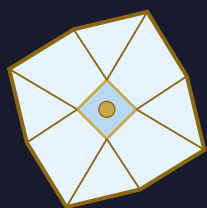


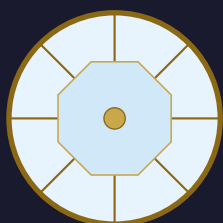
❖ *OLD STYLE CUT* ❖

DIAMONDS

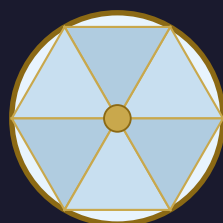
A Comprehensive Guide to Antique Diamond Cuts



Old Mine Cut



Old European



Rose Cut



Briolette Cut

History · Anatomy · Characteristics · Identification · Value

A reference guide crafted for antique gemology enthusiasts

Introduction

Before the age of modern machinery and precise laser technology, master craftsmen shaped diamonds entirely by hand. These antique cuts carry a warmth, character, and romantic glow that no contemporary brilliant can fully replicate.

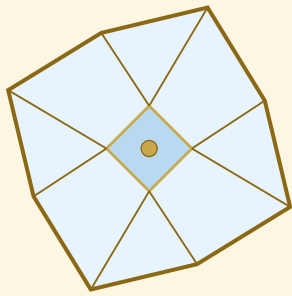
Old style cut diamonds are a category of cuts that predate the modern round brilliant, standardised in the early 20th century. They were produced primarily from the 1300s through to approximately the 1930s, spanning the Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and early Art Deco eras. Each period brought refinements in proportion and symmetry, yet all share a defining quality: they were fashioned to maximise beauty under candlelight rather than electric illumination.

Today, these diamonds are prized by collectors, antique jewellery enthusiasts, and those seeking an engagement ring with history and soul. Their larger facets produce a distinctive play of light — a soft, romantic scintillation quite unlike the sharp, high-contrast sparkle of modern cuts.

Historical Timeline

Period	Era	Cut	Key Feature
1300–1700	Medieval / Renaissance	Point & Table Cut	Natural octahedral shape polished
1700–1750	Early Georgian	Rose Cut	Flat base, domed faceted top
1750–1830	Late Georgian	Old Mine Cut (early)	Cushion outline, high crown
1830–1900	Victorian	Old Mine Cut	58 facets, large open culet
1890–1930	Edwardian / Art Deco	Old European Cut	Round girdle, small table
1920–1940	Art Deco	Transition Cut	Bridge to modern brilliant

The Classic Old Style Cuts



Old Mine Cut (OMC)

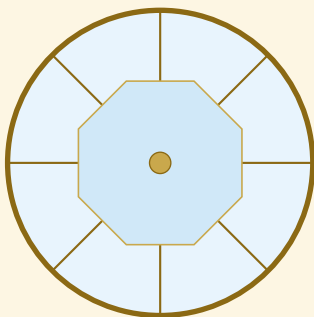
1. Old Mine Cut (OMC)

c. 1750 – 1900 | Georgian & Victorian Eras

The Old Mine Cut is the most iconic of all antique diamond cuts. Named after the 'old mines' of India and Brazil — the primary sources before South African deposits were discovered in 1867 — it features a distinctive cushion-shaped girdle and was cut entirely by hand using primitive tools.

- ◆ **Facets:** 58 (same count as a modern brilliant)
- ◆ **Table:** Very small — typically less than 40% of girdle diameter
- ◆ **Crown:** Very high, giving a tall, prominent dome
- ◆ **Culet:** Large and open — visible as a circle when viewed face-up
- ◆ **Girdle:** Cushion-shaped (square with softly rounded corners)
- ◆ **Depth:** Deep, often exceeding 65% depth percentage
- ◆ **Symmetry:** Hand-cut, often irregular and charmingly imperfect

Under candlelight or warm incandescent light, the Old Mine Cut produces a soft, romantic glow. The large culet creates a distinctive 'bull's eye' visible through the table. The high crown generates exceptional fire and a warm inner luminosity impossible to replicate with modern machinery.



