

ESSENTIAL GUIDE  
TO  
BESPOKE  
JEWELLERY



*what you need to know when ordering bespoke jewellery*

# THE INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

*Everyone deserves to have a unique piece of jewellery.*

Creating a bespoke piece of jewellery can take a while, from the first stages of developing and agreeing a design to the process of making. Before you embark upon this process, it is important that you know for sure that this is what you really want. If it is, then you need to make sure that you have the right designer.

You need to feel that you are a good match for each other and that you have a good rapport, someone who really understands what you are looking for, listens to your feedback and acts upon it. It's a good idea to meet in person or to have a video call, but even with just messaging and emails you can get a good idea as to whether you have the right match for you.

chemistry. It is crucial that you both feel comfortable with each other and keep a good line of communication. You both need to expect a fair level of flexibility. As the client, sometimes you need to accept a little steering from the designer - after all, they have made many pieces and are best placed to know whether a detail is technically possible or perhaps, whether it



*you need to make sure that you have the right designer*

is prudent to use a certain shape or type of gemstone. For example, stones that are less hard should not be selected for an engagement ring which will get a lot of wear and tear and will potentially be exposed to detergents, cosmetics etc. On the other hand, the designer needs to keep an open mind on the design and be prepared to consider a different option without seeing feedback as criticism.

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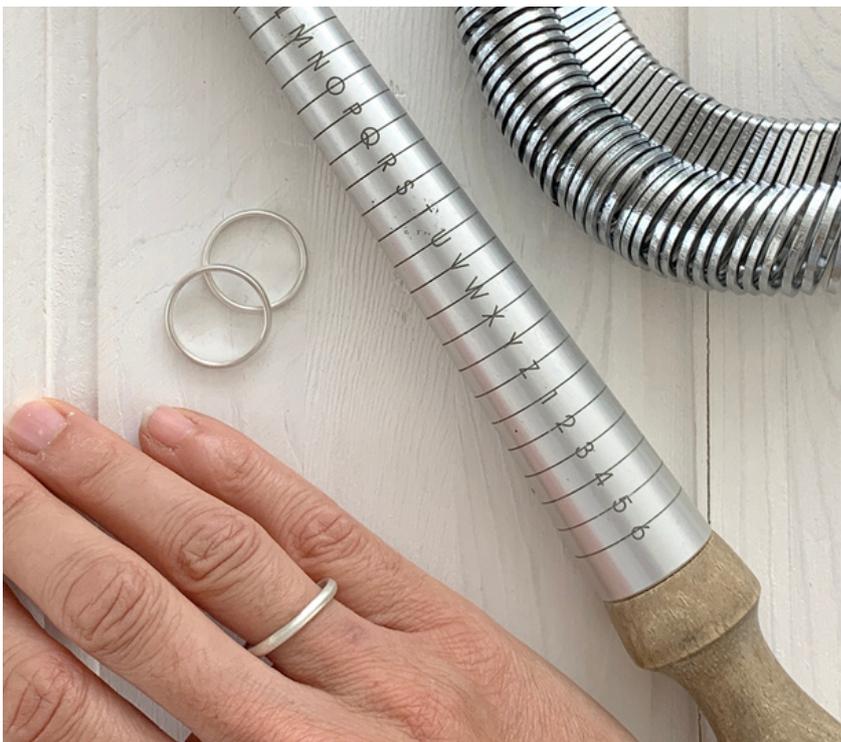
# 1 - SIZE

*Getting the size right is key.*

Whether you are figuring out the ring size, the size or carat weight of a gemstone, or the thickness of a wedding band, you need to have a good idea as to what you want. Do you already know your size? Bear in mind that there are different sizing scales in use in different parts of the world. There are useful conversion tables that you can use to

check your size, but on items where the tiniest variation makes a huge difference - such as rings - there is still scope for the size to be out. I have a few solutions to this dilemma: I usually ask if you have a ring that you know fits you perfectly (as long as it's going to be worn on the same finger), you can send this over to me as a reference point.

If this is not possible, once you have checked your ring size using the printable sheet I send to you, I make 2 to 3 simple rings in consecutive half sizes for you to try on. Then the one you prefer will be used as the size template when making your ring.



