

Why do brides say 'I do' with a diamond?



HER HAND FOR DIAMONDS—If you're planning to get engaged in the near future, you should consider the shape of the diamond, and the shape of her hand. They should complement one another. The five most popular diamond shapes are: the oval cut (shown on hand) which seems larger than others of the same weight; the emerald cut which can be rectangular or square in outline; the round or brilliant cut; the marquise is long with points at both ends; or the pear shape which is wide at one end and tapers to a point at the other.

To some people the diamond means baseball. To those born in April the diamond is their birthstone.

But to young couples in love the diamond is the universal symbol of engagement.

Though many time-honored traditions have toppled, the tradition of the diamond engagement ring is stronger than ever—75 percent of first time brides received a diamond engagement ring in 1977.

Invincible symbol

The diamond is the accepted symbol of the engagement promise, representing to young people everywhere the individual expression of their love.

It all began with Mary of Burgundy. She was the first lucky girl to receive a diamond ring for her engagement to Maximilian of Austria, on August 17, 1477.

The diamond has been considered one of the most precious of all materials, almost since the dawn of his-

tory. The diamond, the hardest substance known to man, literally endures forever. Once cut and polished, it never loses its beautiful brilliance. The very word diamond comes from the Greek word "Adamas" meaning invincible.

Every stone unique

No two diamonds in the world are the same. Each diamond has a personality of its own. Think of a diamond as Nature "doing her own thing."

The major consideration in choosing an engagement ring is, of course, its cost. Today, a good-quality half-carat engagement ring can cost from \$600 up.

It is important to know what factors affect the price of a ring. One, naturally, is the size and quality of the diamond.

Another is the amount of gold or platinum in the design.

Because although diamonds, like everything, have increased in price, gold has

gone up too. This means that a wide ring will cost more than a narrow ring with the same size diamond.

Putting it another way, for the same price you can get a bigger or better quality diamond if it's set in a narrow band rather than in a wide one.

And it's the diamond, not its setting, that is going to last for a lifetime and beyond. Many diamond engagement rings have been handed down from generation to generation.

The shape of the diamond is also a factor in its cost. In general, the round or brilliant cut is less expensive than the so-called "fancy" shapes, i.e. the marquise, the pear and the emerald cut. The reason is simply that more rough diamonds are found in nature that lend themselves to the brilliant cut.

The pear shape is the English name for the French "pendeloque" which is related to our word pendant. The cut is a variation on the

brilliant cut, with one wide end curving smoothly to a point. The point of the pear is always worn toward the fingernail.

The emerald cut—a straight-sided oblong—goes back centuries to the old table-cut method of fashioning gem stones, particularly emeralds. But the emerald cut diamond is the most recently developed of all the popular diamond shapes.

Because of its clean, modern look, the emerald cut diamond is most often set in platinum, usually with two baguette side stones. (Baguettes, by the way, are thin and rectangular, somewhat like the emerald cut, but with fewer facets.)

As with anything else, the shape of a diamond is a matter of individual taste—one is not preferable to another, they are all works of art.

But whatever the size and shape of a diamond, one thing is sure—a diamond is truly forever.



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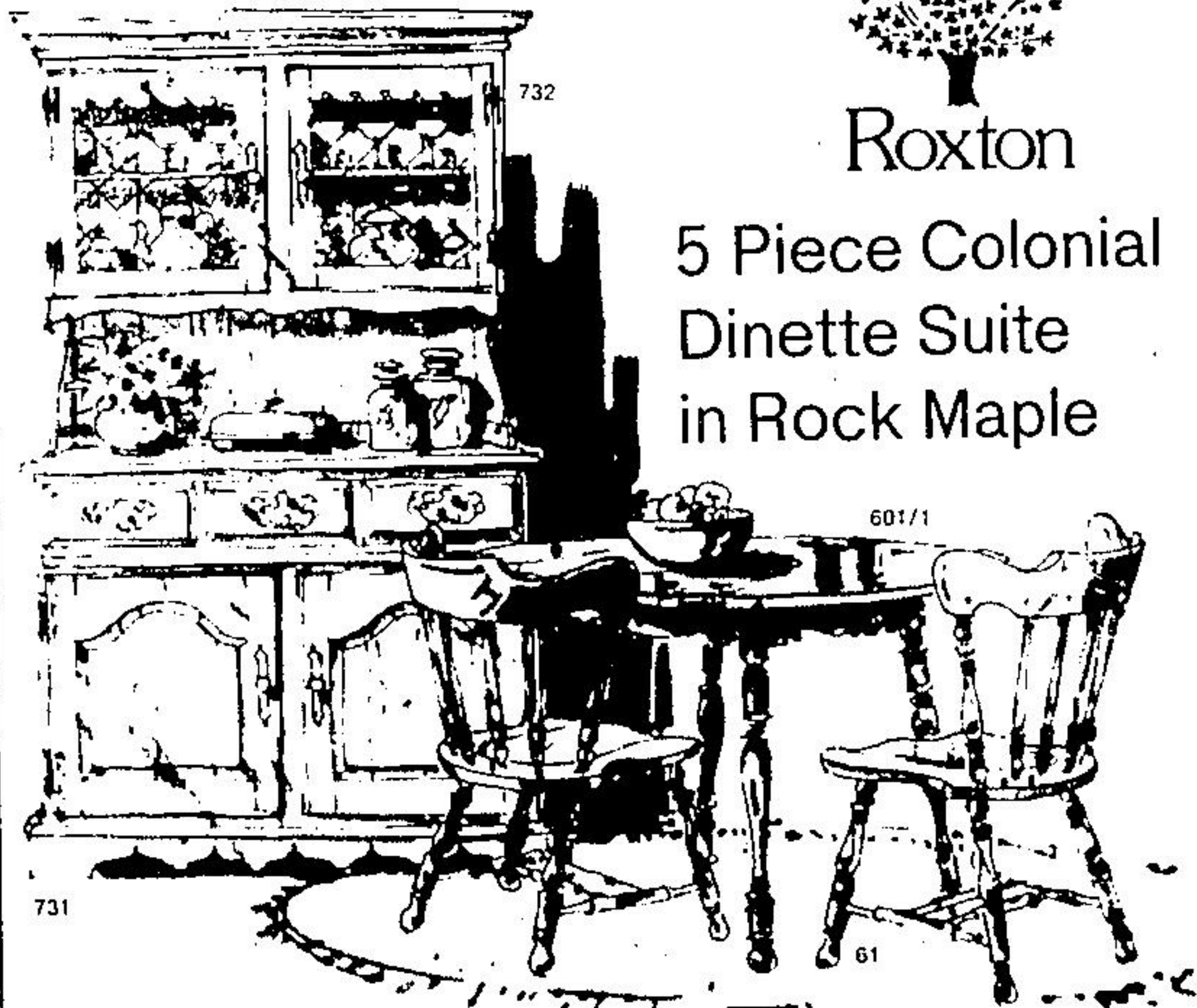
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