

Bluenile.com

Hanging Tough: New Tungsten Wedding Bands

June 23rd, 2017 | Stephanie Dore

Just when you think you've seen every possible innovation in the wedding band game, here comes tungsten, turning heads.

A relative newcomer to the metals game—having been discovered in the 1780s—tungsten's rough-and-tumble nature has made it a contemporary favorite for wedding jewelry.

What's so special about this metal? Well, for starters, it's exceptionally strong, hypoallergenic, and highly resistant to scratches, making it a perfect match for someone with an active lifestyle. But let's go beyond the surface facts and look at where this fascinating modern metal comes from.

Taking its name from the Swedish for "heavy stone," tungsten is five times sturdier than industrial steel and a whopping ten times harder than 18k gold. It has an incredibly high melting point and tensile strength, lending it to use in countless industrial applications from tiny lightbulb filaments to massive jet engines.

The unique characteristics of tungsten include an interesting manufacturing story. Other fine metals like gold and platinum are melted and cast into jewelry. But tungsten requires such a high melting temperature that it would, in fact, melt anything you tried to hold the liquid in. Instead, the element is ground into a fine powder, molded under high compression, and heated to form ring blanks. This explains why tungsten cannot be resized like a gold or platinum ring, so make sure to measure your ring size carefully.

Tungsten is one of the hardest metals available, measuring between 8-9 on the Mohs scale. The only thing that can scratch it is a diamond, so diamond tools and polishers are used to create the countless eye-catching patterns and surface textures you see available on tungsten wedding bands. It also has a substantial weight in your hand, similar to platinum's natural heft, and retains its shape for life.

One of the biggest myths about tungsten is that it can't be removed in an emergency. It can! When extreme pressure is applied to a tungsten band, it should crack or break, unlike gold or platinum which bend under pressure. For someone working with heavy machinery, that breakage is often preferred to the further injury that could be caused

by metals that bend in place. Should the need arise tungsten can be removed by any medical professional with standard emergency room instruments.

This very low-maintenance metal can be cared for with a regular soft cloth wipe down and is now available in a fascinating array of finishes and colors. There's the classic rich gray of the natural metal, a brighter white (light gray) color, and even a deep black that keeps its hue for life. Our newest finish is a raw sand blast that offers a great organic, natural feel for someone who wants an untraditional look that will last a lifetime.