



Figure 16-1 Some of the many variants of the standard round brilliant. These permutations arise by adding additional connecting and accent facets.

16.2.1 Mix and Match

Pushing the envelope a little further, you may wish to try a different crown on top of the prescribed pavilion. Although there may seem to be an infinite number of possible gem designs out there, the range of girdle outlines – at least those that are practical to cut – is considerably more limited. This is partially due to the fact that symmetry produces visual interest. It also has a lot to do with the requirement that faceted gemstones be convex solids (see Chapter 1.2) and the practicalities of gemstone setting – no jeweler will stock or manufacture an infinite variety of findings.

Figure 16-3 and Figure 16-4 show the standard girdle outlines as categorized by the great gemstone designers and teachers, Robert H. Long and Norman W. Steele. Their series of books is essential reading for any faceter (see Chapter 9). While this gemstone “zoo” may appear quite diverse, perhaps 90% of all designs fall into the half dozen or so most popular categories.

The bottom line? Many girdle outlines are identical, particularly for round and symmetrical stones, offering the possibility to mix and match.

In addition to providing a reasonably gentle introduction to gem design, mixing and matching pavilions and crowns with the same outline can lead to striking results. Figure 16-5 shows the same pavilion mated to three different crowns. Differences in symmetry and overall design approach between the two halves of the stone can multiply the interest of your gems.

Mixing and matching is fun and easy. How easy? “Am I Ready?” on the previous page notes that I designed my first gemstone after two years in the hobby. I lied. If mixing and matching counts as design – and I think that it does – then my third gemstone was an original (see Table 5-1).