



Garnet

Birthstone Month: January

Anniversary: 2nd

Season/Zodiac: Aquarius

Interesting Facts/History

Garnet is a gemstone group containing some magnificent species available in a stunning array of colours to suit anyone's taste. This diverse gem comes in the striking red of Pyrope, and Almandite; to orange colours of Hessonite and Spessartite; the lovely purple of Rhodolite, and intense greens of Demantoid, and Tsavorite. Red garnets referred to as "carbuncles" were known since Egyptian times. Garnet is reputed to be one of the original gems on the high priest Aaron's breastplate, during biblical times, each gem believed to be symbolic of a number of things including the custom of birthstones for each of the 12 months. Though red garnet is typically presented for January, a large colour pallet of beautiful garnets are available.

Name Derivation

Garnet comes from the Greek "Granatum" referring to the colour of the pomegranate seed.

Varieties, Value and Colour Symbolism

Almandite: deep, dark, rich Red to purplish Red to orangy Red (the more valuable Almandites have less orange and brown present).

Name: "Alabandina" - An ancient Seaport in Asia Minor.

Major Sources: India, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Brazil.

Demantoid: medium, vivid, Green to slightly yellowish Green (Inclusion resembling "horsetail" highly-prized). Very rare and valuable, sought after by gem collectors and connoisseurs.

Name: "Diamond-Like" - For its amazing yellow-orange dispersion.

Major Sources: Italy, Korea, Russia, Zaire.

Hessonite: medium, intense Orange to yellow Orange colours.

Name: "Cinnamon-stone" - Illustrating its rich orangy colour.

Major Sources: Sri Lanka, Kenya, Tanzania.

Malaya: medium pinkish to reddish Orange colours.

Name: "out of family" - Named because it is a mixture of several garnet "families".

Major Source: East Africa.

Pyrope: deep, dark, rich Red to slightly purplish Red.

Name: "Firey-eyed" - Describing its vibrant red colour.

Major Sources: Australia, Czechoslovakia, South Africa, US.

Rhodolite: medium to dark, intense, reddish Purple to Purple shades.

Name: "Rose-coloured" - After the rhododendron flower.

Major Sources: Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zimbabwe.

Spessartite: medium, intense, Orange to reddish Orange

Name: "Spessart, Bavaria" - An early source of the gem.

Major Sources: Brazil, Sri Lanka, Namibia, Pakistan, US.

Tsavorite: medium, intense Green to slightly yellowish-bluish Green. Rare, sought-after, and valuable.

Name: "Tsavo Park, Kenya" - The exotic African game reserve where the gem is found.

Major Sources: Kenya, Tanzania.

Garnet (cont'd)

Durability

Hardness (*resistance to scratching*) = 7 - 7 1/2 on the Moh's Scale.

Toughness (*resistance to breaking, chipping, cracking*) = Fair to Good.

Stability (*to heat, light, chemicals*) = Stable, avoid abrupt temperature changes that could cause fractures. Garnets are sensitive to hydrofluoric acid.

Care and Cleaning

Ultrasonic = Safe.

Steam Cleaning = Never.

Repair Recommendations = For most repairs involving intense heat, garnets must be removed from their settings.

Enhancements

As a group, the garnets owe their colour and appearance to mother nature, and are not commonly enhanced by any method.

Fashion Significance

The garnet group is available in a wide variety of colours in virtually every price range. Additionally, garnet is a durable, long-wearing gemstone that can be enjoyed for years to come.