Old European Cut (OEC)

2. Old European Cut (OEC)

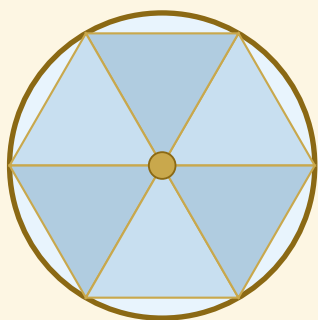
c. 1890 – 1930 | Edwardian & Early Art Deco Eras

The Old European Cut represents the pinnacle of hand-cut craftsmanship and the direct precursor to the modern round brilliant. Developed as lapidary tools improved in the late 19th century, it features a perfectly circular girdle with 58 facets — yet with distinctly different proportions.

- ◆ **Facets:** 58 facets
- ◆ **Table:** Small and circular — typically 40–53% of diameter
- ◆ **Crown:** High crown angle (typically 40–42 degrees)
- ◆ **Culet:** Open — medium to large, polished to a small facet
- ◆ **Girdle:** Perfectly circular, usually unpolished
- ◆ **Pavilion:** Deep, with triangular lower-half facets
- ◆ **Symmetry:** Generally more precise than the Old Mine Cut

The OEC produces a distinctive 'windmill' scintillation pattern — large blocks of light and dark that give it a dramatic, romantic character. Its larger facets capture and throw light differently than modern cuts, producing fewer but more dramatic flashes. Highly prized for its warm, human quality.

Rose Cut & Briolette Cut



Rose Cut

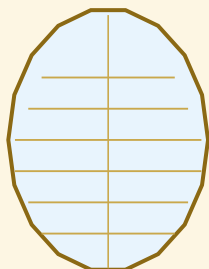
3. Rose Cut

c. 1520 – 1900 | Renaissance through Victorian Eras

One of the oldest diamond cuts still recognised today, the Rose Cut dates to 16th-century Antwerp. Its name derives from the resemblance of its facets to the unfolding petals of a rose. Unlike other faceted cuts, the Rose Cut has a flat base and a domed, faceted top.

- ◆ **Facets:** 3 to 24 triangular facets (6 in the classic form)
- ◆ **Table:** None — the dome rises to a point or apex
- ◆ **Crown:** Domed hemisphere with triangular facets
- ◆ **Culet:** None — base is completely flat
- ◆ **Girdle:** Circular or oval; stone is low-profile and wide
- ◆ **Depth:** Very shallow — typically 50% or less of girdle diameter
- ◆ **Varieties:** Single rose, double rose, Antwerp rose, Dutch rose

The flat base made it ideal for foil-backed settings in the Georgian era, where a mirror-like metallic foil placed beneath the stone amplified its brilliance. Though less brilliant than modern cuts, it has a quiet, intimate beauty and translucency unique among all diamond cuts.



Briolette Cut

4. Briolette Cut

c. 1200s – Present | Medieval to Contemporary

The Briolette is the oldest known faceted diamond cut, with origins in 12th-century India. It is a fully faceted, drop-shaped stone with triangular or rectangular facets covering its entire surface — making it ideal for hanging as a pendant or earring drop with no flat base or table.

- ◆ **Facets:** 48 to 84 triangular and rectangular facets
- ◆ **Shape:** Pear, oval, or tear-drop — no flat base or table
- ◆ **Crown:** No distinction between crown and pavilion; fully faceted
- ◆ **Culet:** None — comes to a point at the bottom
- ◆ **Girdle:** None — facets run continuously around the stone
- ◆ **Mounting:** Drilled at the top and hung; rarely set in conventional bezels
- ◆ **Rarity:** Extremely rare; requires exceptional skill to cut

Associated with Indian Mughal jewellery and European royal courts, famous Briolette diamonds include the 'Briolette of India' (90.38 carats) linked to Eleanor of Aquitaine. Their all-around faceting creates 360-degree scintillation when worn as pendants.

Identifying Old Style Cut Diamonds

Correctly identifying an antique diamond cut requires examining several key visual characteristics. Unlike modern brilliant cuts guided by laser to exact tolerances, old style cuts bear the marks of human hands — making each stone utterly unique.