*there are different sizing scales in use in different parts of the world.*



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## 2 - BUDGET

*You need to be honest with yourself and the designer that you commission about your budget...*

... and communicate this clearly at the outset. When I'm having the first conversation with my client, I do at some stage ask what the client's budget is. There is no judgement on my part, or any differentiation in my mind, between a customer that has a much bigger wallet and one who has not. I adore each and every customer who has chosen to employ me, who has commissioned me to create something special and unique. Once I know the key points on my customer's requirements, I go through a detailed process of checking metal prices, estimating metal usage on the proposed design and reaching out to my extended network of gem dealers to pull together a range of options. With the help of a spreadsheet, I can then work up different combinations of options and the resulting costs. This allows me to perhaps go up a notch in diamond size, or down a notch in choice of metal, and see what price comes out of the formula.



What you need to bear in mind is that you are employing a skilled designer who is providing her expertise, years of accumulated knowledge as well as a little black book of other specialist craftsmen and suppliers from across the globe. You will not only be paying for the privilege of gaining access to all of these, but also for the time, labour and business costs of someone working in safe and ethical conditions in the developed world.

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## 3 - GEMSTONE AND METAL

*Just as you need to be realistic about your budget, so you should also be realistic about your choice of stone or metal.*



Do you already know which gemstone and metal you would like? Just as you need to be realistic about your budget, so you should also be realistic about your choice of stone or metal. If you have set your heart on a diamond but have a limited budget, you need to be realistic about the size and other characteristics of the stone. There are, however, tricks up a designer's sleeve to try and make your dreams come true.

You could look into having a lab grown diamond (I am a huge fan) which gives you a significant upgrade on size, colour, cut etc compared to a mined diamond. Alternatively, you might be able to get a larger stone which is lower

*There are, tricks up a designer's sleeve to try and make your dreams come true.*

down the colour grading, if you choose to have the ring in yellow gold, for example, where the colour might not jar as it would on white gold or platinum. Alternatively, if you are more set on having a big rock, moissanite is a great alternative to diamonds. Whether you use a diamond or moissanite, I would strongly recommend that you choose a certified stone as this will give you detailed information about the quality and characteristics of the stone

and confidence that it will have great clarity, colour and cut. Nowadays, it is quite common to have a coloured gemstone as an engagement ring - sapphires, tourmalines and many other stones - irrespective of price, based purely on personal taste or a desire to be unique. Depending on your budget, you can consider having the ring made in 9 carat, 14 carat or 18 carat gold, or in platinum. The carat number in gold refers to the proportion of gold in the metal alloy. The higher the number, the greater will be the amount of gold. If you have a more limited budget, you can go down on the gold from, say, 18 to 14 carat gold and use the saving towards a bigger or better quality diamond.

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## 4 - THE DESIGN

*Creating a bespoke piece is a collaborative process.*



Do you have a specific design in mind or do you want to give the maker a great deal of artistic freedom? Creating a bespoke piece is a collaborative process. If you have a pretty precise idea, you need to be extremely clear with the artist and provide as much visual reference as possible.

Setting up a Pinterest board is a very useful tool where you can save lots of images and comment on each photo or sketch, indicating what you like or don't like about it.

But beware. No self-respecting maker will be prepared to copy someone else's work, but referring to

*beware - no self-respecting maker will be prepared to copy someone else's work*

photos is an easy way to illustrate what specifically you are after. With my twig ranges, I have a very organic design development process - I first go hunting for twigs with the right kind of thickness, texture and bud distribution in order to meet the client's expectations. In many cases, the first message I will get will be something like this: "I really like your cherry twig ring with the split branch on

one side, but can you make it in white gold instead of yellow, and I would prefer a freeform rose cut sapphire rather than the pear shape yellow diamond. Also, can you add some buds to that?". So what sounds like a simple tweak to an existing design quickly becomes a completely bespoke project. Moreover, each new project often involves a thorough survey of the gemstone world (local and international) for a gemstone with specific qualities that the customer would like.

