

SMART COLORED GEMSTONES

BY MAGGIE SZEKELY-LUSSO | PHOTOS COURTESY OF SERVIS & TAYLOR

Ah, that beautiful ring with a pink gemstone that seems so *you* and would really work with your wardrobe — is it a good buy? Is it a natural gemstone? It could be a colored piece of glass or something grown in a lab. How do you know? What should you pay?

It's doubtful you'd know a gemstone's identity just by looking at it. You'd need an expert opinion, someone who had the right training, certification, and the gemstone market experience to back it up.

So, what should you be looking for in a jewelry store when shopping for colored gemstones and gemstone jewelry?

CREDENTIALS

In the same way you wouldn't visit a doctor who didn't have a diploma, you should be looking for a jewelry store with the appropriate credentials. One way is to find a member of the American Gem Society (AGS). The AGS is a membership organization founded in 1934 to help protect the jewelry-buying public from fraud and false advertising. Only one in twenty jewelers meets the exacting requirements for membership. The society is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and professional behavior. Credentials from the AGS require training from the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), continuing education, and annual recertification.

After all, you need someone who knows what to do with a microscope, polariscope, dichroscope and a refractometer to help decipher a gemstone's identity.

SAVVY SALES AND GEMOLOGICAL STAFF

Purchasing from someone who knows her gemstones is another facet of colored gemstone shopping. The person behind the counter should be able to educate you on a gemstone's quality and attributes.

For instance, if your lifestyle is active, you may want a more robust gemstone — like a gorgeous blue sapphire — to wear as a ring, whereas a more delicate opal or emerald would wear better on your neck. Your jeweler will take this into account as she advises you on choosing a beautiful gemstone that may very well turn into a family heirloom.



Rings by Omi Privé

ETHICS & RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

Sad to say, not every colored gemstone is responsibly sourced. However, in today's marketplace, there are many colored gemstone dealers who regularly travel to the various parts of the world where gemstones are mined. They know both the miners and the mine whence a gemstone came out of the ground, as well as the jeweler who is selling it to you.

These dealers take into account social and environmental considerations throughout the supply chain as they process an uncut piece of rough into a sparkling gemstone.

KNOW YOUR JEWELER

All of these factors combine into one simple idea when purchasing colored gemstones — **know your jeweler**. Buying from someone who is knowledgeable, responsible and well-trained offers you peace of mind, as well as stunning colored gemstones and personal services.



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