

Jackie Kennedy's Engagement Ring: History, Design, Cost & Why It Became Iconic



Jackie Kennedy's engagement ring is one of the most recognizable pieces of jewelry in American history. Given to Jacqueline Bouvier by John F. Kennedy in 1953, the ring broke away from the single-stone engagement ring tradition with an unusual pairing of an emerald and a diamond.

Created by the French jewelry house Van Cleef & Arpels, the original ring featured a **2.88-carat diamond** and a **2.84-carat emerald** arranged in a classic **toi et moi** design. The two gemstones sat side by side, creating a visual representation of two people coming together.

But the ring Jackie wore was not exactly the same throughout her life. Almost a decade after her marriage, she redesigned the piece, replacing its original baguette-diamond accents with more elaborate marquise-cut diamonds and additional round diamonds. That evolution is part of what makes her engagement

ring particularly interesting: it reflects both the jewelry style of the 1950s and Jackie's increasingly distinctive personal taste.

Jackie Kennedy's Engagement Ring at a Glance

Feature		Details	
Owner		Jacqueline Kennedy	
Fiancé		John F. Kennedy	
Engagement		1953	
Jewelry House		Van Cleef & Arpels	
Original	Center	Diamond and emerald	
Stones			
Diamond Weight		Approximately 2.88 carats	
Emerald Weight		Approximately 2.84 carats	
Original Style		Toi et moi	
Original	Accent	Tapered	baguette
Stones		diamonds	
Original Metal		Yellow gold and platinum	
Later Modification		Marquise	and round
		diamonds	
Design Character		Mid-century,	Art
		Deco-inspired	

The Story Behind Jackie Kennedy's Engagement Ring

John F. Kennedy proposed to Jacqueline Bouvier in 1953, and the couple announced their engagement that June. Historical records identify the engagement

ring as a Van Cleef & Arpels design containing a 2.88-carat diamond and an emerald.

Interestingly, Jackie did not immediately have a ring when the engagement was first announced. Contemporary accounts reported that she and Kennedy had looked at numerous rings, but she had not found one she liked.

The eventual choice was reportedly made by Kennedy's father, Joseph Kennedy, who selected the ring from Van Cleef & Arpels' Fifth Avenue store in New York with assistance from Hélène Arpels.

That detail adds an interesting layer to the story. The ring was not simply a conventional diamond selected from a catalog. It became a carefully chosen piece associated with one of the most prominent couples of the era. Jackie and John F. Kennedy married on September 12, 1953, in Newport, Rhode Island.

The Diamond and Emerald Combination

The original ring paired two gemstones of remarkably similar size. The diamond weighed approximately **2.88 carats**, while the emerald weighed approximately **2.84 carats**. Both were central to the design rather than treating the emerald as a secondary accent.

The diamond provided the brilliance traditionally associated with engagement rings, while the emerald introduced a strong green color and a distinctly different character.

This was a bold choice for the period. A traditional engagement ring generally placed the diamond at the center of attention. Jackie's ring instead gave a colored gemstone nearly equal visual importance. That decision helped make the ring recognizable even decades later.

The Diamond Details

The original ring's diamond is widely reported as weighing approximately **2.88 carats**. Sources describe it as an emerald-cut diamond, although some historical descriptions use broader terminology when discussing the square-cut appearance of

the original design. British Vogue describes both principal stones as emerald-cut, while other descriptions focus on their square geometry.

The emerald-cut diamond is particularly suited to the ring's sophisticated appearance because its elongated step-cut facets create a flatter, more architectural look than a brilliant-cut diamond. That geometry works naturally with the clean lines of the ring's original accent stones.

The Emerald Center Stone

The second major gemstone was an approximately **2.84-carat emerald**. The emerald gave the ring its defining color and created a dramatic contrast with the diamond beside it. Some jewelry sources identify the emerald as Colombian, although historical details about the stone's provenance should be treated cautiously unless supported by documentation.

Emeralds are also quite different from diamonds in terms of durability and care. Emerald has a lower hardness and commonly contains internal characteristics. As a result, an emerald engagement ring generally requires more careful handling than a diamond-only ring. For modern buyers inspired by Jackie's design, that is an important practical consideration.

The Original Setting and Accent Diamonds

Jackie Kennedy's original ring was more elaborate than the two center stones alone suggest. The diamond and emerald were surrounded by tapered baguette diamonds that extended along the setting. The combination of geometric gemstones gave the original ring a distinctly structured appearance.

Baguette diamonds are known for their long, straight lines and step-cut appearance. They were particularly compatible with the clean geometry associated with mid-century jewelry. The result was a ring that combined the romantic symbolism of a toi et moi design with a more architectural aesthetic.

Jackie Kennedy Redesigned the Ring

One of the most fascinating details about Jackie's engagement ring is that she later changed it. Around **1962**, nearly a decade after her wedding, Jackie had the ring redesigned. The original baguette accents were replaced with more prominent marquise-cut diamonds, accompanied by round diamonds.

The redesign made the ring more elaborate and gave the center stones a stronger surrounding frame. This change also illustrates something important about jewelry: an engagement ring does not necessarily have to remain frozen in its original form. Jackie was known for her carefully considered style, and modifying the ring allowed her to adapt an important personal piece to her changing tastes.

