

How to Distinguish Between Edwardian & Art Deco Jewelry



By Danielle Olivia Tefft
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Many online listings for antique and vintage jewelry confuse Edwardian (**1901-1910**) style with Art Deco (**1920-1939**) styles.

This guide gives you some useful tips to determine if jewelry is from the Edwardian era or the Art Deco era.



A signature Art Deco necklace.

1. Both Edwardian and Art Deco fine jewelry is often made of platinum or other “white” metals. Here’s why:

Upon the death of Queen Victoria, a new age of Opulence among the very wealthy began. It was spearheaded by the beautiful Queen Alexandra, King Edward’s wife. She wore exquisite jewelry dripping in diamonds and pearls.

Cartier made most of Queen Alexandra's jewelry out of platinum. This was because they utilized a newly discovered process for working the rare, extremely hard white metal.

Platinum became the perfect setting for the diamonds and pearls wealthy women of the Edwardian era loved.



A beautiful Edwardian platinum and diamond dome ring with an elaborate filigree setting.

The exquisite look of platinum filigree settings soon caught on with the general public on both sides of the Atlantic. But since most people could not afford platinum, they settled for substitutes in less expensive white metals.

White gold began to be sold commercially around 1912 (post the Edwardian era). It exploded in popularity during the 1920s when it became the “platinum” of the middle class.

It wasn't until the World War II years, when platinum and white gold were needed for munitions that yellow gold once again became popular.



A lovely, lacey Edwardian yellow gold lavalier pendant. Not all popular Edwardian jewelry was made of white metals!

Point 1 Takeaways:

- A large amount of Edwardian (1901-1910) jewelry was made of platinum or other white metals, ***but NOT white gold!*** Also, not all popular Edwardian jewelry was made of white metals!
- White gold's popularity gradually increased until it's heydays during the 1920s. Popular Art Deco jewelry is typically made of platinum, white gold or other white metals.
- A piece of jewelry in question (***Is it Edwardian or Art Deco?***) is from the Art Deco era (1920-1939) if it's made of white gold!

2. Both Edwardian and Art Deco jewelry settings are often “lace-like” in appearance.

Thank platinum, which was ideal for the creation of intricate details, often called filigree, in jewelry.

Platinum gave intricate pieces strength without the heaviness of the classical Georgian (1714-1837) pieces they imitated.

Other jewelry metals were made to look lacey, too, but did not have the intricate details possible in platinum pieces.



An Edwardian bar pin with a lacey brass setting.

