

More than just a pretty facet (/columnists/diana-jarrett/3210-more-than-just-a-pretty-facet)



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18k yellow gold ring featuring Zultanite® (10.10 carats), pink sapphire and diamonds. Courtesy Lance Fischer.

It could be argued that the last decade's economic free-fall changed peoples spending habits forever. After licking their wounds, consumers gained a more realistic grasp of the true value of a dollar. And that bodes well for jewelry aficionados. Shrewd collectors are responsible for some of the most jaw-dropping prices realized for jewelry at auction today. Because real value and rarity is the target to aim for when it comes to gemstones.

What's rare, what's valuable?

Rarity and value are often inextricably tied together. With regards to gemstones, their value is tied to the public's appreciation for their beauty and their durability to maintain that appeal for a long time. Rarity is a simpler concept. If there's not much of it, if it's difficult to acquire, it's rare.

Few precious stones today can claim both of those traits. But we can think of one that astute collectors should put on their short list; Zultanite®. Zultanite's name is as exotic as its substance. It is in brief, a rare transparent color-change variety of the mineral diaspore. If that's not enough to classify it as rare, only one mining site in the remote Anatolian mountain range of Turkey is known to produce the material.

Lights, please

Those familiar with the stone know that different lighting, whether indoors or outdoors, impacts its apparent color. But there's more to the story. Actually, sunlight, outdoors but not in direct sun, candlelight, and even mixed light influences the subtle to dramatic changes witnessed on the gem's coloration. The rare phenomenon may cause Zultanite to exhibit sparks of canary yellow, cognac

pink, ginger, kiwi green, raspberry pink, rich champagne and sage green.

Not all gem cutters are proficient in cutting Zultanite. Without knowledgeable expert training, the rough may shatter into a million little shards when cleaved. Even so, the expected yield is approximately 3% of the crystal when cut. That's a staggering loss of up to 97% of the rough just to arrive at a finished stone. When admiring a luxurious Zultanite gemstone of any size, consider what size it must have been when it started this journey.



18k yellow gold earrings featuring Zultanite® (32.04 carats), Vietnamese ruby and diamonds. Courtesy Lance Fischer.

Color Loves Color

Today's innovative jewelry designers are becoming more imaginative with Zultanite; pairing it with complementary colored stones thereby enhancing its declaration as a drama queen. As more jewelers include this rare treasure in their inventory, they give their clientele more options of becoming a bona fide collector of rare gems. When it's mined out, this stone will take its place in history. Until then, savvy collectors will keep building a jewelry wardrobe with this chameleon-like beauty.

Award winning trade journalist and gemologist Diana Jarrett is a Registered Master Valuer Appraiser and a member of the Association of Independent Jewellery Valuers (AIJV). She's a popular speaker at conferences and trade shows. Jarrett writes for trade and consumer publications, online outlets, her blog: [Color-n-Ice](http://www.color-n-ice.com), and www.jewelrywebsitedesigners.com (<http://www.jewelrywebsitedesigners.com>). Contact her at info@dianajarrett.com (<mailto:info@dianajarrett.com>), visit her website at www.dianajarrett.com (<http://www.dianajarrett.com>), and follow her on Facebook and Twitter (Loupey).