

## Gemstones and Birthstones

The variety of colours and qualities of valuable gemstones is almost limitless. Some of the most popular ones have been allocated to months of the year, bringing all people born in their months under the protection of that stone.

### The Birthstones:

January	Garnet	July	Ruby
February	Amethyst	August	Peridot
March	Aquamarine	September	Sapphire
April	Diamond	October	Opal
May	Emerald	November	Topaz
June	Pearl	December	Turquoise

### Why you should buy your coloured gemstones from a JAA jeweller

Admiring and reading about gemstones may make you feel knowledgeable, but you're still not an expert. If you're thinking about purchasing a gemstone, you need a trained professional jeweller whom you can trust, so you can be advised on quality as well as a suitable setting and mounting.

Your JAA jeweller can recommend a setting that will best display your gemstone, allowing the right amount of light to reach the stone while still providing maximum protection. The correct design can further enhance your gemstone.



JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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With compliments from your JAA jeweller

This brochure has been prepared by the Jewellers Association of Australia (JAA) with the assistance of Jewellers of America, the Diamond Promotion Service, Hamid Bros and Geoff Tombs, AM, FGAA.

Photograph courtesy of Rudy Weber, Gem Studies Laboratory.

Your JAA jeweller is pleased to make this brochure available to you as a service and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

What you should know  
about buying

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*Jewellery is special. It can last a lifetime. It can be an emotional and sentimental experience that evokes wonderful memories while still giving pleasure for years ahead. When buying for yourself or for others, it helps to have an understanding of the qualities and characteristics of jewellery, which is why the Jewellers Association of Australia (JAA) has produced this brochure.*

*If you need more information or advice, talk to a JAA Jeweller – look for our logo in the store window.*

## The legendary power of gemstones

Your desire to own or wear a coloured gemstone isn't new or unique. Throughout all civilisations, gems have held fascination – sometimes even a legendary power – for people from all cultures.

The mystery and romance of gemstones goes back as far as we can trace, to those primitive days when people coveted these beautiful stones as charms or amulets to ward off evil. Later, as life became more sophisticated, the rarity and beauty of gems established them as the ultimate status symbol.

Today, the pride of possessing a rare and beautiful gemstone is as great as ever. There is, however, one major difference – at one time, only the very wealthy or the very powerful could hope to own a gemstone. Now, thanks to discoveries of rich mining and alluvial sources, no-one needs to be a millionaire to afford a gemstone.

## What is a gemstone?

Most simply stated, the majority of gemstones are minerals, (important exceptions – pearls and coral are of animal origin; jet and amber are vegetable). These minerals have been crystallised as a result of high temperature and pressures exerted by nature on the elements that form the earth's crust.

Of more than 3,000 minerals found on earth, only a small percentage qualify as gemstones due to their beauty, durability, colour and rarity. The most sought-after are transparent gems, drops of pure colour cut from single crystals, which were once divided into precious and semi-precious categories. This is no longer true as gem discoveries have added new varieties to the traditional selection of ruby, emerald and sapphire. In fact, some of the more unusual gemstones command higher prices because of their beauty and rarity. For example, fine jade and fine opal, tsavorite and alexandrite could be more valuable than lesser quality diamonds or emeralds of the same carat weight.

The selection of fine quality gemstones includes such stones as alexandrite, amber, amethyst, aquamarine, chrysoberyl, citrine, garnet, iolite, jade, kunzite, lapis lazuli, moonstone, opal, peridot, spinel, tanzanite, topaz, tourmaline, tsavorite, turquoise and zircon. Each of these gemstones has a particular charm, colour and identity.

## Why buy a coloured gemstone?

Each person has his or her own reason for wanting to buy, own or wear a coloured gemstone. There are, however, several basic and valid reasons that make gemstones desirable possessions.

**Gemstones are primarily beautiful.** Every stone is a natural work of art, each one having a distinct and separate personality and possessing unique and distinguishing beauty marks.

**Gemstones are durable.** Gemstones can last for generations and, in some cases, for centuries. The treasures of King Tut prove that gemstones endure through many lifetimes.

**Gemstones are rare.** While it is true that there are new sources of gemstones, today's economy has brought higher disposable incomes to more people than ever before. As the demand for gemstones is greater the supply has become limited in its ability to meet this demand.

## What determines the value of a gemstone?

There are several factors that determine the value of a gemstone.

**Colour** – The strength and purity of a gemstone's colour is of prime importance. There is no established right or wrong colour, and there are literally thousands of shades of red, blue and green. Therefore, you should make your selection according to your own personal taste.

**Cut** – The cut of a gemstone is of extraordinary importance. The proper cutting emphasises the richness of the gemstone's inherent colour, which is the focal point of the gem's beauty that attracts the eye.



**Clarity** – While the clarity of a gemstone is an important feature, it is equally important to remember that completely flawless gemstones are very rare. Inclusions are inherent to practically every gemstone and are nature's way of adding variety and individuality to a gemstone. Even the most expensive contain some inclusions.

**Carat weight** – The size or weight of a gemstone also affects its value. Remember, 1.00ct of gem weight equates to 0.20 gram but it is not a quality rating as in gold.

## Caring for your gemstones

Buying a gemstone is your investment in lasting beauty. Treat it accordingly. A gemstone's durability means it can last for generations – but it must be handled with care. Here are some easy guidelines for taking care of your gemstones.

- ◆ Keep your jewellery separated when you put it away. Never let one item touch another, and always put in soft fabric.
- ◆ Apply colognes and toiletries before you put on your jewellery.
- ◆ Clean your jewellery regularly. Ask your jeweller to recommend the proper cleaning methods.
- ◆ Bring your gemstones to your JAA jeweller every year. They can then be expertly cleaned and their settings checked.
- ◆ Finally, rely on your JAA jeweller, before and after your purchase. Your jeweller is here today, not only to sell merchandise to you, but also to be here tomorrow, to give you service and advice.