

GEMFIELDS

Rubies are the birthstone of July – a time for prosperity and protection



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Rubies have long been treasured – their intense red colour representing the redness of the blood that flows through our veins. Formed deep beneath the earth’s surface some 500 million years ago, they are far more rare and valuable – frequently costing more per carat – than colourless diamonds. They are associated with passion, prosperity and protection; early warriors would carry rubies into battle, and in some countries, even today, they are laid beneath the foundations of buildings to bring good fortune to those who live and work there.

Rubies are, of course, eternally connected to summer, as the birthstone for the month of July – that time of year when the days are warm, long and full of life. Amongst the famous names born in July who embody the glamorous spirit of this vibrant red stone are Jennifer Lopez, Sandra Bullock, Margot Robbie and Benedict Cumberbatch. And it’s fair to say that rubies have always been a favourite with everyone from royalty to style icons and Hollywood A-listers – who wore them in abundance during this year’s awards season; it’s not called

“the red carpet” for nothing! The Chinese, who revere the “lucky” colour red, adore them, and Hindu cultures described rubies as “the king of gemstones” in ancient Sanskrit texts, which comprise the earliest written accounts of them.

The secret to a ruby’s iconic status and to its value – perhaps more than with other gemstones – is down to colour. “There is no coloured gemstone that fuels passion more than the ruby,” says author and jewellery specialist Joanna Hardy. “We live with colour – it surrounds us during our waking hours, and indeed even in our dreams – but place a ruby in front of any man or woman and there will be an instant response to this vibrant red gem.”

Varying in shade from a purplish red to a more orange-y red, the most desirable ruby hues are said to be either a bluish red or a very pure intense red. It is their chromium content that differentiates rubies from sapphires, with whom they share the same crystal structure, chemical composition and characteristics.

But as with so many aspects of coloured gemstones, appeal is subjective and down to the individual consumer’s taste. It is, however, widely held that an even distribution of colour is desirable; to this end, experts recommend viewing a ruby in daylight, and tilting it to inspect it from all angles. Clarity is also key: rubies can carry beautiful inclusions, with each of these telling the gemstone’s own unique story. And another factor is cut, with round, oval and cushion cuts being the most popular for faceted rubies.

As the world’s leading supplier of responsibly sourced coloured gemstones, Gemfields mines rubies from the Montepuez mine in northeastern Mozambique. Situated on one of the world’s most significant ruby deposits, rubies were first discovered here only in 2009, but had been forming for hundreds of millions of years. Mozambique has established itself as the world’s leading source of rubies, providing gemstones spanning the full colour range, including even the rarest fluorescent reds.

Always working to the principle that those who mine should do so with transparency, integrity and legitimacy, Gemfields ensures that its operations benefit the country of origin, directing funds to establish community and conservation projects such as schools, health clinics and agricultural cooperatives to boost the livelihoods and wellbeing of local people. Once described as “the heart of Mother Earth”, rubies – whose name comes from the Latin *ruber*, meaning red – are now truly living up to this name.

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Notes to editors

ABOUT GEMFIELDS

Gemfields is a world-leading supplier of responsibly sourced, coloured gemstones. Gemfields is the operator and 75% owner of both the Kagem emerald mine in Zambia (believed to be the world's single largest producing emerald mine) and the Montepuez ruby mine in Mozambique (one of the most significant recently discovered ruby deposits in the world). Gemfields believes that those who mine gemstones should do so with transparency, legitimacy and integrity.

Gemfields introduced the most technologically advanced coloured gemstone sort house in the world at its operations in Mozambique, with state-of-the-art equipment, like optical sorting machines. In addition, a proprietary grading system, pioneering auction platform and an active marketing presence means Gemfields plays a significant role in the rise of African gemstones. This endeavour is coupled with a strong belief that coloured gemstones should create a positive impact for the country and community from which they originate.

Responsible sourcing for Gemfields means implementing industry-leading policies and practices across operations, transparency in our auction sales process, an active role in working groups to modernise the sector, projects to improve health, education and livelihoods for the communities around our mines and conservation efforts (#conservationgemstones) to protect Africa's great wildlife and biodiversity.

Fabergé - an iconic name with an exceptional heritage - is a member of the Gemfields Group. This enables Gemfields to improve its positioning, perception and consumer awareness of responsibly sourced coloured gemstones through the beauty of design and craftsmanship.

As well as supplying the majority of the world's rough rubies and emeralds, Gemfields initiates activations to build desire for coloured gemstones. Gemfields creates collaborations with many partners and international jewellery brands. Often surprising, unexpected and unique, these collaborations are chosen to promote consumer awareness, appeal and education of coloured gemstones, raising their profile and, in turn, providing greater benefit to their place of origin in Africa.

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