

Semyonova, Natalya and Nicholas Ilijine, eds. "Nuptial Crown."  
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**The Imperial Nuptial Crown**

St. Petersburg, the firm of Karl E. Bolin (?), 1884

Silver, diamonds, velvet. Height 14.5 cm; diameter 10.2 cm

Sold from *Gokhran* in November 1926 to the antiques dealer Norman Weis; sold at auction at Christie's in London on 26 March 1927 to the antiques dealer Founes; Wartski Gallery; acquired in 1966 at auction at Sotheby's by M. Post Hillwood Museum, Washington, D.C.

This relatively modest crown which was worn by Alexandra Fedorovna at her wedding ceremony in 1894 formed part of the Russian empresses' traditional "wedding set" of jewellery. In addition to a diamond-studded *kokoshnik* that was worn together with the crown, the set included long diamond earrings, an elegant clasp for a dress and heavy bracelets. By tradition a new nuptial crown was prepared for each occasion on which female members of the imperial family were married. In 1856 the Lady of the Bedchamber Ellis "issued to the court jeweller Bolin diamond settings for decorating the nuptial crown of Grand Duchess Alexandra Petrovna, adding to this that on completion of the wedding ceremony the stones would be removed from the crown and returned to the crown diamonds."

This tradition was broken in 1884 and the crown prepared for the wedding day of the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich and the Grand Duchess Elizaveta Fedorovna was not subsequently dismantled. The crown was made using part of the "diamond lapel" of the sleeveless jacket and kaftan of the Emperor Paul I, produced in Leopold Pfisterer's workshop in 1767; the cross consists of stones removed from an early 19th-century diamond epaulette. The last of the female representatives of the house of Romanov to wear the crown was the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, at her wedding to Prince Wilhelm of Sweden on 3 May 1908.

