

How the British Royalty refashioned their crowning glories

Something Old, Something New and Change All Over

For the British monarchy, the rain of precious stones is perennial. The glitz, the shine and the megawatt bedazzlement so characteristic of the British crown fashion has gained impressionist ground for hundreds of years, never once ceding territory to the minimalists or the moderns. From Megan Markle to Princess Diana and Queen Elizabeth herself, the women of the crown are an ode to the charm of classic European fashion and modest dressing with all the room for adornment. What makes this certain style of dressing stand out even in an age saturated by microtrends and sustained fashion evolution is its retention of grace in correspondence with the contemporary times.

Queen Elizabeth, the longest reigning British monarch, maintains a certain penchant for refashioning jewellery initially pioneered by Queen Mary. One of her iconic personalisations, as seen in a modified sapphire and diamond necklace, is one that immortalises her taste. The late queen shortened the necklace, used the extra stones to add a removable pendant and commissioned a matching bracelet, which she wore together as a set in public— an intelligent way to tap into the fanfare surrounding her coordinating outfits and accessories.

Such fanfare is usually the order of the day for the British Crown, which brings us to one of the most publicised days in the history of the family— Megan Markle's wedding to Prince Harry in 2018. Markle's diamond bandeau wedding tiara, was in fact a multipurpose diamond cluster

brooch, flaunting a single round diamond surrounded by nine smaller ones. Queen Mary, who we earlier credited for her imaginative vision had the accessory repurposed to be more flexible, with the brooch as a removable centrepiece. If she wasn't wearing the jewels as a tiara, she wore them as a diamond brooch pinned at the neck until her death in 1953.

Although every aspect of royal accessorising alludes to a timeless sense of dressing, personal style doesn't take a backseat to tradition. Princess Diana is a testament to that statement, even in death. A standout look from her that is buzzed around even today is her attire for Emperor Hirohito's dinner in Japan. She wore a modish headband made from reconstructed diamonds and sapphires that were initially a part of a watch she had received as a gift. Creative, chic and ahead of the times, a single evening look spoke to the eclipse of fresh ideas and generations over the ones behind us.

Seeing the jewels adorn each wearer in a different way and shapeshifting to suit their individual taste palettes paints a panorama of a novelty over centuries— one that has outlived many of us and seen the rise and fall ages. A bearer of both style and sentiment, every jewel also speaks to history, love, loss and valour.

Though the luminosity of the jewelled aesthetic is arresting, the very practice of redesigning jewellery and heirlooms is more about preservation hand in hand with transformation. Preserving a hint of the old to glisten in the new and welcoming change with open arms is the very essence of embracing what has come before and what is to come after.

RAINVAK