

Exclusive: Neil Lane Talks Engagement Rings and 10+ Years of Bachelor Nation

We talk Neil Lane diamond engagement rings with Bachelor Nation's go-to jeweler. Our exclusive conversation with the maker of 10+ years of stunning diamond rings featured on The Bachelor/Bachelorette.



Jewelry designer Neil Lane on the the season finale of "The Bachelorette". Photo by Matt Klitscher/Walt Disney Television via Getty Images.

Any Bachelor Nation fan can attest to the fact that an immeasurable amount of drama goes down during any given season of The Bachelor or The Bachelorette. However, that's usually all forgotten by the final episode, in which an epic wedding proposal is punctuated by the gift of a truly unforgettable natural diamond engagement ring created by the one and only Neil Lane.

Of course, Neil Lane didn't just become Bachelor Nation's go-to jeweler by chance.

Before becoming synonymous with *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the Los Angeles based jewelry designer was undoubtedly the premier source for the diamond engagement rings of Hollywood's biggest stars. After all Madonna's three-stone diamond engagement ring from Guy Ritchie, Reese Witherspoon's Asscher-cut diamond from Ryan Phillippe, and Portia de Rossi's marquise diamond east-west engagement ring from Ellen DeGeneres are all amongst his most well-known rings.

"My celebrity clients—then and now—range from the super-famous to rising stars," says Lane. "I think they have all felt comfortable working with me because of the way I walk them through the details of the rings and the diamonds."

If you've ever tuned into *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette*, you already have a sense of what said diamond ring selection process is like. Season after season, Lane's on-screen appearances completely mirror the approach he takes with his celebrity clientele. Because of this—and of course the stunning diamond quality and designing dream engagement rings—he has risen as one of America's most famous diamond jewelers. It goes without saying that Neil Lane Couture rings drive the ever-evolving tastes and styles of engagement rings everywhere.

With a new season of *The Bachelorette* starring Clare Crowley on the horizon, we couldn't have been more excited to chat with the man behind TV's most coveted diamond engagement rings.

How has your role on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* evolved over the years?

Well the first time, I wasn't even on the show. They asked me to fly to New Zealand for the filming and I couldn't work it into my schedule, but my ring was used. After the show aired, I was inundated with requests for engagement rings. The next season I went on. I just had one ring to present.

Over the years, I have gotten to know the crew and see everyone rooting for love. At some point I started bringing a selection of rings. It's like being a sous chef. You don't know what someone is going to order and there is the briefcase and the knock on the door. What you see on the show is quick, but in reality it is hours of talking about the ring with the guy selecting it.

Why do you use natural diamonds in your engagement rings, and what is the process

of making the jewels?

I like the glamour and sparkle of natural diamonds for engagement rings. It's also just part of an American tradition and Hollywood style to have a natural diamond engagement ring and I feel my work is part of that tradition.

I put a lot of thought into making the setting beautiful because that is where the diamond lives. It is a small jewel, but the symbolism is giant. If what it represents to a person could be magnified it would be as big as a Mack truck. It represents everything and I try to give it everything.

I don't just think about how it looks from overhead, but from every single angle. I put details on the sides in the design. Then there is the manufacturing. Everything is handmade in Los Angeles the same way jewels were made over 100 years ago. And there is a whole team involved in the process. It is not possible to make a ring with one person. Each job is done by a specialist, so there is a polisher, a setter, an engraver and others.



J.P. Rosenbaum and Ashley Hebert attend WE tv's Premiere Party for Their New Show "Dr. Miami" in North Miami Beach, Florida. Photo by Rodrigo Varela/Getty Images



Neil Lane Cushion Cut Art Deco Engagement Ring. Image by Neil Lane.

Let's talk about some of the specific diamond rings from the show. Tell us about the cushion-cut natural diamond engagement ring J.P. Rosenbaum gave Ashley Hebert on Season 7 of *The Bachelorette*.