3. Both Edwardian and Art Deco jewelry often have intricate millegrain detail work.

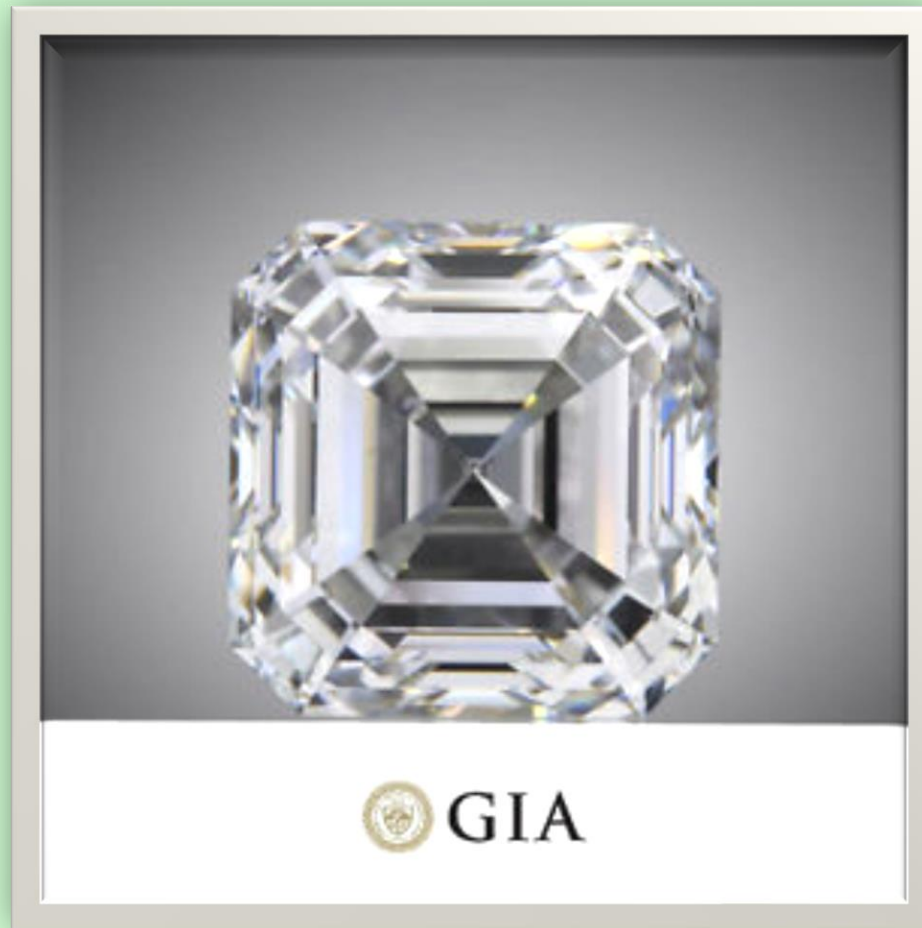
Millegrain looks like tiny round beads set close together, often to form an ornate border.



A gorgeous Art Deco diamond and sapphire ring with a lacey platinum setting. Note the fine milligrain detailing throughout the setting.

4. Both Edwardian and Art Deco jewelry can have Asscher cut diamonds.

The sensational Asscher eight-sided step cut for diamonds was invented in 1902, during Edwardian times. It was an instant hit. But it became even more popular during the Art Deco era.



**The spectacular 8-sided Asscher Cut.
Asscher cut diamonds and other
gemstones were extremely popular in
Edwardian and Art Deco times.**

5. Edwardian jewelry has curved lines and features like floral vines, scrolls and loops.

Both Edwardian and Art Deco rings often have dome or navette (elongated oval) shapes. However,

6. Art Deco jewelry has pronounced geometric shapes incorporated in the gem stones and settings.

The most popular shapes include octagons, triangles, squares, rectangles, hexagons and chevrons.

The next pages show good examples of Edwardian jewelry.



A classic Edwardian pendant necklace with lacy floral details.



An Edwardian pendant necklace. Note the milligrain (beaded) detail, the scrollwork and floral decorations.



An Edwardian Sterling silver ring. Note the fine millegrain (beaded) detail along the border.

The next pages show good examples of Art Deco jewelry with these distinct geometric shapes.



An Art Deco necklace with rectangular geometric links.



**An Art Deco necklace with kite-shape
geometric links.**



An Art Deco navette shape ring with distinct triangular & octagonal features.



An Art Deco costume necklace adorned with crystals in distinct square shapes.



An Art Deco watch incorporating distinct rectangular and triangular shapes.



**An Art Deco ring with a rectangular stone
with a distinct concave cut-out.**

Keep in mind that there are also transitional pieces that masterfully blend style elements of both the Edwardian and Art Deco time periods.

When I come across jewelry that has distinct characteristics of both, I often categorize it as, “late Edwardian transitional” or “transitional early Art Deco.”

Study this guide and especially the photos a bit more. It won't take long before your eye will be able to distinguish between Edwardian and Art Deco jewelry. Happy Hunting!

About The Author



Danielle Olivia Tefft is a GIA (Gemological Institute of America) accredited jewelry professional. She showcases her passion and knowledge for antique and vintage jewelry in the [Found in the Jewelry Box](#) blog.

She has also been the proprietor of [Treasure Box Antiques](#), an online antique and vintage jewelry lover's shop since 2008. Originally on Ruby Lane, the shop now resides on Etsy.

A collection of her jewelry identification courses in PDF format are available for sale at: www.danielleoliviatefftwrites.com