

# CUSTOMIZING a Keepsake

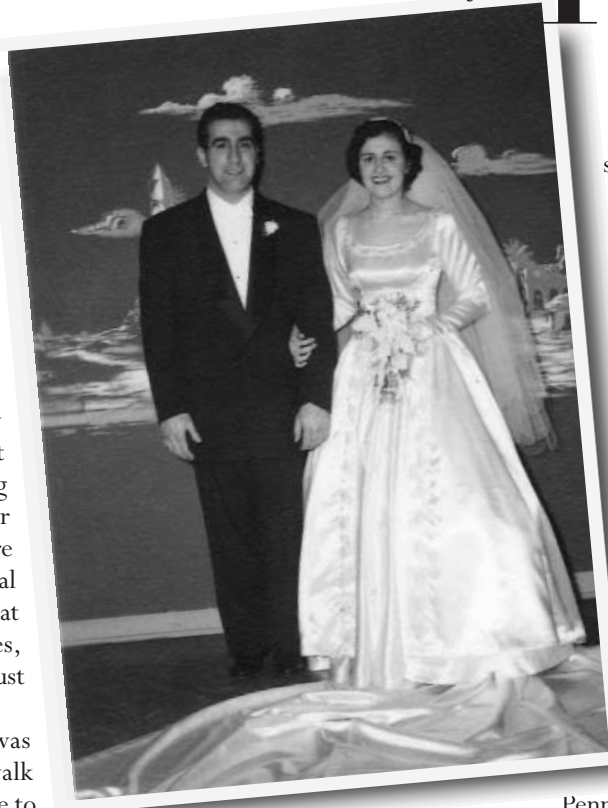
Turning my mother's bridal set into my own By Lorraine DePasque

## ONCE CHARLIE PROPOSED,

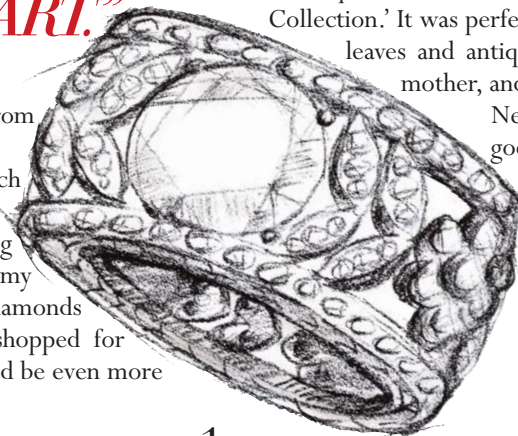
I realized I'd need to decide whether or not to wear the bridal set my mother left to me. She had passed away six months before and, grief-stricken, I'd tucked away her platinum engagement ring and matching diamond band in a corner of my jewelry box, where I'd take only an occasional peek at them. Looking at her belongings—clothes, jewelry, anything—was just too heart-wrenching.

But now that I was planning my dream walk down the aisle, it was time to consider things. Should I say my "I do's" in my mother's rings? Would Charlie mind? Like many single women, I had often noticed engagement and wedding rings in shop windows and would imagine a range of different styles on my left ring finger. Were my mother's rings from 1953 the look I wanted to wear...forever?

I wrestled with these thoughts and with much advice from well-intentioned friends. Eventually, I settled on having a custom ring made out of the diamond center stone in my mother's engagement ring and the smaller diamonds from her band. While Charlie had already shopped for rings, he supported my decision, saying it would be even more



I call my  
wedding band  
**"MY WORK  
OF HEART."**



special this way.

I wondered if my mother would be okay with this. Ultimately, I came to the conclusion that she would. A proponent of personal style, I can still hear her saying, "You have to be completely comfortable in what you wear or else you won't have a good time." When I thought of the piece of jewelry I'd be wearing for the rest of my life, her words seemed particularly meaningful.

With the decision made, I went to my favorite jeweler, the one who had helped me select my Ebel 'Wave' watch for my 35th birthday; the one who had helped me choose the right diamond earrings to celebrate my big promotion; the one who'd helped me decide on the perfect cocktail ring "just because it's Tuesday."

Once inside the jewelry shop, I had what Oprah often refers to as an "aha moment." The revelation? When I spotted a collection of

Penny Preville jewelry in one of the showcases, I decided that since I'd been buying this designer's romantic and feminine pieces for years (I own two pairs of her earrings, one pendant, a necklace and an ankle bracelet), why not have her create the wedding ring from my mother's diamonds?

And so she did. A month later, after working with my jeweler and the designer, I had my new wedding band, one that incorporates my mother's center diamond into an all-around pavé and small-point diamond band from Penny's signature 'Garland Collection.' It was perfect—delicate with open work flowers, leaves and antique-style flourishes. It was partly my mother, and very much "me."

Nearly a decade has passed, but not a day goes by that I don't look down at my left hand and think of my mother, my husband and my favorite jewelry designer. I call my wedding band "my work of heart." ♦