Why Jackie Kennedy's Ring Became Iconic

The ring became iconic for more than its gemstones. Jackie Kennedy herself became one of the most influential style figures of the 20th century. Her position as First Lady placed her clothing and jewelry under extraordinary public attention, while her preference for polished, sophisticated designs helped shape the image of American elegance.

Her engagement ring benefited from that association. But the ring also had design qualities that allowed it to stand on its own. The combination of diamond and emerald was unusual. The *toi et moi* arrangement gave it a distinctive silhouette. The geometric accent stones added structure, while the later redesign made it even more visually dramatic.

The result was a ring that looked different from the standard solitaire while remaining sophisticated enough for Jackie's public image.

Jackie Kennedy's Ring and the Return of Two-Stone Engagement Rings

The *toi et moi* style has experienced renewed interest in modern jewelry. Contemporary celebrities have helped bring two-stone engagement rings back into the spotlight, but the concept itself is far older. Jackie Kennedy's ring demonstrates that the style was already capable of looking sophisticated and timeless decades before its modern revival.

Modern couples can interpret the style in many ways. A diamond can be paired with an emerald, sapphire, ruby, or another gemstone. Two diamonds can also be used for a more traditional color palette. The defining characteristic is the relationship between the two principal stones.

How Much Was Jackie Kennedy's Engagement Ring Worth?

The value of Jackie Kennedy's ring is difficult to state with complete certainty because historical purchase prices, later modifications, gemstone quality, provenance, and cultural significance all affect its worth.

Some modern jewelry sources have placed its value at more than \$1 million, while other valuations may differ considerably depending on the assumptions used. For that reason, it is better to describe any current figure as an estimate rather than a confirmed market value.

The ring's historical significance is also difficult to separate from its material value. A comparable ring containing similar-sized stones would not necessarily command the same price because Jackie Kennedy's ownership and the ring's connection to American history contribute substantially to its collectible appeal.

What Jackie Kennedy's Ring Teaches Us About Engagement Ring Design

The biggest lesson from Jackie Kennedy's ring is that an engagement ring does not need to follow a single formula.

The ring combines:

- Two substantial center gemstones
- A diamond and colored gemstone pairing
- A toi et moi arrangement
- Geometric accent diamonds
- A sophisticated vintage aesthetic
- Personal symbolism

For someone designing a modern ring inspired by Jackie, the goal does not need to be an exact replica.

A diamond and emerald pairing can recreate the color contrast. A two-stone setting can capture the toi et moi concept. Baguette or marquise accents can add the geometric character associated with the original and redesigned versions. The result can be inspired by Jackie without becoming a copy.

Jackie Kennedy’s Ring Compared With Other Iconic Celebrity Rings

This quick comparison shows how Jackie Kennedy’s distinctive two-stone design differs from other memorable celebrity engagement rings.

Celebrity	Center Stone	Ring Style	Signature Feature
Jackie Kennedy	Emerald Diamond	& Two-Stone / Toi et Moi	Vintage design geometric
Megan Fox	Emerald Diamond	& Toi et Moi	Thorn-inspired setting
Lily Collins	Rose-Cut Diamond	Bezel Solitaire	Vintage-inspired elegance
Lady Gaga	Oval Diamond	Solitaire	Minimalist luxury

Blake Lively Oval Diamond Pavé Solitaire Rose gold setting

Kate Middleton Blue Sapphire Diamond Halo Royal heritage

Final Thoughts

Jackie Kennedy's engagement ring remains memorable because it combined history, personal style, and an unconventional gemstone pairing. Its 2.88-carat diamond and approximately 2.84-carat emerald created a distinctive *toi et moi* design, while the later redesign gave the ring an even more elaborate appearance.

More than seven decades later, the design still offers useful inspiration for [*modern engagement rings*](#). It shows how a colored gemstone can stand beside a diamond without feeling secondary and how two-stone designs can communicate a sense of partnership.

The ring's enduring appeal ultimately comes from the balance between its historical importance and its design. It is unmistakably connected to Jackie Kennedy, yet the underlying ideas behind it remain relevant to couples looking for something more personal than a traditional solitaire.

Frequently Asked Questions

What gemstones are in Jackie Kennedy's engagement ring?

Jackie Kennedy's original engagement ring featured an approximately 2.88-carat diamond and 2.84-carat emerald in a *toi et moi* arrangement.

Who designed Jackie Kennedy's engagement ring?

The ring was created by the French jewelry house Van Cleef & Arpels. Historical accounts say Joseph Kennedy selected it from the firm's Fifth Avenue store with help from Hélène Arpels.

What is the style of Jackie Kennedy's engagement ring?

It is a *toi et moi* engagement ring, meaning two prominent gemstones are positioned together. Jackie's ring paired a diamond with an emerald.

Did Jackie Kennedy change her engagement ring?

Yes. Around 1962, Jackie had the ring redesigned. The original baguette-diamond accents were replaced with marquise-cut diamonds and additional round diamonds.

How much is Jackie Kennedy's engagement ring worth?

Modern estimates vary, but some jewelry sources have valued the ring at more than \$1 million. Because the figure is an estimate and historical jewelry value depends on many factors, it should not be treated as a confirmed market price.