Visual Identification Comparison

Feature	Old Mine Cut	Old European Cut	Modern Brilliant
Girdle Shape	Cushion (squarish)	Round circle	Round (laser-cut)
Culet	Large, open circle	Medium circle	None / pointed
Table Size	Very small (<40%)	Small (40–53%)	Large (53–64%)
Crown Height	Very high	High	Moderate
Light Pattern	Warm, soft glow	Windmill pattern	Sharp white flashes
Symmetry	Irregular, hand-cut	More precise	Machine perfect
Best Lighting	Candlelight / warm	Candlelight / warm	Bright / LED light

Value & Collectibility

Old style cut diamonds occupy a fascinating position in the gem market, influenced by factors both traditional (the 4Cs) and unique to antique stones.

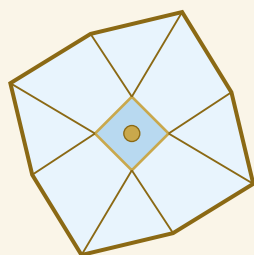
- ❖ **Rarity Premium:** Genuine antique cuts command a premium due to scarcity and the inability to reproduce them authentically with modern machinery.
- ❖ **The 4Cs Apply Differently:** Colour often appears warmer (G–K typical) and clarity grading must account for the era's polishing standards.
- ❖ **Carat Weight:** Old cuts retain more rough in crown and culet — appearing smaller face-up than a modern stone of identical carat weight.
- ❖ **Provenance:** Documented history from a known jeweller (Cartier, Tiffany, Fabergé) or historical estate can dramatically increase value.
- ❖ **GIA Reports:** The GIA issues 'Antique and Vintage' reports for old style cuts using different terminology for their unique proportions.
- ❖ **Re-cutting Debate:** Some old cuts are re-cut to modern brilliant proportions, increasing brilliance but destroying historical character and value.

Care & Authentication

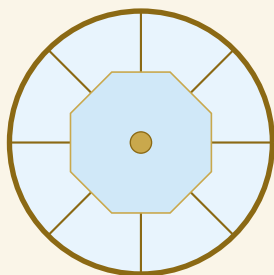
- ❖ **Authentication:** Always purchase from reputable antique dealers or auction houses with a gemological certificate and provenance documentation.
- ❖ **Cleaning:** Use warm water with mild soap and a soft brush. Avoid ultrasonic cleaners on antique-set stones — older settings can be damaged by vibration.
- ❖ **Storage:** Store separately from other jewellery. Diamonds scratch softer stones and can chip against each other.
- ❖ **Appraisal:** Seek an independent certified gemologist (GIA Graduate Gemologist or FGA) — especially important for insurance purposes.

◆ **Re-setting:** Consult a specialist in antique jewellery who can create a sympathetic setting that honours the stone's original era.

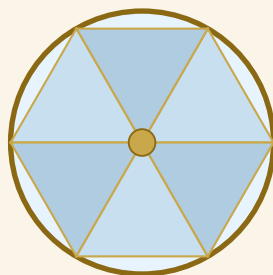
Cut Comparison at a Glance



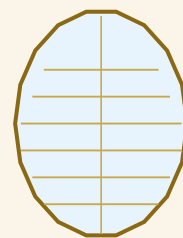
Old Mine Cut ■ c. 1750–1900



Old European Cut ■ c. 1890–1930



Rose Cut ■ c. 1520–1900



Briolette Cut ■ c. 1200s–Now

Quick Specification Reference

Spec	Old Mine Cut	Old European	Rose Cut	Briolette
Facets	58	58	3–24	48–84
Girdle	Cushion	Round	Round/Oval	None
Base	Faceted pavilion	Faceted pavilion	Flat	Fully faceted
Culet	Large open	Medium open	None	None
Setting	Prong / Bezel	Prong / Bezel	Bezel / Rub-over	Drilled pendant
Era Peak	Victorian	Edwardian	Georgian	Mughal / Medieval
Rarity	Moderate	Moderate–High	High	Very High

“Every old cut diamond is a fingerprint of its cutter — no two are identical, and each carries centuries of craft, culture, and candlelight within its facets.”

This guide is intended for educational and reference purposes. For professional gemological assessment, always consult a certified gemologist.