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# 5 - TIMELINE

*A bespoke project takes a minimum of 6 weeks to design and make, but the initial stages are open-ended, dependent on client's timeline*

## INITIAL CONTACT | EARLY DESIGN STAGES

1

*Initial contact and conversations regarding design, budget and timing*

OPEN ENDED -  
DEPEDNS ON CLIENT

2

*Gemstone search, design development, Photoshop mockup and wax modelling*

OPEN ENDED -  
DEPEDNS ON CLIENT

3

*Refinement of design in wax, incorporating actual stone in the design*

OPEN ENDED -  
DEPEDNS ON CLIENT

## DETAILED DESIGN | COSTING | PLACING ORDER

4

*Product costing with options based on metal and gemstone choice*

OPEN ENDED -  
DEPEDNS ON CLIENT

5

*Production begins once order is placed and payment made by customer*

SEE CHART BELOW  
FOR PRODUCTION  
TIME

## PRODUCTION PHASE

**METAL CASTING**

1 WEEK

**PRODUCTION**

1-2 WEEKS

**STONE SETTING**

1 WEEK

**HALLMARKING**

1 DAY - 1 WEEK

**POLISH & PLATING**

2 DAYS - 2 WEEKS

**EXPRESS SHIPPING**

NEXT DAY - UP TO 1 WEEK IF  
CUSTOMS INVOLVED

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## PAYMENT

You can pay with most major credit cards, Apple Pay and Google Pay by placing an order on my website, [www.brandtsjewellery.co.uk](http://www.brandtsjewellery.co.uk) or by bacs transfer. You can also pay me via Paypal, or place an order on one of my other online shops such as Etsy or NotOnTheHighStreet.

## ETHICS & ENVIRONMENT

From the outset it has been my mission to build a business that respects our planet and has a minimal environmental impact as well as ensuring that all materials used in the production of my jewellery are mined and manufactured in safe conditions, without the use of forced or child labour. I am a registered user of Fairtrade Gold and all my cast components are 100% recycled (sterling silver and all gold alloys).

## SHIPPING

I provide free shipping on all sales on my website. Depending on value, I use different services. For high value fine jewellery I use fully insured express shipping services such as FedEx, DHL or similar. Please note that you are responsible for any local taxes, custom duties or other charges that may be payable in your country. I am unable to predict or advise on this. Whatever the price of the item you are buying, I will let you know what form of shipping is available.

## PACKAGING

Wherever possible, I use gift boxes made from recycled and recyclable cardboard, which are packed into recycled shipping boxes. For high value jewellery I currently use hinged white boxes that are not recyclable, but I am always on the lookout for a more sustainable alternative to these. You are free to request recyclable only packaging even for your most precious jewellery and I would be more than happy to leave out the hinged box.

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# PAST PROJECTS & TESTIMONIALS

"Thank you so much for the ring... it arrived yesterday! She absolutely loves it and it fits perfectly - so thank you so much for all the effort and skill that's gone into it."

Absolutely fell in love at first sight. They are so beautiful and I'm wearing them ever since : ) I really liked the packing, too. Made with so much love.

"Your beautiful bracelets arrived today and THEY ARE PERFECT!!!!"

"The ring is beautiful and the whole experience of personalizing it was so gratifying. Ayshe kept in touch answering questions, sending pictures, clarifying details and going out of her way to make it special. I can't recommend her highly enough."

"If anyone ever needs a beautifully crafted piece of custom jewellery, that's 100% personalised, emotionally crafted for its reason, created by talent, with a clear passion and love for what they do (listening and understanding the project at every step) and with the attention to detail / patience to be applauded!! Please look no further. One of a kind Jewellery!"

"Such real and lovely stones, so very carefully and beautifully made... And wonderful speedy service. Many, Many Thanks"

"Hands down aside from my children this is the best gift I've ever received"

"This purchase was custom made for me. My instructions were followed every step of the way to ensure we both agreed on the final result. My order arrived beautifully packaged and very quickly. Brandts are a company that I would recommend. Their customer service is first class."

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# OTHER PRODUCTS & SERVICES

BRIDESMAIDS &  
GROOMSMEN  
GIFTS



CLASSIC  
WEDDING BANDS  
FOR HIM & HER



ENGRAVING  
SERVICE



REPAIR AND  
REPURPOSING OF  
HEIRLOOM  
JEWELLERY

GEMSTONE  
TESTING &  
CERTIFICATION

RE-CUTTING &  
REPOLISHING OF  
HEIRLOOM GEMS

SOME OF THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY THIRD PARTIES

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## GET IN TOUCH

*Do you have a new (or old) piece of jewellery in mind and you don't know where to start? Just call or drop me a line I love bespoke projects, no matter how big or small!*

### PHONE

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### EMAIL

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### WEBSITE

[WWW.BRANDTSJEWELLERY.CO.UK](http://WWW.BRANDTSJEWELLERY.CO.UK)



## STAY CONNECTED

*I try to post most days on my social media accounts. It's the easiest way to keep up with what I'm getting up to in my studio and also what is inspiring me*



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