It is one of the most beautiful rings I have ever made. I wanted something with Art Deco design elements. On the gallery of the ring under the stone, there is a little arch set with diamonds. I put it there so whenever she puts her hand out to type on a computer or holds her baby, she will see it and remember the proposal and the moment when the ring got slipped on her finger.



JoJo Fletcher and Jordan Rodgers sits down with Chris Harrison to talk about their engagement on 'After the Final Rose'. Photo by Rick Rowell/ Getty Images



Neil Lane oval diamond engagement ring. Image by Neil Lane.

It was the first time I made a ring without a halo setting around the center diamond. I took a chance and started introducing ovals. It turned out really well because Jordan didn't want an angular stone. These types of specific ideas are something that has evolved over the years. People are exposed to more because of what they see other people wearing and things we have introduced on the show. Rings have become much more of a fashion statement than they once were.



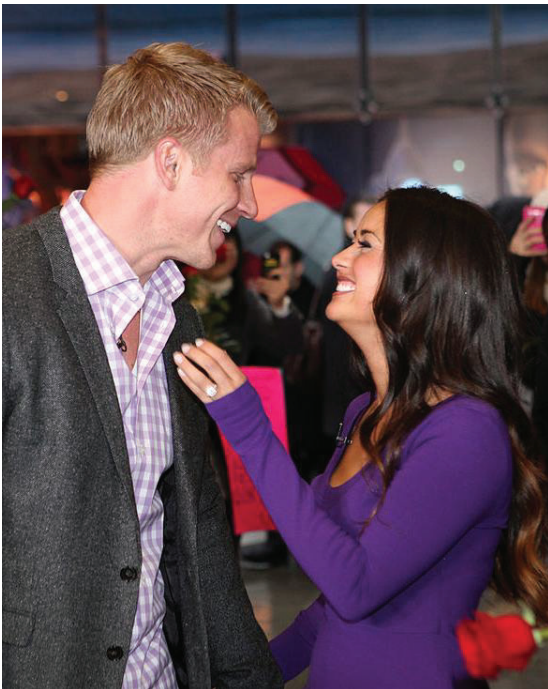
Bryan Abasolo (L) and Rachel Lindsay outside of AOL Studios in New York City. Photo by Ray Tamarra/Getty Images.



Neil Lane 3 Carat pear shaped engagement ring with halo setting. Image by Neil Lane.

The 3-carat pear-shape diamond in a halo setting Bryan Abasolo gave Rachel Lindsay is so special. Let's hear about that jewel.

It was amazing getting his emotions and talking about what Rachel might want. I try to glean information in advance. On a date night when they were filming *The Bachelorette*, I tried to understand what they would like and what would work best for them. She didn't want something that was geometric. When we looked at the pear-shape, it was "Oh yes, that's it."



Sean Lowe and Catherine Giudici on "Good Morning America." Photo by Fred Lee / Getty Images



Neil Lane 3.15 carat cushion shaped diamond ring with halo setting and split link band. Image by Neil Lane.

The ring Sean Lowe picked for Catherine Giudici during Season 17 of *The Bachelor* is another one of your chic cushion-cut natural diamond designs. The 3.15-carat center stone is stunning.

Cushion shape diamonds were so popular in my Hollywood world. The general public didn't know about them as much 15 years ago. The show introduced various cuts to the American public. This particular ring design is another one you can look at from any angle and it's stunning. It has a delicate split shank that shows a little skin under the band. And it has a halo of diamonds around the cushion.

There is a lot of demand for Neil Lane Couture collection diamond rings that are similar to those given on The Bachelor and Bachelorette. Do you have any plans to expand the collection in the future?

Yes, we have been working for some time to accommodate people in a way that is like a couture fitting of a gown, but accessible on the internet. The Prestige Collection is going to be offered on our website soon and make it possible for people to choose the style of mounting and center stone for a ring. Then we will make it custom with our craftsmen here in Los Angeles. Each will be in essence one-of-a-kind because every center diamond is unique, plus the size of the gem and the bride's finger will dictate details of how the ring is built. I am really excited to be able to be able to offer the experience to a wider audience.

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