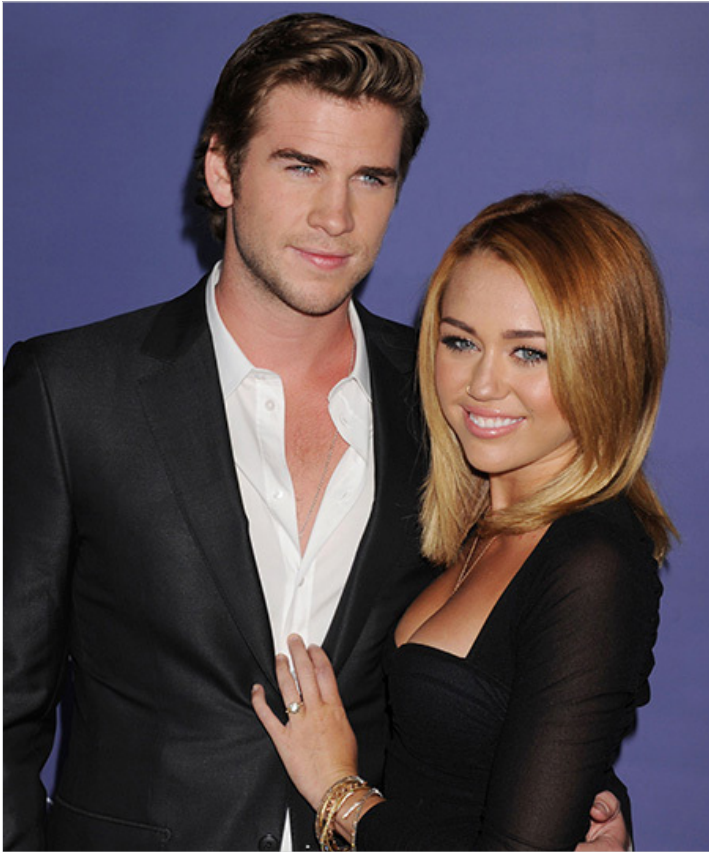
## PORTIA DE ROSSI & ELLEN DEGENERES:

“I have to tell you a funny story. When I first met Portia, she said to me that she’s always dreamed of getting a Neil Lane ring. Even before she met Ellen – it was kind of crazy! So designing that ring, I wanted to do something different. I took a marquise diamond and I turned it sideways. Then I added all these little details to make it really chic. I added pink little diamonds to it to make it really feminine. Ellen surprised her and she loved it. I remember the first time they walked a red carpet afterwards, and she had her hand up the whole time, showing it off to the world.”



## NICOLE RICHIE & JOEL MADDEN:

“Nicole is a little bit sassy. She didn’t want a simple princess cut. She really wanted something different, and her ring got a lot of attention because it was so different. I remember going up to the house and making sketches and drawings – I had samples and she loved the idea of having a central diamond, a round one, with a space and an octagonal frame around it. She is a very petite girl, so her ring looks gigantic when she wears it! I’ve never done another one like that. It was a really cool ring.”



## MILEY CYRUS & LIAM HEMSWORTH:

"I got more attention from Miley Cyrus than anything I've ever done – from Angelina Jolie to Madonna. It was a pretty romantic ring. Liam loved the idea of gold, and this ring was the best I could deliver. I created it like it was from 1880s France. It had these amazing cushion stones, gold scrollwork and was sprinkled with little diamonds. They both loved it. I make these jewels with a lot of love and time – what happens down the line afterwards, that's between them!"



## BRITNEY SPEARS & JASON CHATWICK:

“This one was so sweet! Jason agonized about it. I had been working on the design for a couple of months, while Britney was on tour, and I would get these calls from Jason at 3 o’clock in the morning to talk about the ring. I was sending him designs back and forth. I always listen to the guy first before I start designing, because I love hearing how these guys feel about their girlfriends. Jason just kept on saying, “She’s my princess,” so I thought, “Ok, I’m going to make him a princess ring!” It was a very classic, round diamond, but we did a lot of scroll work and drapery on the side, so you could almost picture a fairy princess coming out in a white gown wearing that ring.”



## CHRISTINA APPEGATE & MARTYN LE NOBLE:

"Now this was a challenge. She's got this rock and roll husband and you wouldn't think it, but she's kind of rock and roll herself! We ended up making a ring that fits in with a sleeve and comes together, so you can take it apart. She can dress it up and dress it down. We gave it a whole Victorian-England vibe."



## EMILY BLUNT & JOHN KRASINSKI:

"This one was quite secretive. They're a very private couple and John totally surprised her on the ring. He wanted something really romantic. And Emily, she's just such an elegant girl. It had to have a vintage vibe and it had to have detail. It was diamond and platinum – and I don't like using the word simple because it's never simple – but it was simply elegant."





## PAUL MCCARTNEY & NANCY SHEVELL:

"That was a big deal, oh my god! Being able to work with Sir Paul McCartney was like, 'wow.' That's definitely one of the highlights. He was so thoughtful, so romantic. Being this amazing rock and roller, the ring had to have a little bit of edge, so I gave it some black onyx on the sides. It was a round diamond, pretty large, four or five carats. The black against the white diamond gave it a little jazz-age feel, like from the 1920s."



## GUY RITCHIE & JACQUI AINSLEY:

"I've known Guy forever. He kept saying, 'I want to get a ring, I want to get a ring,' and I'd say, 'What kind?' and he'd say, 'I don't know!' We went back and forth like that for a while. We ended up choosing a cushion diamond with tiny little rows of diamonds around it – sparkle, sparkle, sparkle! I remember seeing Jacqui the following week and she couldn't take her eyes off the ring. Everybody was talking to her and she wasn't looking at them, she was just looking at her ring! And Guy was so proud. He was so happy to give her this beautiful ring."



## ANDI DORFMAN & JOSH MURRAY:

“I’ve never done an oval diamond before for ‘The Bachelor.’ They’re usually a lot of cushions, some emerald cuts. It’s not always easy to get to know these people in a short period of time, but I started to understand who Andi is and her femininity - and Josh just saw her as the cat’s meow. He was totally smitten from the first day he saw her. I wanted to do something really different, a nice feminine ring that wasn’t round. So I designed an oval. It was soft and romantic, like back to the Edwardian period in Paris in the 1900s. I could imagine him getting on one knee and proposing to her with it.”